**Ashdon Village Museum Access Statement**

**What is an Access Statement?**

It is a written, clear, accurate, and above all honest description of our current facilities and the services we offer, to enable you to make an informed decision as to whether the Museum meets your particular access needs. In any case where you have specific needs in order to facilitate a visit, please do not hesitate to contact us and see if we can make the necessary adjustments.

**Pre-Arrival**

The Ashdon Village Museum (AVM) is housed in the old Labour Party Rooms which date to the early 20th century. It consists of a main display room, and a small kitchen and tearoom extension on the back. We also have two outside seating areas with partial cover.

* The Museum puts a noticeboard outside when it is open, otherwise it is not signposted
* The Museum is a white painted low building set back a short distance from the road, with an open parking area in front

**Travelling by Car**. Ashdon is on the Bxxx, north of Saffron Walden. The museum is on the main road through the village and using the Satnav postcode of CB10 2HF is reasonably accurate. You can also use the AA route planner <http://www.theaa.com/route-planner> to get directions.

**Parking**. There is very limited parking in front of the AVM and the space is an eccentric shape. Please park considerately to try and maximise the space available. There is also roadside parking along Church Hill, but please park tightly along the roadside and take care when opening car doors and crossing the road.

**Travelling by Train**. The nearest railway station is in Whittlesford Parkway. <https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/station-information/wlf>.

Or Audley End, near Saffron Walden

<https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/station-information/aud>

Trains run to Cambridge, Stansted Airport and London Liverpool Street on a regular basis from Audley End Station, nr Saffron Walden. For timetable information, call **08457 48 49 50** or go to the National Rail website [HERE](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/).

**Travelling by Bus**. Bus 59 Haverhill to Audley End Station via Helions Bumpstead, Castle Camps, Shudy Camps, Ashdon and Saffron Walden run Monday to Fridays. Saturday buses extend to Clavering. As in most rural communities however, there are no buses on Sundays.

Timetables are available in both the Rose and Crown bus shelter and Church End bus shelter. You can also click for [59 Bus Timetable](https://bustimes.org.uk/operators/stephensons-of-essex). Additional information is available by calling **01440 704583**

**Connecting by taxi.** There are several Taxi companies that will come out to Ashdon, mostly from the Saffron Walden area. Some phone numbers to call include…

Walden Cabs: 01799 500 500
Crocus Cars: 01799 525 511
Five Star: 01799 522 445
Adtax: 01799 527 796

**Travelling on foot**. Ashdon village is built around a series of Ends, which means it has dispersed centres of housing and many interconnecting footpaths, making it a pleasant area to walk around. Visitors are welcome to park in a convenient place in the village or surrounding countryside and walk in to the Museum.

**On Arrival**

General admission is free, though donations are welcome. However a small charge may be made for some events and activities, and for group visits and outreach services provided out of hours.

* The main entrance to the museum is broadly level, with a few small lintels, it is followed by a short corridor with small display rooms to the left and right. Wheelchair access is possible, but slightly tight for manoeuvring in doorways.
* There is another short passageway between the Museum space and the tearoom and a 90-degree corner to negotiate.
* The majority of the Museum is on the ground floor (one room). The staircase at the rear leads to the Curator’s den and is off display

**Toilets / Baby Changing Facilities**. At the back of the museum we have a single toilet. While it is not fully accessible in terms of equipment, it is a large space with room for a carer/assistant (it also has exhibits). The toilet doubles as display space, so if the door is closed, the area is in use as a toilet (there is a conventional lock). We have no specific baby changing facilities.

**Public Areas of the Museum**

**Mobility**. The flooring throughout the museum is carpet and floors are level, though there are some floor rugs, these can be removed with 24 hours notice. A limited range of seating is provided throughout the Museum. A chair can be brought to you from the tearoom on request, to any part of the museum.

**Lighting**. Lighting is mainly by ceiling lights and there is no natural light in the main museum area. If you require assistance to view something more closely, do not hesitate to ask. Magnifying glasses and torches can be provided. Please ask one of the staff.

**Temperature**. There is limited temperature control within the Museum, and because of the lack of windows, the temperature is usually slightly colder than ambient, which also helps conserve the collection. The tearoom is often warmer.

**Vision.** The Museum tells the history of Ashdon primarily through displays of objects. The displays are currently very traditional. Most objects are displayed behind glass in display cases with text panel interpretation. Because we value putting objects on display rather than storing them off-display, the museums in a rich, intense experience of colour and visual stimuli. The tearoom is similarly visually rich, with the kitchen largely visible and displays on the walls.

**Sound**. We often have a video playing with interviews with individuals about farming practices. This can be heard as a quite background conversation in many areas of the museum. There is also a soundtrack which accompanies the Blacksmith’s display which has some ‘clanking’. This is housed in a 2m square ‘cupboard’ in the side of the museum. The display is dark, with a mock fire in the background.

**Mannequins.** The museum makes use of a number of mannequins to enable clothing to be displayed and to retain a human element to the displays. There is a seated farmer on entry to the museum, a postman around the first major bend, a blacksmith seated in the forge display, a prisoner in the gaol display, a soldier and an air raid warden in the WWII display, a bride and groom in the wedding display and a skeleton in the funeral display. (these mannequins occasionally change roles, under the Curator’s guidance!). There are also a few anatomical models in the pharmacy/medical display in the toilet.

**Touching policy**

Touching collection objects creates a variety of risks to the collection through the transfer of body oils, the risk of dropping, contamination etc. Therefore, it is common museum policy not to allow touching. However, if touching an object is a compelling part of your experience, or is a function of a behavioural need, then our staff will not intervene. We ask that visitors who may need to spontaneously handle objects are appropriately monitored by others in their party.

**Refreshments**

The Museum has a small (but perfectly formed!) tearoom at the rear, which offers a wide selection of cakes along with freshly brewed tea in a teapot with its own unique tea cosy. When the weather permits, tea and cakes can be taken out to either of the outdoor seating areas. We try to cater for a range of dietary requirements, but our baking is done by volunteers and we may at times run out of some items. Please speak to the volunteers in the kitchen if you have questions about ingredients.

**General Access information**

* Service/support dogs and well-behaved pets are welcome
* No smoking is permitted in the building or in the outdoor spaces belonging to the museum
* We have no trained first aid staff on site, but a first aid kit is available on request

**Future Plans and feedback**

We are developing an outreach service through 2021 where a volunteer goes out to care homes and special interest groups to provide information and resources for groups who cannot necessarily access the Museum.

We welcome your feedback to help us continuously improve our accessibility. If you have comments or suggestions please leave them with a member of staff or phone or email them to us. Should you have a complaint please ask to speak to the Curator.

**Reviewed 20 March 2021**