

Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre: Access Statement

Introduction

Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre is located in Leigh Woods, an area on the outskirts of Bristol located 15 minutes drive from the city centre. The Visitor Centre is on the side of the Avon Gorge, and Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Both Leigh Woods and Clifton Village (the adjoining area on the far side of Clifton Suspension Bridge) are hillside settlements. However, it is possible to park on either side of the Suspension Bridge and reach the Visitor Centre over flat terrain.



The Visitor Centre is located on Bridge Road, Leigh Woods, BS8 3PA

Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre opened in December 2014. We are a member of the Visitor Attraction Quality Assurance Scheme and are working to provide a comfortable and accessible attraction that can be enjoyed by all.

The Visitor Centre is open every day from 10am to 5pm. Entrance is free of charge. Each night at dusk the bridge illuminations and street lights are turned on.

Planning your visit

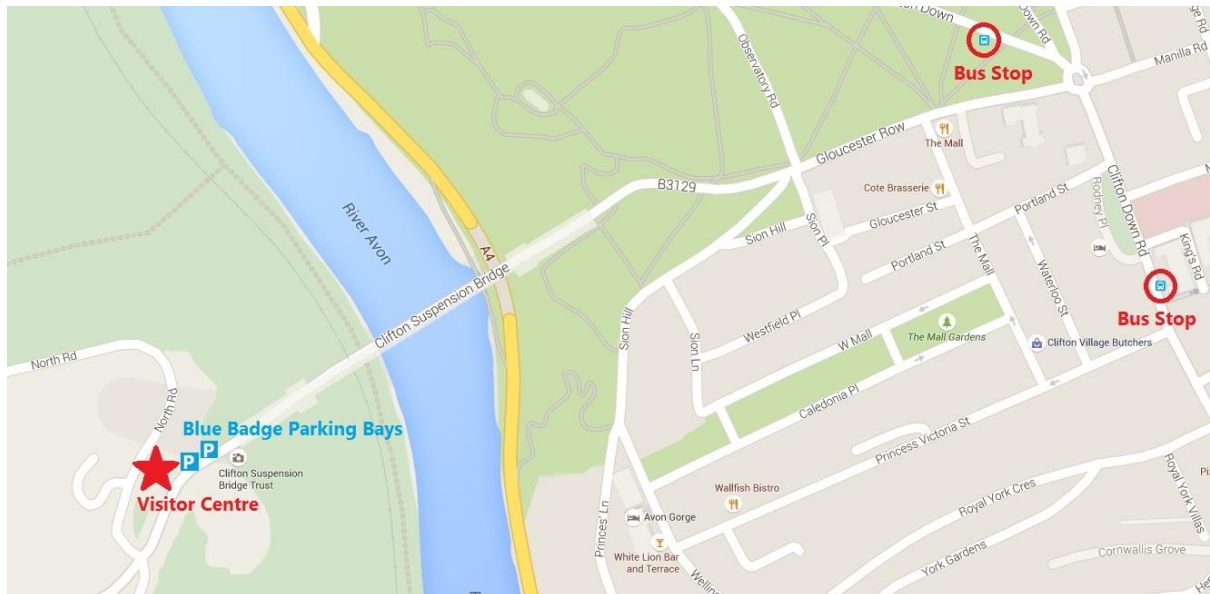
Our address is Clifton Suspension Bridge Visitor Centre, Bridge Road, Leigh Woods, Bristol, BS8 3PA. Our Grid Reference is 51.453322, -2.632396. Our What3Words address is chats.race.exam.

Rail

Bristol's main rail terminal is Bristol Temple Meads (BTM). The closest station to the Suspension Bridge is Clifton Down, a drive of 7 minutes or a walk of 30 minutes.

Bus

It is possible to catch a number 8 bus from Bristol Temple Meads to Clifton Village. Our closest bus stops are at Christ Church and Clifton Down Road, both a 15 minute walk on flat terrain along Suspension Bridge Road and across the bridge. The service operates at 5-10 minute interval throughout the day.



A map showing bus stops and blue badge parking bays

For up to date information on bus routes and bus times, see:

www.cliftonbridge.org.uk/visit/how-to-find-us

Taxi

A list of accessible taxis is available on the Bristol City Council website:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/streets-travel/accessible-taxis-contacts>

Car

There is a £1 toll charge to cross the bridge in a vehicle.

There are two allocated accessible parking bays next to the Leigh Woods toll booth which blue badge holders are welcome to use free of charge. The spaces are located 25 metres from the building entrance.

Parking on-street is limited on the Leigh Woods side of the bridge. Pay and display parking is available on Burwalls Road, where payment can be taken by machine or via the MiPermit app.



There are two parking bays for blue badge holders on the approach to the bridge and next to the Visitor Centre.

On and around the Bridge

On the Bridge

The bridge abutments are laid with paving slabs and the bridge footways have an asphalt surface. The footways are wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair, mobility scooter or double buggy.

Benches are located next to the toll booths at each end (allowing a view of the towers) and on the Abutments (giving views of the Avon Gorge and Bristol city). However, there is nowhere to stop and sit on the bridge itself. The bridge is 214m or 712ft long.

In windy weather you may feel the bridge sway slightly. This is meant to happen and gives the feeling of being on a ferry or ship deck.

Leigh Woods

Bridge Road is level and runs through Leigh Woods from the Suspension Bridge to Ashton Court Park. The Visitor Centre is located on this road. North Road slopes steeply uphill and leads to National Trust Woodland. Burwalls Road slopes steeply downhill and leads to the River Avon and Avon Trail.

There are tarmacked pavements of both sides of Bridge Road and a pelican crossing opposite the entrance to the Visitor Centre. There is a paved area leading from the Visitor Centre entrance to the bridge. This passes the parking bay.

Clifton Village

Clifton Village is on the far side of the bridge. The main shopping area (which includes cafes, coffee shops and restaurants) is located on a gentle slope. A green area known as the Downs provides plenty of benches to sit and enjoy the sun. Tarmacked paths run across it.

Tarmacked pavements lead from the bridge to Clifton Village. Roads must be crossed at Observatory Hill or Sion Hill. Be aware that if crossing Sion Hill, the pavement leading towards The Mall pub ends with a set of steps.

Entering the Building

The Visitor Centre and the bridge itself are all on one level.

The building is free to enter and has a double set of glass automatic doors which open when approached. On the left hand side of the doors there is a glass panel which is used for the display of posters and informational signage. The entrance is 93cm (3 feet) wide and has a small metal plate at the bottom which creates a very slight raise.



A 'push to open' button is available on the right hand side of the entrance, although the doors should open automatically. There is also a buzzer intercom system if additional assistance is required or if you are visiting for an out-of-hours event.

Assistance dogs are welcome!

Inside the Visitor Centre

What is the Building like?

The Visitor Centre has two floors. The ground floor level consists of a shop/reception, a double height exhibition space and toilet facilities. On the first floor level, the exhibition continues on a mezzanine balcony and there is an Education Workshop space which is mostly used for school and group activities.

Access to the first floor is via an ash staircase which has handrails on both sides and an additional handrail for use by younger children. Inserts in dark walnut clearly mark the edge of each step. There are no other steps or changes in level.

The staircase is in two sections with a platform halfway up. The lower section is wide and narrows slightly as you climb. The upper section is two people wide. When climbing the stairs, the left handrail is in a straight line, parallel to the wall. The right handrail follows the shape of the stairs.



The exhibition space

There is also an enclosed lift to the first floor. Please remember to keep your finger on the button to keep the lift in motion. (We recommend that users with mobility scooters reverse in as this makes it easier to exit unassisted.)

The floor throughout the building is a pale beige linoleum, except in the Workshop space and toilets where the colour changes to pale blue. Walls are painted white.

Most walls have colourful information displays attached to them. Lighting is provided by downlighters and spotlights. There are LED striplights in the Workshop space.

Our knowledgeable volunteers are on hand every day to answer your questions about the bridge and talk to you about our exhibition. Please ask them if you require orientation or about anything else you'd like to know.

Reception and Shop

Upon entering the building, the shop and reception desk will be to your left and the exhibition and stairs to your right.

No ticket is required to visit the exhibition. You are welcome to move straight into the exhibition space. As soon as a member of the team is available, they will greet you and explain the content of the exhibition.



View of the Reception and Shop from the staircase. The entrance doors are to the left.

The reception desk operates as a welcome area as well as the till. It is low and has a recess designed for wheelchair access. There is no partition or microphone system. A portable T-Loop is available.

At the desk we have information sheets with a history of the bridge in large print and a wide selection of languages, as well as maps, pens and paper. Information sheets can be kept and taken away.

The shop consists of one area to the right of the reception desk. It is all on one level with shelving against two walls and a table unit in the centre. In the shop you will find a selection of cards, postcards, stationery, fridge magnets, books, homewares and

toys. In this area, the display shelves are up to 209 centimetres (6.8 feet) high, and the width of the space is 84 centimetres (2.75 feet) wide at its narrowest point. The table is 102 centimetres by 65 centimetres (3.4 feet by 2 feet) with a shelf on top reaching 170 centimetres (5.6 feet) high. Underneath the table is a small cupboard and two wooden baskets. They reach out 33 centimetres from the edge of the table.

To the right of the desk is a fridge unit containing cold drinks, and a glass cabinet containing jewellery and higher-priced items.

There is always a member of our team at the front desk who will be happy to assist you to reach or inspect any of the products sold in the shop. Aside from books (which are individually priced), the price of each item can be found on the wall display or counter top. Labels are white with dark orange trim and dark grey text.

Accessing the Exhibition

Folding stools are available for your use throughout the building. They are light, have a carry handle and can be used as a walking aid as well as a seat.

Exhibition guides in English (Large Print), French, German, Italian, Spanish, Finnish and Afrikaans are available from a display rack at the start of the exhibition. Please take a guide around the exhibition with you and return it at the end of your visit.

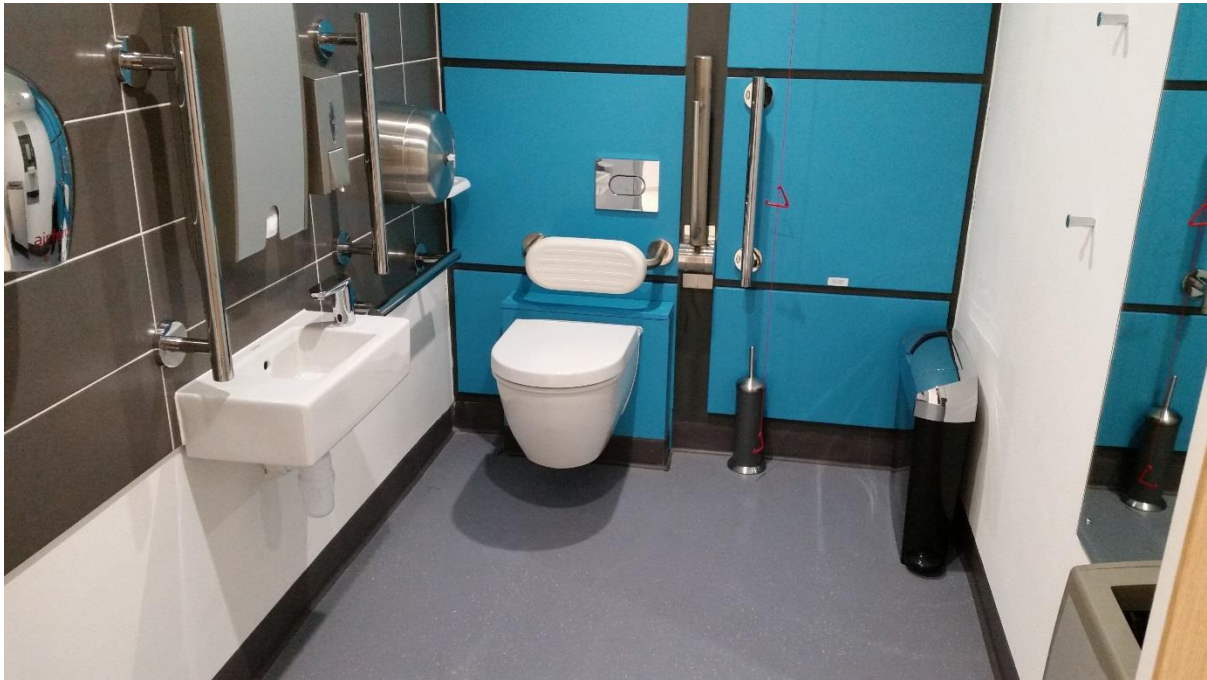


Folding stools



Exhibition Guides

Ground Floor Toilet Facilities



Our accessible toilet

A unisex accessible toilet is located on the ground floor level at the end of the toilet corridor. A RADAR key is not required and the toilet will only ever be locked if it is out of order. There is level access with no ramp or steps.

The door to the toilet is 85cm (2 feet 9 inches) wide. There is space for a wheelchair 93cm (3 feet) wide to the left side of the toilet. The seat of the toilet is 50 cm (20 inches) from the floor. There are grab rails to either side of the toilet, above the sink and on the back of the cubicle door. The tap is operated using a motion sensor and both a hand drier and paper towels are provided. Free sanitary products are also available from a dispenser, mounted low on the wall.

There are also two ladies and two gents and a family toilet equipped with baby change facilities and a step to reach the sink and toilet. All toilets have non-slip linoleum floors and are lit with motion activated ceiling spotlights.

Both the accessible toilet and the family toilet are fitted with red alarm cords. If you need assistance, please pull the cord to sound the alarm and light a display at the front desk. (If the cord is pulled in error, there is a 'reset' button next to the cubicle door.)

Ground Floor Exhibition

On the ground floor, the exhibition has a large amount of visual content – written information and images. This content is not yet available in braille.

A model of the Leigh Woods Abutment includes audio content from the Bridgmaster, who explains the layout and history of the vaults.

There is also a weighbridge activity which has an audio introduction explaining different types of bridge load. The activity is visual, using button controls and a display screen. None of the displays include flashing lights, although the lights on this display cycle slowly when not in use.

A selection of handling objects are included within the 'Engineering' section of the exhibition: a nut from the suspension chains, a bolt with a thread worn by the constant movement of the bridge and a piece of asphalt road surface.

A range of children's activities are available including imaginative drawing, a magnetic game and a weighbridge.

On the wall above, you can view a DVD presentation. The presentation is 28 minutes long and tells the story of the Clifton Suspension Bridge. It is narrated by Susannah Harker and includes a number of interviews with bridge staff, historians and local residents. The DVD includes some music and provides a coherent history without audio description. The DVD audio can be heard in the background throughout the whole exhibition space. Subtitles are not yet available, but there is a book with the audio transcript. The content of the DVD is also available in written form as part of the exhibition itself.

All of the information in our exhibition is in English.



The ground floor exhibition and balcony

Moving between floors

There is a children's bannister on the main staircase to help younger visitors safely negotiate the stairs. At the top of the stairs there is a gate which may be closed if a school or group is using the space. If the gate is open, you are welcome to explore the exhibition.

A lift is also available. Please remember to keep your finger on the button to keep the lift in motion.

First Floor Exhibition

The first floor (or mezzanine) is used to display temporary exhibitions. When objects from the archive collection are on display, light levels may be low to protect the fragile artefacts. Details of the current exhibition can be found in the 'events' section of our website. See www.cliftonbridge.org.uk/visit/events for details.

You are welcome to take a folding stool with you into this space.

First Floor Education Workshop

The entrance into this space is 135cm (4 feet 5 inches). Doors will be locked open unless an event is in progress. If you are participating in an event, staff or volunteers will open the door for you using the keylock system.

An A3 book of tactile drawings which represent bridge designs and bridge engineering is available. The tactile drawings have braille labels. We have also provided a printed book of the same images with the text in written English. The books are close to a table and chairs, which provides a place to sit and explore the content.

The table is also used for children's jigsaw puzzles. Please ask a volunteer if you would like assistance in clearing the table or exploring the drawings.

Extra Facilities

A tour of the bridge takes place every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday at 2pm. It starts from the Clifton Toll Booth (the far side of the bridge from the Visitor Centre).

The tour takes approximately 45 minutes and includes a short walk across the bridge, finishing at the Visitor Centre. Information is available here:

<https://cliftonbridge.org.uk/weekend-bridge-tours/>

Two buggy lockers are available at the entrance to the venue. If you are visiting with children who would rather explore the centre on foot, you are welcome to lock your buggy away and keep hold of a key during your visit. Lockers may also be used for folding mobility scooters or luggage if desired.

Our venue is breastfeeding friendly.

In an Emergency

In the event of a fire alarm, alarms will sound and lights will flash in the ceiling. The fire doors at the entrance to the Education Workshop will swing closed, but the keylock system will be disabled. The automatic doors at the front entrance will lock open and emergency lighting will switch on.

Please leave the building by the main doors, or your nearest fire exit, located in the Education Workshop or at the end of the toilet corridor.



Our volunteer team will escort you safely from the building and to our assembly point at the Leigh Woods Toll House.

In the event of a fire, the lift will return to the ground floor. If you are unable to use the stairs, please wait for assistance at one of the first floor refuge points. These are located next to the lift and next to the fire exit in the Education Workshop. The Refuge Intercom connects to emergency telephones at the reception desk and in the entrance foyer of the building.

For further information, or to plan your visit...

If you would like any help to plan a trip or assistance during your visit – or have a question you would like to ask, please contact the Visitor Services team on 0117 974 4664 or email visitinfo@cliftonbridge.org.uk.