

# The Newt in Somerset

## Web Accessibility Guide

Sensory Trust, January 2020

The Newt in Somerset welcomes visitors of all abilities and ages. We have developed this Access Guide to help inform your visit. If you have any questions about accessibility that aren't answered here please contact us and we will be pleased to help.

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### 1. Before you arrive: planning your visit

#### Access enquiries

All enquiries are responded to by our Reservations Team – please phone 01963 577 777 or email [reservations@thenewtinsomerset.com](mailto:reservations@thenewtinsomerset.com).

#### Opening times

Please check online at [www.thenewtinsomerset.com](http://www.thenewtinsomerset.com) to find information about opening times. Please be aware that issues like bad weather or exceptionally busy days could mean we need to close the site at short notice.

#### Group visits

Group visits are possible by prior arrangement only. Please contact us in advance to talk through your plans and requirements as this helps us best support your visit.

#### Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are welcome at The Newt in Somerset.

#### Tickets

You can buy your tickets at the Gatehouse, which is a few minutes' walk from the car park.

We offer complimentary entry for a companion or carer.

### Staff support

There are always staff working in the visitor attraction areas; we are easy to spot, and we are all happy to offer you assistance.

### Wheelchairs

We welcome all types of wheelchairs and mobility vehicles. Please note that path materials include close-set cobbles and setts which have more irregular surfaces.

We have some manual wheelchairs available to borrow on a first come first served basis. These chairs are kept in the Gatehouse and Threshing Barn. The weight limit for these chairs is 135kg.

## 2. How to get to The Newt in Somerset

Please check our website to find information on how to get here.

The nearest mainline train stations are Castle Cary, Bruton and Templecombe.

## 3. When you arrive

### Parking

The car park is clearly signed from the main entrance.

There are plenty of accessible parking spaces. These are not solely limited to people with a Blue Badge but are intended for visitors with mobility and access needs. They are indicated by a wheelchair symbol.

### Drop-off points

There is no marked drop-off area but there is plenty of space in the parking area for drop off by taxi or car.

### Gatehouse - tickets

Follow the boardwalk path to reach the Gatehouse from the car park. This takes a few minutes to walk at a slow-moderate pace. The boardwalk is gently sloping.

The Gatehouse has accessible toilets, seating and a lowered counter. Wheelchairs are available on a first come first served basis. Staff will be happy to help you with information.

## 4. During your visit

### a) Paths through the gardens

The natural gradients across the site present some physical challenges with slopes and there are some steep gradients.

Gatehouse to Threshing Barn – follow the boardwalk for 3-4 minutes at a relaxed pace. The path surface changes to stone slabs and cobble setts which is less even than the boardwalk. The Barn is a magnificent space with sculptures, seating and visitor information.

Threshing Barn to Courtyard – the Barn opens to a courtyard surfaced with setts which could prove bumpy for some wheelchairs and mobility vehicles. There is an alternative route with a smoother surface skirting the edge of the courtyard. Here you will find toilets, seating and café.

Onwards to the gardens – there is a choice of routes, depending on which part of the gardens you are keen to visit.

#### b) Toilets

There are toilets in the Gatehouse, the Courtyard, just outside the Threshing Barn, at the Garden Café and near the Cottage Garden. All provide accessible facilities.

#### c) Food and drink

The restaurants and cafés have step-free access and offer a delicious range of food including vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options.

#### d) Seating and shelter

There is plenty of seating throughout the gardens. There is shelter in the Barn and other buildings, but less in the open gardens so please do bring appropriate clothing.

#### e) Medical assistance

You will never be far from a member of the garden or visitor attraction team so do speak to them if you require medical assistance.

#### f) Sensory highlights

A visit to the Newt is a journey through captivating vistas, enclosed and open spaces and detailed planted and built compositions - a place that naturally appeals to all the senses.

### **Sight**

The gardens are enclosed by beautiful trees and woodlands, and filled with the visual delights of the plantings, sculptures and architectural features. The eyes will be rewarded with new vistas and compositions around every corner, and in moments of pause by deeper immersion into the colours, shapes and patterns.

### **Tactile exploration**

The gardens invite you to explore through touch and you will find a rich tapestry of textures and patterns to interact with in the sculptures, walls, buildings and plantings. This theme is carried underfoot in the variety of materials that have been crafted into beautiful paths and surfaces.

## Sound

Listen to the water fountains or sit and tune into the songs of the many birds who are regular visitors to the gardens.

## Smell

Flower fragrances fill the air in spring and summer and year-round the garden is full of leaves and flowers that will reward a discrete feel with wafts of scent. Our Cyder tours will open up a suite of delicious apple aromas.

## Taste

Enjoy the taste of fresh, local produce in our restaurant and cafe and sample our Cyder made from our homegrown apples.

## 5. When you leave

### Trains

The nearest mainline train stations are Castle Cary, Bruton and Templecombe. These are a fifteen-minute taxi ride from the gardens.

### Feedback

We welcome feedback on your experience so please let us know about your visit, what worked and what could work better. Email our Reservations Team at [reservations@thenewtinsomerset.com](mailto:reservations@thenewtinsomerset.com) or telephone 01963 577 777

## 6. Useful contacts

### Information

Telephone 01963 577 777 for visitor information.

This Accessibility Guide for The Newt in Somerset has been developed in collaboration with the Sensory Trust.