

St. Mary's House and Gardens

Access Statement

Introduction

St. Mary's House is a Grade I listed building, and dating from Tudor times it has considerable architectural and historical interest. It is also located within the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The need to conserve the special characteristics of St. Mary's House is recognised, and the aim for accessibility is to fulfil the obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA), providing that any work to improve accessibility does not prejudice the character of St. Mary's or increase the risk of long-term deterioration to the building fabric or fittings.

Policy

St. Mary's House and Gardens are open to the public on designated open afternoons during the summer months, and open to groups on other days by appointment. We welcome visitors with a disability and make every effort to ensure that they get the most out of their visit by

- Ensuring staff are trained to communicate sensitively with visitors with disabilities and to provide advice and assistance where appropriate;
- Allowing wheelchair access to the whole of the ground floor;
- Offering to serve tea to wheelchair users on the terrace in fine weather, if they cannot manage the four steps up to the tea-room;
- Providing room guides describing each room and its furniture and artefacts in large print.

Facilities for the Disabled

- There are portable ramps for wheelchairs, which can be put into place on request at the main entrances to the house;
- A portable ramp is available for the single step up to the topiary garden;
- There is a ground floor toilet available on a level floor, but there is currently no toilet specifically designed for wheelchair users. A toilet is available in the village for disabled users; it is situated about 40 metres from St. Mary's next to the village car-park.
- A photograph album showing the upstairs rooms, furniture and artefacts is available on request for those visitors who cannot access the upper floor;
- There are no steep slopes in the gardens;
- The garden paths are flagstones, grass or gravel.