

Skipton Castle Woods Accessibility Statement November 2016

Purpose: This accessibility statement outlines the available facilities and access information for Skipton Castle Woods.

Welcome

We, the Woodland Trust, invite everyone to enjoy Skipton Castle Woods, a 36 acre ancient woodland in the heart of Skipton town centre.

Skipton Castle Woods in North Yorkshire is a place to enjoy space, peace and wildlife along a river valley featuring Springs Canal and Ella Beck. The woods were first opened to the public by the castle owners in 1971 and later were leased to the Woodland Trust under a long term arrangement in 1998.

Visitors today are welcome at Skipton Castle Woods with free woodland access 365 days a year.

Further details about Skipton Castle Woods, volunteering opportunities and the Woodland Trust are available on the Skipton Castle Woods website. If you have any queries or require any further information please contact england@woodlandtrust.org.uk

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1. Before you arrive

Skipton Castle Woods is located behind Skipton Castle.

Due to the woods valley location there is no step free access into Skipton Castle Woods however there are routes where the number of steps are limited. The following information is to help you make informed choices about the routes into the woodland and how suitable they are for your individual access needs.

At 36 acres, there are three entrances to the woodland linking to either public or permissive footpaths. Each of these entrances are located outside the castle grounds. Visitors to the castle should exit through the castle entrance to access the woods.

If you are visiting for the first time, we recommend you use the main **Old Saw Mill** entrance so that you can view our information boards and site map. Alternatively, you can access the woodland on **The Bailey** at the side of Skipton Castle car park. The third entrance on **Short Lee Lane** is most suited to those visiting the woodland as part of a longer walking route due to distance from the town centre and parking limitations.

Visiting us

a. By train

Regular trains run on the Airedale Line into Skipton Station which is approximately ½ a mile away from Skipton Castle Woods. Services include trains to and from Leeds, Bradford, Carlisle, Lancaster and Morecombe. A single daily return service also operates between Skipton and London Kings Cross.

Check travel websites to get up to date journey information before departure. For information on train times please contact National Rail on 08457 484950 or visit the [National Rail](#) website.

From Skipton Railway Station you can walk into the town centre on flat surfaced footpaths. The distance is approximately ¾ of a mile. Exit the station and turn right following the blue town centre signage to the High Street.

To enter the woodland, go to the top of the High Street where you will see Holy Trinity Church and Skipton Castle. Take a left at the top of the High Street onto Mill Bridge, where you can access the canal towpath that leads into Skipton Castle Woods and the Old Saw Mill entrance.

b. By bus

There are several options for travelling by bus to Skipton Castle Woods. The recommended route depends on where you are visiting us from, but there are bus services to and from Colne, Preston, Manchester, Leeds, Otley, Ikley, Keighley and Sidsen in addition to services to and from Dales towns and vilages.

If you are planning to travel by bus please check travel websites to determine the best route and times and plan ahead for your journey. For more information on bus services please visit the [Traveline](#) website.

Once you have arrived at Skipton Bus Station exit the station by turning left onto the A6131 Keighley Road and continue to the top of the High Street. This route is on surfaced footpaths in the town centre and is approximately ½ a mile. Take a left at the top of the High Street onto Mill Bridge, where you can access the canal towpath that leads into Skipton Castle Woods and the Old Saw Mill entrance.

Alternatively, should you wish to walk alongside the canal tow path into the woodland, exit the bus station towards the rear of the bus shelters and proceed up 18 steps onto a canal footbridge. Once over the bridge, walk along the canal basin and follow the tow path up to Mill Bridge and Skipton Castle Woods. This route includes steps and some uneven and narrow surfaces along a water course.

c. By car

From the M1 (northbound) take the M62 west, the M606 to Bradford, A650 to Keighley and A629 to Skipton. From the M6, take the A65 to Skipton. The nearest postcode is BD23 1AW.

d. By bike

Taking the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway offers spectacular scenery and challenging routes. If you're stopping off in Skipton and want to secure your bicycle to visit the woods on foot, the nearest cycle rack is located in the High Street Car Park.

<http://welcometoskipton.com/section/Cycling>

2. Arrival and car parking

Skipton Castle Woods is located in the heart of the town and although there are no dedicated Woodland Trust car parks on site, there are several other car parks located close by which means you can also enjoy spending time in the town centre.

Skipton Castle Car Park – The Bailey, Skipton, BD23 1UA – operated by Skipton Castle.

Skipton Castle Car Park is a short walking distance to the town centre and the access path which leads to The Old Sawmill entrance of Skipton Castle Woods (approximately 1/4 a mile away). This surfaced car park is located on a steep short incline leading from the town centre on a moderate gradient of around 10%.

This car park also gives direct access to The Bailey entrance of Skipton Castle Woods.

193 car spaces plus 3 coach spaces and staff on site.

Mon-Fri 8am-6pm £4.50
Sat 9am-6pm £2.50
Sun 10am-5pm £4.50
Mon-Fri after 2pm £2.50

High Street Car Park, Skipton, BD23 1ED – operated by Craven District Council

Situated behind the Town Hall and accessed via High Street or Rectory Lane. Parking is available for cars, motorcycles and coaches. Public toilet facilities are also available.

This car park is approximately ¼ of a mile to the access path which leads to The Old Sawmill entrance of Skipton Castle Woods. This walk is on flat surfaced footpaths and includes road crossings.

Coach Street Car Park, Skipton, BD23 1LE – operated by Craven District Council

Situated near the canal, Coach Street can be accessed from Broughton Road, Gargrave Road or Water Street. Parking is available for cars and motorcycles and public toilet facilities are available.

This car park is approximately ¼ of a mile to the access path which leads to The Old Sawmill entrance of Skipton Castle Woods. This walk is on flat surfaced footpaths and includes road crossings.

For up to date information on charges relating to Craven District Council car parks please visit <http://www.cravenc.gov.uk/article/1869/Parking-in-Skipton>

3. Nearest facilities

We want everyone to enjoy their experience at Skipton Castle Woods. Due to the location of the site, you may find the following information useful when planning your day.

Toilets

The nearest public toilets to Skipton Castle Woods are available at the High Street Car Park behind the Town Hall, including a RADAR key accessible toilet. A small charge applies.

Visitors to Skipton Castle have access to public toilets on site including disabled facilities (admission charge applies).

Food and drink

If you are visiting Skipton Castle you will find a tea room and shop in the courtyard. The historic tea room serves light meals such as sandwiches and soups, delicious cakes, tea, coffee and cold drinks.

If you are exploring the town, the area around Mill Bridge which gives access to The Old Saw Mill entrance via the canal tow path has plenty of choices for refreshments.

The Castle Inn

Located next to Mill Bridge at the top of Skipton High Street, The Castle Inn serves traditional pub food and real ales. It's traditional décor and warm welcome is perfect for couples and older families.

The Two Sisters Café

New in 2016, this vintage style café furnished with cinema style seats and old school room chairs is perfect for groups of friends and couples. The simple menu is sourced from local suppliers and a range of beer, wine, gin, tea and coffee is available.

The Ewe Café (formally The Union Café)

If you want hearty portions, fresh tasty food with good tea or coffee give The Ewe Café a try. The café overlooks the canal on one side and is spacious enough indoors and out for families.

Food on the go

If a Yorkshire pork pie is all you need in your rucksack then try Stanforths Butchers an award winning pie maker located on Mill Bridge. If you want to take a freshly made sandwich into the woods, pay a visit Whitakers on the corner of Mill Bridge and Keighley Road.

A wide variety of other attractions and establishments are also available in Skipton. Please visit the Welcome to Skipton website for more information. <http://welcometoskipton.com>

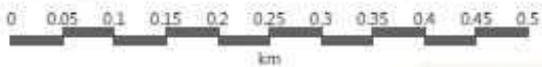
4. Entrances to Skipton Castle Woods

There are three entrances to Skipton Castle Woods which all include gates of a width of 1.2 metres or more.

Skipton Castle Woods

A natural oasis in the heart of Skipton

Walk through history!
Pick up an Earl of Thanet Trail leaflet from Skipton Castle or the Tourist Info Centre.



●●● River valley route

A pleasant, family friendly stroll from the main entrance along Fair Beck, ending at the Great Flood Bridge. This walk is great for spotting herons by the water, including ducks, kingfishers, wagtails and dippers. Retrace your steps to exit.

Wood access from town is via the canal towpath. Includes four steps, manageable with single pushchairs. A mainly wide, surfaced path with two short, moderate slopes. Some parts can be muddy after rain.

	14km / 1 mile
	Allow 1hr

●●● Upper paths extension

To extend your river valley route by exploring the upper paths, accessed at various points in the woodland. Discover views over neighbouring farmland while getting closer to birdlife and the magnificent trees.

A mix of wide, surfaced paths and narrow, uneven sections with some steep drops. Accessed from the river valley via a choice of steps or a steep slope with handrail.

	14km / 1 mile
	Allow up to 1hr

●●● Earl of Thanet Trail

An enjoyable, active walk through the industrial history of Skipton Castle Woods. Discover the river valley and upper paths on this circular route from town to Skipton Castle, with great views through the trees below.

Mostly wide, surfaced path with some narrow, uneven sections. Includes four bridges, four sets of steps and one steep slope. Some parts can be muddy after heavy rain.

	4km / 2.5 miles
	Allow 2hrs

- River valley route
- Upper paths extension
- Earl of Thanet Trail
- Public footpath
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Grey wagtail
Grey wagtails are just one of the 25 species of bird recorded here.

Fernbeam
The woodland also contains a scattering of fernbeams (pictured) and sweet chestnut - some over 200 years old.

The Old Saw Mill Entrance

The main entrance to the woods is via the Canal and Rivers Trust elevated tow path at the side of High Corn Mill. This is located on Mill Bridge, just off the High Street. This entrance can usually be accessed and used by visitors with lightweight pushchairs.

Leaving Mill Bridge on foot you can access the tow path via steps or a short surfaced incline on a gentle gradient of 5%.



Access to the woodland is via a flat elevated surfaced path of $\frac{1}{4}$ a mile made from crushed limestone which is firm in all weathers. The surface also includes raised joints across the width of the towpath with handrails on both sides. The towpath is 1.8 metres across at its widest with a section that is 0.90 metre at its narrowest.



At the end of the towpath cross the footbridge above Ella Beck. The surface of the bridge is flat and is made from metal with anti-slip grips. There is a handrail at each side.

At the end of the footbridge is a stone gateway (width 0.90 metre) with five stone steps which show some signs of wear. Each step is of a different size height and depth with a maximum riser of 12cm. There are handrails at the side of this gateway.



Turning right through a section of narrow footpath with a full height boundary wall to your left and fence to your right, you will come to a pedestrian entrance of a private road. Please be mindful of our neighbours when passing through this area by staying on the permissive path and by keeping dogs on leads.



Access to the woodland is to the right, passing through a full width gate (3 metres) which encloses a private residential property. The gate is secured at the top left with a hook and eye fastening. Proceed ahead to the gate of Skipton Castle Woods.



The entrance gate to Skipton Castle Woods opens outwards and is 1.2 metres wide. Immediately ahead is a flat metal walking surface with anti-slip grip and a handrail on the right hand side. This spans a cobble slope which allows water to run off the upper parts of the woodland and so this area can be wet underfoot. Ahead is a short moderate incline of a 5% gradient which leads onto the flat path in the woodland.



The Bailey Entrance

Skipton Castle Woods can be accessed by a gate located close to the entrance of Skipton Castle Car Park. The gate is 1.2 metres wide and opens outwards with a latch fastening on the top right. There are four steps up onto the path which are visible once the gate is opened. The highest riser is 16cm and the gate post is available to use as a hand rail.



This route takes you along part of the upper path with great views of the tree canopy's and the valley floor. The rest of the woodland can only be accessed from a choice of steps which descend from the upper path to the valley below.

The upper path surface is of compacted crushed limestone with some uneven surfaces including tree roots underfoot. There are some steep drops to the left hand side into old quarry workings and care should be taken in the area.



Lee Short Lane Entrance

This entrance is popular for local residents living in the Raikes Road area or for those incorporating the woods into a longer walk as there is no dedicated parking nearby. This entrance is approximately 1 mile from the town centre. Access is via the B6265 Grassington Road coming from the direction of the A65 roundabout. Lee Short Lane is on the left.

The lane is an unmade farm track with a metal farm gate (3 metres wide) which leads to the entrance of the woods. This track is shared with farm traffic and livestock, the surface is uneven with vehicle tracks and muddy verges. Access to the upper path of the woodland is through a wooden gate 1.2 metres wide.



The upper path surface is of compacted crushed limestone with some uneven surfaces including tree roots underfoot. On entering the woods, the path runs along the outer edge of the woodland to your left, with a choice of an incline towards the end of the Long Dam or steps at Sougha Gill to access the river valley below. The incline is fairly steep at a 15% gradient and a handrail is present.



5. Main paths

All footpaths in the woodland are permissive and are in good condition.

Keeping to marked paths helps us care for and protect the woodland.

Visitors and dogs should avoid creating and using 'desire line' paths that can often disturb ground nesting birds and rare plants. This also helps us to protect the areas where wild garlic lays dormant until the spring.

The footpath from the main entrance at the Old Saw Mill extends for 1 ½ miles along the valley floor. The surface is mostly flat and is surfaced with crushed limestone and is firm underfoot.

As you enter the main gate there is a short moderate incline with a gradient of 5%. Towards the end of the Long Dam, there is a second short moderate incline on the footpath at a gradient of 8%.

In wet weather or in instances of high water levels, some areas near the Long Dam can become muddy so caution is advised.

The Woodland Trust aims to manage all main footpaths to allow a minimum width of 3m.

Obstacles

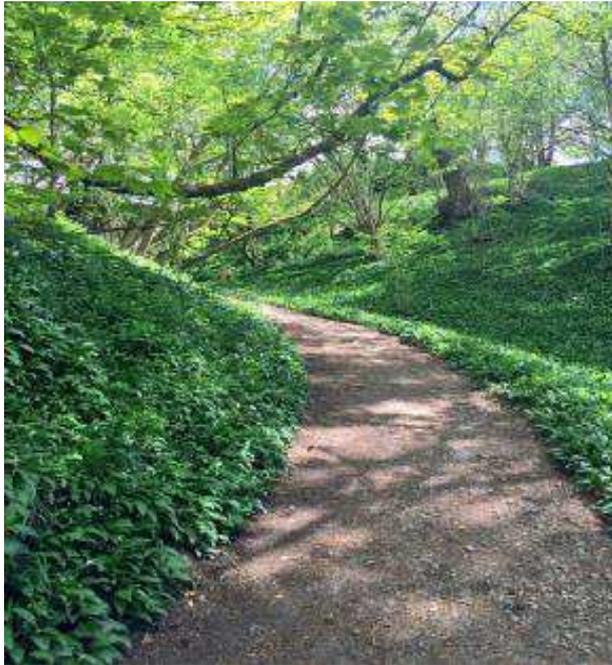
You will not encounter stiles, cattle grids or boardwalks in Skipton Castle Woods.

To move between the upper and lower paths, visitors will need to access one of four fairly steep sets of steps and/or one of two fairly steep inclines inside the woodland.

Horse Tramway Twin Steps – ½ mile from The Bailey entrance above the Round Dam. Approximately 30 steps with timber risers and deep steps of crushed limestone. There is a timber handrail to the left which extends half way down the steps. Opposite, there are a similar set of steps with a hand rail to the right which lead down to the same area. These steps are fairly steep on a gradient of around 12%



The twin steps are followed by fairly steep surfaced incline leading to the valley floor. The surface is made from crushed limestone which is firm underfoot but covered in leaf litter in the autumn. The gradient is 15% from the valley floor.



Long Dam Steps - These are found at the end of the Long Dam 1 ½ miles from the Old Saw Mill entrance. There are 25 fairly steep steps with timber risers with a crushed limestone surface linking the river valley to the upper path leading to The Bailey entrance. There is a timber handrail and the steps are on a gradient of around 12%.

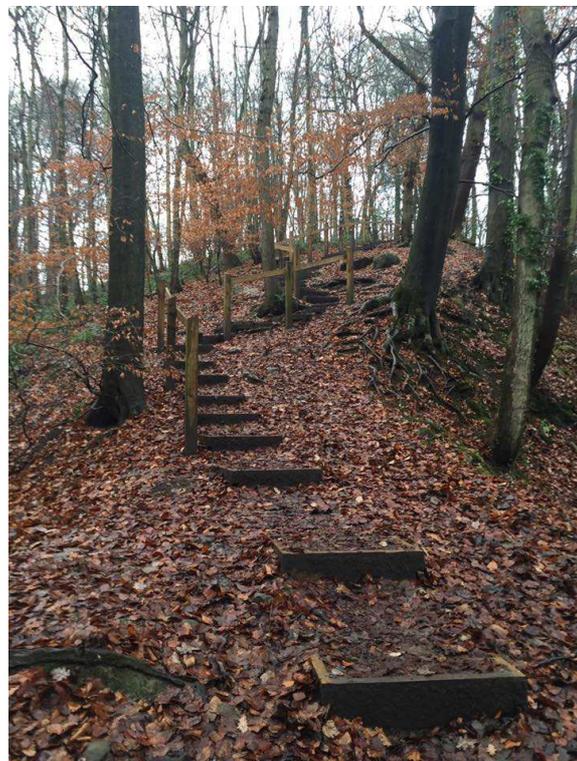


Sougha Gill Steps

Located just before the Round Dam on the left, these steps lead from the valley floor up to the upper path near the Short Lee Lane entrance. Access using the V-shaped bridge which spans Sougha Gill. On approach there are some large stones underfoot followed by three low rise wide steps up onto the bridge.



The bridge leads to approximately 52 steps with timber risers and deep steps of crushed lime stone with partial handrails. This gradient is steep and long at over 20%.



Short Lee Lane: Incline from Upper Path down to Long Dam

On entering the woods at Short Lee Lane, the path runs along the outer edge of the woodland to your left, with a choice of either a steep incline towards the end of the Long Dam or steps at Sougha Gill to access the river valley below. The incline is fairly steep at a 15% gradient and a handrail is present.



6. Additional access information

Benches

There are a number of benches around the woodland with the closest ¼ mile from the Old Saw Mill entrance.

Dogs

Dogs, including assistance dogs, are welcome guests at Skipton Castle Woods. The vast majority of the site allows for dogs on leads to protect native wildlife and livestock nearby. We ask that you walk no more than four dogs at once in the woodland.

Livestock

Around some areas of the site there may be grazing livestock present from in adjoining farmland. We ask that dogs be kept on leads and under close control along paths which border neighbouring farmland.

Horses

Horses are not permitted on footpaths, including the permissive paths through the ancient woodland.

Bicycles

Footpaths are not accessible for bicycles and are intended only for pedestrian use, including those through the ancient woodland.

Medical care

While there may be Woodland Trust employees or volunteers on site who are trained in First Aid (particularly during events), if you require immediate medical attention we advise you visit the nearest emergency department at Airedale NHS Foundation Trust, Skipton Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire, BD20 6TD Tel 01535 652511.

For emergency access dial 999 and direct fire, ambulance and police vehicles to the woodland via Chapel Hill, Skipton, BD23 1UL to The Old Saw Mill to park. Emergency car and fell rescue 4x4 vehicles can drive directly into the woodland using this route.

Latitude: 53.965521

Longitude: -2.013637

Easting: 399202

Northing: 452160

Grid reference: SD992521

The nearest defibrillator cabinet which includes access to 24hr emergency support is located on the public toilet block in the High Street Car Park.