

## **Access Guide**

WWT Martin Mere Wetland Centre  
Fish Lane, Burscough L40 0TA  
Phone number: 01704 891220  
Text Relay number: 01704 892343  
What 3 words: menu; influence; contacts

A visual story of the centre is available to either download from the website or to request a copy when you arrive at the centre.

### **The car park**

It is free to park vehicles at Martin Mere.

There are two large blue badge holder car parks catering for 20 vehicles. One of the sections is tarmacked whilst the other is stoned. These car parks are located within 15 metres of the main entrance over a sloped paved walkway. There are bike racks available in the car park.



### **Arrival**

There is a push button to open the main entrance doors which is 90cm above the ground and the door opens to a width of 118cm. Upon entry the admissions desk height is 74cm. The admissions area and whole building has level access.

The exit doors back to the car park are automatic opening.

Free wheelchairs are available at the centre and these can be requested on arrival. There is a mobility scooter available to book in advance by emailing [info.martinmere@wwt.org.uk](mailto:info.martinmere@wwt.org.uk). There is a £10 charge for the mobility scooter.



It is free for carers to enter the centre and we welcome trained assisted guide dogs.

A Walkabout guide is available to purchase at the entrance at a cost of £3.50 and it contains pictures of all of the birds we have on our site. A 'whats on' board provides you with the full schedule of talks and activities. A TV screen provides information on work on site that could cause loud noises.

Sensory bags are available from the admissions desk with a £15 refundable deposit. These contain ear defenders, fidget toys, binoculars, hand wipes, magnifying glass and bird tick lists.

A portable hearing loop is available on the admissions desk to assist with your arrival and can be used in other areas of the centre or as part of workshops upon request.

Our front of house staff and volunteers have been trained in some every basic sign language phrases to welcome you to Martin Mere. There is one member of staff trained up to BSL Level 1 to offer support if required on arrival. Please just ask. In addition you will see many of our staff wearing the dementia friendly badge.

The information desk is the central accessibility information point. At this desk you can ask any questions, collection an accessible map, fidget toys, coloured acetates and magnifiers to assist with reading signs, copies of the visual story and look at a sample sensory bag.

### **Toilets**

All toilets have motion centred lighting installed. There are accessible toilets available in the following locations:

- In Mere Side Café
- Next to the play area
- At the canoe safari (compost toilets)
- On the nature trail opposite the Raines Observatory
- Main corridor of the building: this includes an adjustable height-changing table and hoist. You will need your own sling to attach to the hoist. **This toilet does not have a hand dryer.**

The toilets (except Raines Observatory) have coat hangers at different heights, a shelf and a full length mirror.

### **The building**

The building houses an exhibition hall, retail shop, lecture theatre and classrooms. The lecture theatre has a hearing loop. There is a craft room that is open at the weekend and during holidays offering a range of free and paid crafts. Cushioned trays are available to request from the craft room for visitors in a wheelchair who would like to have a go at the crafts. All areas are accessible for wheelchair users. There are large windows in the main foyer and exhibition hall for ease of movement in building for visitors with a visual impairment. Our shop staff will be happy to assist anyone who is unable to reach the higher shelves. The retail payment point is 99cm in height with a lower option available at a height of 74cm.

Upon exiting the building to the waterfowl gardens, all doors are double doors and need to be manually pushed open. The widths of the individual doors are 80cm (minimum) to 90cm (maximum).

### **Mere Side Café**

The café is located next to the main building, leaving via the door by the exhibition hall.

The entrance is automatic doors and exit doors are controlled by push buttons that are 85cm above the ground.

Menus are on the tv screens on the walls in contrasting colours.

Meals are ordered at the counter at a height of 90cm and the food is delivered to your table. Cash as well as card payments are accepted. There are a large number of baby chairs available as well as a microwave to heat up baby food, spare bowls and a bottle warmer. Free water is provided. Double handed mugs are available upon request for hot drinks. We cater for sugar free (diabetic), vegetarian and gluten free (celiacs) specific diets, although it is worth contacting the café in advance to inform us of any specific dietary requirements by emailing [info.martinmere@wwt.org.uk](mailto:info.martinmere@wwt.org.uk) or calling 01704 891220.



There are large windows along the right hand side of the café to assist with visitors who have a visual impairment. The table and plates have contrasting colours.

There is an outdoor seating area overlooking swan lake. This is accessible via a sliding door in the café and has a non slip floor surface externally. Our café staff will be happy to assist anyone who needs support in carry trays, drinks and condiments. There are a mixture of chairs outdoors – some have arm rests and some do not.

### **The waterfowl gardens**

The waterfowl gardens are all fully paved and accessible with benches at regular intervals as resting points. There are steel gates separating the themed waterfowl zones which are manually opened.

Guided boat tours are available from the canoe safari location. The boat can accommodate two wheelchairs. It is recommended to either pre-book your boat trip online or enquire on arrival as they do get fully booked in busy periods. We can offer an early boat tour at 10.30am upon request for a quieter session. A portable hearing loop is available to use on the boat tour. The path leading to the boat tours is stoned. There is no minimum age for the boat tours. The minimum height for a child is 1m to go on the canoe safari and a large print health and safety briefing is available upon request. Boat tours close from November to March.

Items to note in the waterfowl gardens:

- The gardens have lots of open space and pathways are next to open water
- The eco-garden leads to the white stork enclosure which is accessed via a ramp that has non-slip mesh on it.
- The central part of the eco-garden is pathed but there is a wooded area that has bark chippings over it and can become muddy in wet conditions.
- Wild Walk is located off the Africa area in the grounds. Wooden boards are used as a pathway leading to the central 'middle lodge'. There are 2 steps leading from the lodge that leads to wobbly bridges, balancing beams and stepping stones. Away from the path, Wild Walk can become very muddy in wet conditions and busy periods.
- There is an aviary located in the WOW development. The aviary is accessible through doors that can be easily pushed open. The birds in the aviary can take flight and will often fly onto the roof of the aviary building.
- There are three locations in the grounds that have hand dryers – outside the café, the Wooded Wetlands area and the WOW area by the aviary – all dryers are located within a wooden housing structure.



The pond zone is DDA compliant and is accessible for anyone wanting to have a go at finding small creatures in the ponds. Minimum age for the pond dipping is 2 and we have a smaller pond for smaller children to still have a great experience. Long handled nets are available upon request for those in a wheelchair. In Spring and Summer we offer quiet pond dipping sessions at the weekends during term time. These are bookable via the website as we limit numbers attending this session.

There are large gates from the waterfowl gardens to the nature trail and these steel gates are self-closing but can make a noise when closing.

## The nature trail

The nature trail is fully paved. It is not a circular loop. Most of our hides have lower windows to allow for wheelchair users to view the wildlife. Listed below are the heights of these windows as well as door widths and key accessible information. Some of the hides can appear to be dark.

Hide	Distance from centre	Door width	Window height for wheelchairs	Access notes
Discovery hide	15 metres	Main entrance is 90 cm (180cm with double doors). Three other doors 83 cm	60 cm (inside) 110 cm (outside wing)	Hide is DDA compliant
Janet Kear hide	490m	87 cm outside door leads to 73 cm inside door	100cm	Ideal for watching bird feeders. There are entry points at both sides of the hide that are accessible via two doors, as there is a central raised area accessed via steps.
Harrier hide	490m	3 upstairs doors are 75 cm. There is a wooden lip on the door frames.	Central floor to ceiling windows to view the wildlife.	There is a steep slope leading up to the Harrier Hide
United Utilities hide	585m	144cm	95cm	Wheelchair users will need assistance to enter hide as there is a steep sloped pathway. The top level is only accessible via a set of stairs.
Raines Observatory	160m	All doors are 90cm	80cm	Heated observatory with bench seating. Sliding and push doors to enter.
Hale hide	215m	80cm	100cm	One level, fully accessible
Mere View hide	480m	94cm	There are no lower windows in this hide due to concrete structure.	The entrance is via a sloped pathway
Ron Barker hide	585m	85cm	85cm	Two levels. The top level is only accessible via a small number of stairs.

There are two 'lookout' points along the nature trail overlooking the mere. These are accessed via a small slope.

There is a reedbed walk accessible from the lower level of the Harrier Hide that also has 3 hides. This walk is approximately 45 minutes to 1.5hours long and would not be suitable for wheelchairs.

### **Customer care support**

- In the event of a fire alarm, all visitors inside the attraction will be led to safety by a member of the team to the designated fire evacuation point.
- Only guide and assisted dogs are allowed in the grounds. We can provide a water bowl for them on request.
- On our website, within the accessibility area, you will find a visual story of our building and facilities to download – or you can request a colour print out when you arrive at the centre.
- Bits and bobs box: Just ask at our admissions desk if there is anything you need – from a sewing kit, cycle puncture kit, glasses kit, wipes, sanitary products to directions to the nearest electric charging point, our team are here to help.

### **Morning Explorers: Relaxed times to visit the centre**

At Martin Mere, during mid-week term time, the centre is quiet enough to welcome anyone who may struggle with crowds or have a sensory overload – this includes people with autism and dementia.

At the weekends we recommend visiting between 9.30am and 11.30am when the centre is more relaxed. There will be no queues at the entrance and the building and café will not be noisy.

Activities during morning explorers:

- Call in advance for your own guided boat tour, reserved specifically for children or adults with additional needs. The guided boat tours are 20 minutes in duration and the boat floats along at 3mph giving you the opportunity to get up close to nature. The boat tours are an additional £3.50 per seat. The boat tours run at 10.30am and 11am. The boat can accommodate 2 wheelchairs and carers are free. The boat tours are only available from April to end of September.

### **Quiet Pond Dipping**

We'll be running quieter pond dipping sessions for people with neuro-divergent or different needs in Summer 2024. The sessions will have limited spaces to create a calmer environment. You are able to book your space online. Long handled nets are available upon request for individuals in wheelchairs to do pond dipping

**Please note that during school holidays and bank holidays the centre is a lot busier than normal and these relaxed times are only recommended during school term time.**