

# KENTS CAVERN

PREHISTORIC CAVES

UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

## Accessibility Guide for Kents Cavern Ltd

Kents Cavern is the most accessible show cave in Britain, however a visit is not just made up of entry to the cave. Our accessibility guide breaks up the visit into four different components, each with their own set of access guidelines that all visitors should be aware of.

A Visual story is available to download from the Accessibility tab on the Kents Cavern website. This has been designed to help children and adults with autism prepare for a visit to Kents Cavern, however it might be useful for any person who is worried about visiting for the first time.

### **Car Park**

- There is one highlighted accessible parking space available in the Kents Cavern car park, however all spaces are on the same level and are located within easy access to main visitor centre.
- This is a pay and display car park with a set price of £2 for 4 hours parking which is mandatory for all visitors. Alternative free parking is available on the road adjacent to the car park.

### **Visitor Centre and Firestone Kitchen**

- From the car park, the visitor centre is located through the garden via steps or a ramp.
- The ticket desk and Firestone Kitchen are easily accessible for wheelchair users, however the shop is only accessible via 2 small steps and the exhibition areas are accessible via 4 steps.
- Our accessible toilet is located at the end of Firestone Kitchen. It has been designed for wheelchair users and has a right hand transfer. This toilet is available for anyone to use.
- The exhibition area in the visitor centre includes interpretation panels focused on the heritage of Kents Cavern. Large print and easy read guides are available for anyone to use. These can be signed out at the ticket desk and are free to use.
- Firestone Kitchen is a fully licensed restaurant and is accessible for everyone. The main menus are located on tables however Vegetarian and Vegan menus can be provided on request.
- All dogs are welcome in the gardens, visitor centre and Firestone Kitchen, however we ask that they remain on a lead at all times.

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### Cave Tour

- Visitors should be aware that the way the cave has been naturally formed results in some narrow passages, low ceiling heights, slopes and steps.
- All visitors should pay particular attention to the safety briefing given by the guides before entering the cave.
- There is no access for mobility scooters. A standard sized manual wheelchair is able to visit the first chamber of the cave only. A DVD of the cave tour can be viewed by anyone who is unable to visit the whole cave system. Access to first chamber for wheelchair users is free of charge, as is the DVD of the cave.
- There are concrete paths throughout the cave tour. Assistance may be required by some visitors as there are a few steep gradients of up to 1:4 - 1:5. There are nine steps in the caves, and a narrow point on route of 55cm (21.5") at ground level extending for 1m (3'3").
- A standard single-child pushchair under the responsibility of an adult can be negotiated around the cave.
- The guide will issue warnings if strobe lighting sequences are in operation during the tour but visitors who are susceptible to rapid flashing light should make this known to the guide.
- The caves are electrically lit but the lighting levels are purposefully kept low to protect the cave environment. There are periods of reduced lighting and short spells of complete darkness during the tour.
- The temperature is a constant 14°C (58°F).
- Sensible footwear should be worn.
- There are no toilet facilities inside the caves.
- Head protection helmets are not required in the caves but are available for visually impaired visitors.
- Parts of the tour include sections where the guide encourages visitors to look at the formations and some replica artefacts. A tactile box is available for people with visual impairments. If this is required, please make our ticket desk staff aware and they can organise for someone to have the box ready for when your tour is over.
- Only assistance dogs are permitted to enter the cave.

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- A printed version of the tour is available for hearing impaired visitors.
- A British Sign Language version of the tour is available for Deaf visitors. This is provided on a handheld digital tablet loaned out to the user from Kents Cavern at no extra cost. Instructions of how to use the tablet are included into the video clips.
- Visitors who feel uncomfortable in the caves should inform the guide who will arrange for an escort out. Visitors should never make their own way out of the cave.
- A special rate of £6.50 is available for people with disabilities.
- Carers are not permitted free of charge, however at a ratio of 1:1, they are able to enter the cave at the same £6.50 rate.

### **The woodland trail**

- The Woodland Trail is part of the children's activities at Kents Cavern. Due to it being outdoors, it can be affected by the elements. All visitors should wear sensible clothes and footwear appropriate to the weather.
- On rainy days, parts of the path can become muddy and slippery.
- We advise that all visitors stay on the paths throughout their time in the woodland trail.
- Due to unavoidable steps throughout the trail, there is no access for wheelchair users.
- Single-child pushchairs will go around the trail, as long as parents/guardians are prepared to manoeuvre them up and down the steps.
- Assistance may be required by some visitors as there are a few steep gradients of up to 1:4 - 1:5 on the Woodland Trail.
- Handrails are present throughout every section of the woods where there are steps or steep paths.
- Only assistance dogs are permitted in the woodland trail.