



Forestry England

Hicks Lodge Know Before You Go Guide

Updated: 5th April 2026



Know Before You Go- Hicks Lodge Forest Centre

Welcome to Hicks Lodge

Welcome to Hicks Lodge. This guide has been created to help you plan your visit and find a route suitable for you and others to engage with nature, focus on wellbeing and enjoy the great outdoors! This document provides detailed information about and photographs of the different facilities, trails and cycle trails at Hicks Lodge.

Hicks Lodge is a managed woodland site, whilst the ground is surfaced with compact stone and some loose material, the ground surface and gradients across some of the site may be challenging for some visitors with access requirements.

We have also created some short videos about accessibility at Hicks Lodge which are available to view on the Hicks Lodge website.

This access guide and accompanying access video has been created by and with the support of access consultants with lived experience of disability, who have experienced all the trails described in this guide.

If there is any information you can't find in this guide, please contact Forestry England:

Telephone: 0300 067 4340

Email: info_nationalforest@forestryengland.uk

We hope you enjoy your visit to Hicks Lodge!

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Overview

The following pages provide an overview of accessibility at Hicks Lodge. Detailed information can be found from page 5 onwards. For more information about visiting Hicks Lodge, including opening hours, how to find Hicks Lodge and parking prices please visit the [Hicks Lodge webpage](#).

Staff availability

Forestry England staff are located on site during café & bike hire opening hours. Whilst there is no formal welcome desk, Forestry England staff can be found working in or near to the cafe.

Toilet facilities

Toilet facilities are available during café & bike hire opening hours. There are female, male and unisex accessible toilet facilities. There is a separate baby changing facility on site. These are located next to the café. The accessible toilet is larger than a standard accessible toilet and provides additional room to manoeuvre. An adult sized changing mat is available in this toilet. There is not a Changing Places toilet at this site.

Car parking

There is one large car park, this is accessed from the main vehicle access road into Hicks Lodge. Accessible bays are marked out on site. Car parking is located near to the main facilities on site. There is a charge to pay for non-members. Blue badge holders are required to pay. For further information on parking charges please visit the [Hicks Lodge webpage](#).

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Facilities

The following facilities are available on site:

- A café
- A cycle hire centre
- Inclusive play areas
- Walking trails
- Beginner-Intermediate cycle trails
- Bird Hide
- Picnic Areas

Please note that this site does not currently offer mobility equipment hire.

Walking Trails

The three main walking trails at Hicks Lodge are all shared, multi-user trails:

- Hicks Lodge Lake Trail
- Dilworth Woodlands Trail
- Wood Farm Trail

These trails are made up of a compact stone surface, with loose stones and natural material on the ground. The ground can be uneven in places, however, may be well suited for some wheelchairs and mobility scooters with larger, off-road wheels. These trails are also used by cyclists.

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Cycling at Hicks Lodge

All trails at Hicks Lodge are multi-user trails and suitable for cycling. There are three main cycle trails at Hicks Lodge:

- Pedal and Play trail (green- beginner graded, on the Dilworth Woodlands Trail)
- Wood Farm trail (green- beginner graded)
- Shell Brook trail (blue- intermediate graded)

The Pedal and Play trail and Wood Farm trail are green graded trails. These both include flatter sections, with gentle slopes and wide paths which make them well suited for adapted cycles. The Shell Brook trail is a blue graded trail, with narrower sections. For general information about trails and grading, visit <https://www.forestryengland.uk/hicks-lodge/cycling-and-mountain-biking-trails-hicks-lodge>

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Detailed Accessibility Guide

Arrival and parking

Sat Nav postcode

Sat Nav postcode: LE65 2UP

Address: Hicks Lodge Forest Centre, Willesley Woodside, Moira, Ashby-de-la Zouch, Leicestershire

Car parking

There are 5 signposted accessible car parking bays in the visitor car park. These provide easy access to the start of all the trails and facilities at Hicks Lodge. Payment is required for all vehicles including blue badge holders. Spaces are located on firm ground with some loose stones and uneven surfaces. Payment can be made using the RingGo app or via ticket machines within the car park at the beginning of your stay. For further information on car parking payment visit the [Hicks Lodge webpage](#).

Pedestrian and cycle access points

The main entrance does not have a formal pavement or cycle lane from the road, however a bridleway does enter the site here through a pedestrian gate. There are three pedestrian and cycle access points which link Hicks Lodge to the surrounding area. These are described below.

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Access route to and from Donnisthorpe

This access route joins onto the Lake Trail and leads to and from Donnisthorpe via a swing gate at the edge of the site. The gate is wider than 1m, which allows a wheelchair users and cycles to pass through. There is a steep hill along this route. The path is at least 1.5 meters wide and is managed by a neighbouring land owner.

Access Route from New Fields Road, Moira

This access route also joins up with the Lake Trail. This route is approximately 800m long. There is a narrow motorbike deterrent gate at this pedestrian entrance, the gap is less than 700mm wide, which restricts access for some users.



Motorbike deterrent gate at the New Fields Road entrance.



Horse rider access at the New Fields Road entrance.



Access path from New Fields Road entrance.

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Access route to and from Willesley Lane

This access route joins onto the Dilworth Woods Trail and leads to and from Willesley Lane via public footpath from the edge of the site. This path is an unsurfaced grassy trail, managed by a neighbouring landowner, rather than Forestry England and is therefore not suitable for visitors with access needs.

Arrival by cycle

There is bridleway access to the site via the main entrance. It is possible to access Hicks Lodge by cycle via the pedestrian access route to and from Donnithorpe. Two wheeled cycles can get through the access gate from New Fields Road, this route is not accessible for larger adapted cycles.

Once on site, there are plenty of cycle rack spaces located on firm level ground in front of the cafe and toilet block.

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Information on arrival

Signs in front of the cafe and car park show a map of the site with different trail routes, this is also where any details on trail closures or site works are posted. There are several information boards in key locations across the site, a site wide visitor information board is provided near to the car park and cafe. Leaflets and events information can be found near the toilet block. Paper maps are available to purchase from the cafe and bike hire.

Images of arrival at Hicks Lodge are provided below



Information board and map along a footpath next to the car park.



Cycle parking is provided on firm level ground next to the café and toilet block.



A photo of two empty accessible car parking bays in the car park.

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Visitor Facilities

Toilet facilities

There are male, female and a unisex accessible toilet facilities at Hicks Lodge which are open during cafe opening hours. These are in a toilet block next to the cafe. The toilets are well signposted. Details on these facilities are provided below:

- There is one large accessible toilet, which measures 2.4 m x 2.6m. This is unlocked during visitor opening hours and does not require a RADAR key to enter.
- The accessible toilet has a right-hand transfer.
- The accessible toilet has a changing seat, an adult changing mat is available.
- The accessible toilet has an emergency pull cord.
- Lighting levels in the accessible toilet are low.
- The toilets are located within 50m of the car park and cafe.
- There is a unisex baby changing facility in the toilet block, this is in a self-contained room.
- There is no Changing Places toilet on site.

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Images of the toilet facilities are provided below:



The entrance to the toilet block is well signposted.



There is one accessible toilet inside the toilet block, this does not require a RADAR key to open.



A photo of the large accessible toilet cubicle, with a changing seat.

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Cafe

There is one cafe on site; Grounds Café Hicks Lodge located near to the car park, toilet block and play area.

Further details on the café are available on their website: [Grounds Cafe Hicks Lodge](#)

- The cafe is set at ground floor level, with step-free access and a clear, wide access route for visitors with mobility aids and people visiting with pushchairs.
- The cafe is counter-service; cold drinks and sandwiches are collected from self-service fridges, food, cakes and hot drinks are served by staff.
- Staff are available to assist where required.
- The cafe does not have a hearing loop installed.
- The cafe can become noisy when busy.
- Inside and outside seating is provided, tables are set at a height of 72cm with removable chairs. There are also some picnic tables nearby. 8 of the 14 outside picnic tables are on flat, surfaced ground.
- Toilet facilities, including an accessible toilet, are provided adjacent to the cafe.

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Images of the cafe facilities are provided below:



Approach to the café up a slope from the car park.



Picnic benches and cycle parking are provided outside the café.



A photo of a seating area inside the café.

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Bike hire

There is a bike hire centre which is operated by the café. At the moment it is not possible to hire adapted cycles or trikes. The shop is accessed from the cafe. For details on opening times and costs, please visit the following website link

<https://groundcyclecentres.uk/hicks-lodge/>

Inclusive play area

An inclusive play facility is provided opposite the toilets and cafe. This has level access into the play area and includes a number of accessible features including ramped access to the slide, and a wide accessible path leading to different play equipment.

There are also opportunities for quieter, more reflective and creative play. An inclusive communication board is provided at the entrance of the play space.

Seating is provided within the play area including benches with backrests. The ground material is varied, however there are firm, wide surfaced paths that lead to many of the play features.

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Images of the play area are provided below:



A communication board at the entrance of the play area.



A photo of the play area looking towards the slide, the ground material in front of the slide differs from the pavement and is more difficult for wheelchair users to push over.



An accessible path within the play area leading over a small wooden bridge.

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Waymarked Trails

Lake Trail

Description

This is a popular waymarked trail which is well signposted from the car park and loops around the lake. The trail is characterised by wide paths, and does not include any gates, barriers or stiles. This trail is waymarked with pink signs, and text saying 'Lake Trail'. The Lake Trail is used for the family activity trails (typically themed around a Julia Donaldson/Axel Scheffler character).

Distance

2km/1.25 miles

Gradients and terrain

The ground surface is made up of compact stone with some loose material and uneven ground. The path surface is consistent along the trail.

One section of this trail contains a steep hill, with a 1:12 gradient or more that may be more challenging for some manual wheelchair users to negotiate independently.

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Seating

Bench seating is provided at regular intervals along the side of the path, approximately every 50m. An example of the seating is provided in the trail photographs (below). There is also a picnic area along this trail, set on softer ground surfaces that may be difficult for wheelchair users to wheel across.



A continuous sloping path along the Lake Trail, the path is wide with some small, loose stones.



An example of a wooden bench at the side of the Lake trail on the grass.



A pink waymarker sign with an arrow on a wooden post along the Lake trail, there is a black sign with directions back to the car park.

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Bird hide

A bird hide is located halfway around the trail. There is step-free access into the hide via a short ramp and a manual door that may be heavy for some people to open. The hide includes a viewing area for seated and standing users. There is good circulation space inside the hide.

Images of the bird hide are shown below:



The approach to the bird hide is via a wide path, there is a closed door into the hide.



The Lake trail footpath is wide with some fine material on the path. The bird hide is found off a short path to the left of the path.

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Dilworth Woods Trail

Description

This is a waymarked trail that takes you through young woodland around Hicks Lodge. Follow the yellow signs to this trail from the car park and cafe. Key features of this trail include:

- An option to take a short or longer loop.
- Wide paths with plenty of room for wheelchair users, mobility scooter users and pushchairs. Paths are typically 1.5m or wider.
- Gentle slopes throughout the trail, with steeper zig-zag sections on the longer version of this trail.
- This is a shared use trail, parts of this route also form part of the Pedal and Playtrail.
- This route also incorporates the ‘Wellbeing’ trail. This is not shown on any maps of the site, however it is waymarked on signage on-site. The Wellbeing trail has themed panels which invites users to pause and connect with the forest environment. You can find out more about the Wellbeing trail by clicking on the following link <https://www.forestryengland.uk/hicks-lodge/wellbeing-trail-hicks-lodge>

Distance

Short loop: 2km/1.25 miles

Long loop: 2.5km/1.5 miles

Short and long loop: 4.5km/2.8 miles

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Gradients and terrain

There are slopes throughout the trail, with continuous steeper zig-zag sections on the longer version of this trail.

Seating

Benches and picnic benches provide resting points along the trail. This includes benches with arm rests and backrests on the side of the path. Seating is sometimes located on uneven ground.

Images of the Dilworth Woods Trail are provided below:



Signs near the visitor centre and café directing people to the start of the trails.



An opening which leads to a road crossing along this route to the Dilworth Woods trail.



An example of an accessible wooden bench on the side of the path, with arm rests and backrests.

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Cycle Trails

Pedal and Play

Description

Pedal and Play is a trail designed to help riders build off-road cycling confidence. Parts of this trail and activities are suitable for adapted cycle users. Features along this trail include:

- Access from the Dilworth Woods Trail across the road, from the visitor centre to the start of the trail.
- Accessible seating at the different challenge areas, including benches with arm rests and backrests and picnic tables.
- Wide spaces to manoeuvre and turn.
- No narrow gaps, gates or stiles.
- A choice of different activities and challenges along the route.

Distance

2km/1.25 miles

Gradients and terrain

This trail is relatively flat, with the option to take on some gentle gradients, berms and turns as part of the activities. The path surface is compact, with some small loose stones. The trail surfaces are well suited to off-road adapted cycles.

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Seating

Benches and picnic benches are provided next to each challenge zone, some of the picnic benches are located on uneven or grassy areas, which may be more difficult to navigate across.

Images of the Pedal and Play trail are provided below:



Signs are provided at each challenge zone to help riders to improve their skills.



Image of challenge zone 1 'In the loop', there are different surfaced tracks for cyclists to practice on. This path shown in wide, with gentle slopes.



Photo of a small play area and picnic benches next to zone 1. There is a wide surfaced path to the play area. Picnic benches are located on the grass.

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Wood Farm trail

Description

This multi-user trail is designed to be a beginner mountain bike trail, but is also a walk to explore quieter parts of the site. You will need to cross a road by the cafe to start this trail. It is also well suited for many adapted cycles and includes the following features:

- This trail is well signposted by green arrows and text on waymarker posts.
- The trail is 1m or wider.
- There are no gates, stiles or narrow gaps along this trail.
- There are no sharp turns or berms to navigate along this trail.

Distance

4.4km/2.7 miles

Gradients and terrain

This trail includes several long, gentle slopes as the route winds through the forest, as well as flatter sections. The cycle path is surfaced and is made up of compact stone, with loose stones and natural forest material along the path.

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Seating

Benches and seating are provided alongside the trail path. Many of the seats and picnic benches are located on the grass, and are sometimes located on uneven terrain.

Images of the Wood Farm trail are provided below:



Waymarker signs on a post to the side of the trail, providing arrows to show the trail direction.



A handcyclist cycling along a wide path along the trail, there is a bench next to the trail path on the grass.



A handcyclist cycling along a path with a gentle bend in the path, the path has some loose stones.

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Shell Brook trail

Description

This trail has a moderate grading (blue) and will not be accessible for many adapted cycle users. Key features include:

- Narrow gaps between large rocks, with a path surface less than 1m wide in places.
- Variable surfaces.
- Access to and from sections of this trail from the Dilworth Woods Trail.
- There are no places to stop and rest on the trail, however these trails link up to the Dilworth Woods Trail which provide benches and picnic areas.
- This is a one-way trail with limited space for adapted cycles to turn, however sections of the trail will loop back to the Dilworth Woods Trail.

Distance

5.5 miles/8.9km

Gradients and terrain

- Gradients are considered moderate, and steeper than the Wood Farm trail.
- The path surface is made up of a compact stone surface with a loose stone top layer.

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Images of the Shell Brook trail are provided below:



The start of one section of the blue trail, which is signposted. The path is narrow with large rocks at the side.



A photo of a section of the blue trail with a narrower path width, and larger rocks to move around.



The blue trail can be narrower in places and less than 1m wide as shown in this photo.

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Sensory Guide

What to expect

Hicks Lodge provides different trails including walking and cycle trails. The trails are signposted with maps and directional arrows. There is one cafe on site.

Different forest users

Many of the paths are shared paths between pedestrians and cyclists. There are several bridle paths accessed from the forest and so you may also experience people riding horses along shared use routes.

Sensory experiences along the trails

Textures

In autumn, fallen leaves may cover the path in the woodland areas to create different ground textures. In wetter weather, areas covered in leaves may become slippery. The space is well managed which limits flooding in wetter weather.

Sounds

Expect to hear a variety of different natural sounds along all of the trails, including birdsong. The bird hide part way around the lake provides a quiet, sheltered space to enjoy nature. The cafe can become noisy when busy, outdoor seating around the cafe may provide quieter spaces to sit.

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Light

The forest trees can create shaded areas, with natural light shining through on a sunny day. There is no artificial lighting in this forest. Paths along the Hicks Lodge trail are more open, with less tree shelter and shade.

Shelter

The cafe is located near to the car park and provides shelter. There is an enclosed bird hide part way around the lake along the Hicks Lodge trail. There are sheltered seating areas in both playgrounds.

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Activities

A number of different activities operate in woodlands in the National Forest as part of the Feel Good in the Forest project. These activities are free to take part in. You must book in advance to take part in these sessions. Activities include:

- Forest Bathing.
- Nature Journaling.
- Yoga.
- Tai-Chi
- Volunteer Groups.

Information about each activity and how to book can be found on the following webpage <https://www.forestryengland.uk/feel-good>

Some activities may be held in ‘The Den’, which is a large tent set at ground level, and a short walk from the cafe and car park. ‘The Den’ is not open to the public, and is only used for organised, bookable activities. There is step-free access into this space. Seating is provided within the tent.

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Images of 'The Den' are provided below:



The path that leads to the entrance to the Den is wide, with loose stones. There is a wooden gate at the entrance.



The Den has plenty of space inside for a wheelchair user to move around.

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For further access information on each of these activities, we recommend that you contact the organiser directly using the contact details provided via the website link on the previous page.

You can also contact the Active Forests Coordinator using the following contact details:

Email: info_nationalforest@forestryengland.uk

Telephone: 03000674340