

Didcot Railway Centre - Home of the Great Western Society

Access Policy – Issue 10

This paper sets out the Great Western Society's Access Policy. The Access Policy develops the third and fourth strands of our Mission.

Our Vision is to recreate the golden age of the Great Western Railway.

Our Mission is:

- To be a nationally accredited independent organisation
- To maintain Didcot Railway Centre as a working museum dedicated to the Great Western Railway
- To provide suitable facilities to demonstrate restoration and maintenance of the Collection
- To be open to the public for the enjoyment, benefit and education of the community.

Our challenge is to become a more commercially orientated organisation in order to achieve the Vision.

Didcot Railway Centre warmly welcomes all visitors with physical, sensory and learning disabilities. Our staff will do everything they can to ensure visits are both comfortable and enjoyable. Because the Centre is a working museum it is not always possible to make all areas, locomotives and carriages as accessible as we would like but our aim is to provide as much access as possible within those constraints.

We recognise that the steps leading to our entrance limit current access to the Centre. We are working on a Heritage Lottery Fund application to improve our entrance and provide an alternative to the steps. The Didcot Access Group is supporting this work.

We provide guided tours for booked parties of visitors. Parties are welcome but are advised to check with the Centre beforehand. Our paths provide access around the Centre and we have an accessible toilet and wheelchairs available. Assistance dogs are welcome. While visitors with disabilities pay the normal admission charge, their carer is admitted free. However, if the carer wishes to pay to defray our costs, this would be welcome.

We have reviewed Didcot Railway Centre and commissioned an Access Audit to ensure that all our visitors can access as much of the collection as possible within the constraints of the Centre being a working museum. We have included the results of these reviews in our site development plans. The HLF application will give us the opportunity to commission a further audit. We have developed an Access Statement to provide a consistent response to visitors' comments about access. We will continue to review our signage and printed material to ensure they meet readability standards. We will continue to develop our web site to improve its content and ensure it meets accessibility standards.

The Access Policy is fully supported by senior management and was approved by the GWS Board on 2 July 2016. The policy will be monitored and reviewed every two years.

Ann Middleton
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