

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to our suitability for those with access needs, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our guests/visitors.

## Access Statement for Michelham Priory

### Introduction

Michelham Priory is a unique historic site dating back to the 13th century. It is in the quiet rural village of Upper Dicker, three miles west of Hailsham, in East Sussex. There is an historic house, the remains of a ruined Priory and 7 acres of gardens, including Kitchen Garden, Physic Garden and Orchard, within the longest water filled (mile-long) moat in England.

A huge Tudor barn is used for private hire and education work. There is a cafe and toilets, a small Rope Museum, working Forge, medieval Gatehouse and a working Watermill. The shop is a converted Dovecote.

Across a flat wooden bridge is the Moat Walk, leading to a new play area and a reconstruction of a Bronze Age round house. There are three accessible picnic areas with tables, two on grass, one on gravel.

The majority of the site is flat and accessible by pushed or motorised wheelchairs and buggies, except for the upper floors of the ancient House, Gatehouse and Mill.

Paths are gravel, stone or tarmac and there are no restrictions on taking wheelchairs on the lawns. Wooden ramps allow access around all aspects of the gardens close to the House and into the ground floor of the House.

Visitors can go in and out of the site and House as often as they wish on the day of their visit, and wander freely at their own pace.

A minimum 2-4 hours should be allowed for a full visit, and there is plenty to occupy visitors for a day.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone **01323 844224** or email **adminmich@sussexpast.co.uk**.

### Pre-Arrival

- Our postcode is BN27 3QS for satnav.
- On our website **www.sussexpast.co.uk/michelham** are maps of how to find us.
- You can also find directions and plan your journey by car or public transport using [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) : simply enter your postcode and ours, which is BN27 3QS, to get directions.
- Our nearest rail station is Berwick, 3 miles away. Polegate station has more train connections but is further away.
- There is no regular public bus service to Michelham Priory.
- Accessible taxis are available by advance booking from (tel) 0500 121293 or 01323 726 726 (Sussex Cars).

## **Car Parking and Arrival**

- There is ample accessible parking on site for cars and 10-12 clearly marked Blue Badge parking spaces, which are close to the main Gatehouse entrance.
- The car park surface is hard gravel with a stone paved path leading to the main entrance. The car park is not lit at night.
- There is no charge for parking and visitors can go in and out of the site to the car park freely with the same day ticket.
- Where there are steps leading to the house entrance with handrails on both sides, there is also a permanent ramp as an alternative.
- Some of the outside surfaces are uneven as the site is ancient, and the moat is unfenced.
- The whole site and car park are level.
- The main entrance door is usually open and is 130cm / 50.7ins wide.
- We have ample parking and turning space for coaches, buses and taxis in the car park.
- The car park is outside the Gatehouse entrance but guests for private functions with mobility problems can drive into the site to be dropped off at the the Barn or Cafe. The Gatehouse opening is 3m x 3m max.

## **Main Entrance, Reception and Ticketing Area**

- The main entrance and ticket area has step free, level access, on the ground floor of the medieval gatehouse.
- There are some bench seats in this area and across the site.
- The floor surface is stone tiled.
- The area is evenly and well lit with overhead lighting and daylight.
- The pay booths have glass screens that can be partially opened to aid lip reading and visitors with a visual impairment.
- A pen and pad of paper are available at each counter.
- Wheelchair loan (pushed or motorised) is available, free of charge, on request.
- Duty managers are 'Welcome All' trained and on call at any time for assistance
- Site maps are given free to each visitor

## **Attraction (displays, exhibits, rides etc.)**

- Volunteers staff the house to answer any questions about the site and its history
- There are notices in all the rooms, in dark text on light background.
- Information can be enlarged on request
- Volunteers give information to supplement written notices inside the House and Mill
- At weekends costumed re-enactors are often on hand to demonstrate medieval archery, metal forging or cooking skills, at no extra charge.
- Traditional period music is played inside the House and this can be turned up or off on request.

- There are hands-on practical activities throughout the house for adults and /or children; all can be accessed from a sitting or standing position.
- Two large models of the ancient site in the House entrance hall are visible from a sitting or standing position. One can also be touched by visually impaired visitors.
- Tours for special needs groups or individuals are available by pre-booking.
- Interpretation boards are all in large text, and have pictorial representation where applicable.
- We encourage people to carefully touch most objects that are not cased.
- There is a returnable laminated leaflet planned (2013) which gives detail of the information and displays in the House (in large print).
- There is an album planned (2013) which will give information and images of the upstairs rooms to mobility impaired visitors.

## Public Toilets

- Public toilets are located in the courtyard opposite the cafe on the ground floor with level access from the main entrance, restaurant/café areas.
- These toilets include a separate unisex accessible toilet
- A light, easy open door over 112cm / 44ins wide.
- 112cm / 44ins transfer space to the right of the toilet, when facing the toilet.
- The toilet height is 56cm/22ins.
- There are vertical rails either side of both basin and toilet.

## Catering

- The café is situated on the ground floor and has step free level access from the entrance, gardens and all other areas.
- There is a step inside to one end of the seating area that can also be accessed by a ramp from the door. This door is 97cm/38ins wide.
- The main entrance doors to the café is 110cm/43ins wide.
- Tables in the café are well spaced apart, with a clear height from the floor of 63.5cm/25ins, with a mixture of upright chairs without arms.
- Lighting in all areas is natural daylight with overhead lighting used.
- The flooring in the café is quarry tiled.
- Where possible all our food produce is locally sourced.
- We do our best to cater for any dietary requirements; please contact us in advance to check any specific requests you may have.
- The cafe is self-service, however, staff can assist on request.
- Specials of the day are shown on a blackboard. All staff can assist by running through menus with you.
- Crockery is white contrasted with natural wooden tables.
- The nearest toilet with an accessible WC is located across the courtyard approximately 23 metres from the café.

## Shop

- There is a shop with a range of souvenirs and books etc. which can be accessed directly from garden
- There are double wooden doors to the shop, opening to a maximum 120cm/47.5ins wide and manual, they are usually kept open.
- The shop is level throughout.
- There is ample room within the shop for a large wheelchair to manoeuvre and turn.
- There are tall display racks and low tables accessible from a seated position.
- There is background music that can be turned off on request .
- The counter has a pen and pad if needed
- Staff can offer assistance if required.

## Grounds and Gardens

- There are 7 acres of lawns and flat gardens with paths and smaller walkways covered with loose gravel, hard stone, brick, grass, stone steps and wooden ramps.
- There is a small picnic area on a level surface that can be reached behind the shop. This has a combination of picnic wooden tables with benches. There are also tables in the courtyard, on the lawn by the cafe, and under cover beside the Barn eaves
- There is a Physic Garden with botanical plant labels and a Kitchen garden with brick paths. The herbaceous border is beside the lawn.
- Main pathways are various widths and all are level.
- Between pathways there are grass areas, which can be uneven underfoot.
- There are wooden benches at intervals all around the gardens and along the moat walks.

## Additional Information

- Our key staff and volunteers receive regular training that includes disability awareness training.
- We have a set of evacuation procedures – should you require it someone will assist you with evacuation out of the building
- All our information brochures are available in large print.
- We welcome trained assistance dogs. A water bowl is available at the cafe entrance/ exit on request for assistance dogs. There is a designated run/toilet area in the field adjacent to the car park.
- Clear signage is used throughout the attraction using Arial font large letters black on a light background.
- We can offer specialist tours eg Tactile Tours and Signed Tours if booked in advance
- We have a reduced-price carer/disabled ticket policy

## Future Plans

- We are planning a review of our website in 2013 to make it more accessible, your comments are welcome to assist us with this project.
- We will produce an album showing inaccessible House contents from 2013.
- We are revising Mill interpretation to bring more items to ground floor level.

## Contact Information

Address (Inc postcode): Michelham Priory Upper Dicker East Sussex BN27 3QS

Telephone: 01323 844224

Email: [adminmich@sussexpast.co.uk](mailto:adminmich@sussexpast.co.uk)

Website: [www.sussexpast.co.uk/michelham](http://www.sussexpast.co.uk/michelham)

Hours Of Operation: Feb 16th - Mar 1st 11am-4pm  
Mar 2nd – Nov 1st 10.30am to 5pm  
Nov 2nd - Dec 20th 11am-4pm  
Closed Dec 21st-Feb 15th

Local Accessible Taxi: By advance booking from (tel) 0500 121293  
or 01323 726 726 (Sussex Cars).

Local Public Transport: Our nearest rail station is Berwick, 3 miles away. Polegate station has more train connections but is further away. There is no regular public bus service to Michelham Priory.

Revised January 2013