

**Wigtown  
Festival  
Company**



# **ACCESS STATEMENT**

## Introduction

Founded in 2007, Wigtown Festival Company is a charity limited by guarantee, aiming to promote and assist in the advancement of education and the arts, with particular emphasis on books and literature, but also including music, film, drama, dance and theatre. The Company aims to extend and increase the appreciation, knowledge and understanding of the arts in all its manifestations through the provision of, and enhanced access to, an annual programme of events in this remote and economically disadvantaged rural part of south-west Scotland. To encourage participation in literature and the arts by providing access to cultural activity in a remote area in south-west Scotland. We do this by offering an annual 10-day literature festival and a series of smaller events throughout the year. The annual programme includes national and international activities. The Company is based in Council premises at County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH.

Wigtown Festival Company firmly believes in enabling access for all and continues to work towards providing greater access facilities. This statement offers advice on access currently available.

Wigtown is rural and predominantly surrounded by countryside. The closest city is Glasgow which is 94 miles North. Wigtown is situated on a hill with a gradual approach – the situation of each venue varies and is described later in this statement.

Wigtown Festival Company has a policy to ensure that all venues are, as far as reasonably possible, are accessible to all. The specific facilities are detailed under each venue. There may be occasions when disabled access is not possible e.g. for a site specific event such as a nature walk, or literary event at an historic venue such as Craggleton Church or Cardoness Castle. In these circumstances, visitors would be made aware of this.

Wigtown Book Festival takes place across several venues in and around Wigtown. Primarily these are:

- Festival Marquee, Wigtown Square
- Festival Bookshop, Wigtown Square
- The McNeillie Library, Ground Floor, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- Festival Box Office, Ground Floor, County Buildings, Wigtown
- Main Hall, First Floor, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- Supper Room, First Floor, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- The Visitor Centre, Second Floor, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- The Martyrs Cell, Lower Ground Floor, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- McNeillie Tent, Old Bank Bookshop Garden, South Main St, Wigtown, DG8 9EH
- The Living Room, By County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- The Kist, By County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH
- The Booth, Low Vennel, Wigtown, DG8 9HW
- Wigtown Children's Festival, Wigtown Primary, New Road, Wigtown, DG8 9JE

## Venues

### **Festival Marquee, Wigtown Square**

The Festival Marquee is situated in the gardens in the middle of Wigtown Square. This is a flat and accessible piece of ground, with hard standing from the gates between North and South Main Street, into the marquee, which is fitted with a ramp. The marquee is entirely flat and wheelchair accessible internally. The exit for the marquee is on North Main Street, where a gate leads out of the gardens and onto the street, on flat and hard standing. The marquee is kitted with a large screen, visible from all rows. The marquee also has a loop system for people with hearing impairments.

### **The Festival Bookshop, Wigtown Square**

The Festival Bookshop is situated in the middle of Wigtown Square. This is a flat and accessible piece of ground. The Festival Bookshop is wheelchair accessible from the gate on North Main Street, opposite Briars Engravers. Whilst the marquee is placed on grass, mats are placed on the ground to provide a solid path to the double doors which are wheelchair accessible. The internal layout of the Bookshop enables wheelchair access.

### **County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH**

The County Buildings is situated within Wigtown Square. From the pavement, there are two shallow steps or a ramp to the right of the front door, accessible through a red gate, which is normally tied open. There is a further shallow step into the building, or a ramp leading inside the front door. The ground floor contains **The McNeillie Library** which is situated immediately to the right as you enter the building, **Male and Female Toilets** through a door on the back left of the foyer and to the right once through the door and an **Easy Access Toilet** through the second alcove on the right, beyond the Library. The building is fitted with a **Lift** which is situated through a door to the back left of the foyer and then immediately to the left. The lift enables access to the first floor – **Main Hall, Supper Room and Easy Access Toilet** – and also to the second floor – **The Visitor Centre**. All doors within the building are double doors which enable wheelchair access. Similarly, all rooms offer wheelchair access internally. In the event of an emergency when the lift cannot be accessed, the building is fitted with three **Evac Chairs** which staff within the building are trained to use. **The Main Hall** is fitted with a loop system and has a large screen, visible from all rows.

### **The Martyrs Cell, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH**

The Martyrs Cell is the home of Radio Wigtown, the dedicated radio station for Wigtown Book Festival. Daily broadcasts are made from here. The Cell is accessible through the County Buildings (as above) by taking the corridor to the back left of the foyer. There are then 5 shallow steps leading to the cell. Alternatively, the Cell can be accessed via the building side door on Bank Street (to the left when looking at the front of the County Buildings) which allows access to the cell at ground level through double doors.

**McNeillie Tent, The Old Bank Bookshop Garden, South Main St, Wigtown DG8 9EH**

The McNeillie Tent is situated in the garden of The Old Bank Bookshop. Access to the marquee is via the side gate which is normally tied open. A concrete path leads to the grass where a path is then laid using rubber mats to lead to the door of the marquee. The marquee has double doors and is internally accessible for wheelchairs.

**The Living Room, By County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH**

The Living Room is situated on the road outside the County Buildings in the main square, which is closed to traffic during the festival. Whilst the road slopes slightly, the marquee entrance, through double doors, is flat and wheelchair accessible. The marquee is internally accessible for a wheelchair, has a large screen which is visible from all rows and an induction loop system in place.

**The Kist, By County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH**

The Kist is situated on the road outside the County Buildings in the main square, which is closed to traffic during the festival. Whilst the road slopes slightly, the marquee entrance, through double doors, is flat and wheelchair accessible. The marquee is internally accessible for a wheelchair and stallholders are advised that they should not display on the floor in front of their stalls to ensure access is always available.

**The Booth, Low Vennel, Wigtown, DG8 9HW**

The Booth is situated at the side of the road on Low Vennel with a slight upwards slope into the venue, which has a large access door. The venue is accessible internally for wheelchairs.

**Wigtown Children's Festival, Wigtown Primary, New Road, Wigtown, DG8 9JE**

Wigtown Primary School is designed over three levels with no internal ramps or lifts. To access **The Hall**, enter the school grounds via the car park and follow the gates to the main entrance, where two shallow steps or a ramp lead to the front door. The Hall is accessible internally for wheelchairs. To access **The Library and The Study**, enter the school at the upper entrance through the 'nursery' gate and enter via the door to the left of the long row of windows. There is a flat entry to the school and into both venues via this door.

We look forward to welcoming you. If you have any queries or require any assistance please phone 01988 402036 or email [mail@wigtownbookfestival.com](mailto:mail@wigtownbookfestival.com).

## Pre-Arrival

### By road

**From the South** - follow M6 onto the M74, leave the M74 at Gretna (junction 22) and follow the signs for A75 Stranraer (drive time approx. 1.5 hours). At Newton Stewart roundabout, pick up the signs for Wigtown, 1st exit on the left.

### From the North -

From Glasgow - follow the A77 to Ayr. From Ayr take the signs for A713 Castle Douglas. At New Galloway pick up the A712 'Queens Way' to Newton Stewart then onto Wigtown. *Alternatively, from Ayr, you can follow the A77 to Girvan, then A714 to Newton Stewart via Barhill.*

From Edinburgh - follow the M8 to Glasgow and then pick up the A77 (as per directions from Glasgow). *Alternatively, head south on the A702 to Abington and onto the M74, exit at Moffat (junction 15) at follow the A701 to Dumfries. Follow the signs A75 Stranraer, at Newton Stewart roundabout, pick up the signs for Wigtown, 1st exit on the left.*

### By bus / coach

**From the South** - the National Express coach service travels across the region on a daily basis with a pick up and drop off at Newton Stewart (6 miles from Wigtown). To find out more about timetable information, prices or to book the Ulsterbus service 920 click on [www.gobycoach.com](http://www.gobycoach.com) or call 08705 80 80 80

**From the North** - For further information click on [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com) or call the TravelLine 0870 608 2 608

### In the Region -

Local stage services operate on a daily basis, with regular bus services across the region from Dumfries. For further timetable info, see the D&G Council [website](#) or call TravelLine 0870 6082608.

### By rail

**From the South** - Scotrail services operate on a daily basis from Carlisle to Dumfries. Click on [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk) or call 0870 606 2031 for further information.

**From the North** - Scotrail services operate on a daily basis from Glasgow to Stranraer via Ayr stopping at Barrhill to connect by bus to Wigtown. Click on [www.scotrail.co.uk](http://www.scotrail.co.uk) or call 0870 606 2031 for further information.

### By ferry

**From Ireland** - a number of services operate from Larne/Belfast to Cairnryan. For the most up to date information, click on the links below:

Stena Line (up to 9 crossings daily, Stena HSS fast ferry 2 hours and Superferry 3 hours) [www.stenaline.co.uk](http://www.stenaline.co.uk) or call 08447 70 70 70

P&O (up to 8 crossings daily) [www.poirishsea.com](http://www.poirishsea.com) or call 0870 24 24 777

AFerry - [www.aferry.co.uk](http://www.aferry.co.uk) or call 0844 5765503

Larne to Cairnryan:

P&O (up to 8 crossings daily) [www.poirishsea.com](http://www.poirishsea.com) or call 0870 24 24 777

### **By air**

Prestwick, our local airport, operates regular Ryanair flights from London Stansted, Dublin, Belfast and Bournemouth, as well as most major European cities. The airport has its own bus and train stations with connections via Ayr. For all information please see [gpia.co.uk](http://gpia.co.uk) or [ryanair.com](http://ryanair.com).

### Car Parking and Arrival

Car parking is available around the main square in Wigtown, is free and is well lit by streetlights. There are two Blue Badge parking bays on South Main Street, next to the entrance to the Festival Marquee, where there is a lowered kerb to the pavement. The Lorry Park, accessed on South Main Street, beside The Old Bank Bookshop and opposite the County Buildings, is designated for Blue Badge holders during the festival and is a flat, tarmac surface.

Visitors can be dropped off outside the County Buildings, on South Main Street or North Main Street. From here, they can access all venues in the County Buildings, the Living Room and The Kist. The road here is closed to traffic and therefore there is no kerb. Drop off is not available outside the Festival Marquee and Festival Bookshop during busy periods on weekends due to a street market, however, support is available from the box office, where a wheelchair and/or volunteer are available to assist visitors to the Festival Marquee and Festival Bookshop.

All venues are accessible at ground level or via ramps, which do not have hand rails. All doors open outwards, though all venues are manned by volunteers who will ensure doors are opened. The exception to this is the County Buildings main door which opens outwards but is not always manned. All doorways offer clear space for manual wheelchairs and motorised wheelchairs to access.

### Main Entrance and Box Office

The main entrance is situated at the front of the County Buildings. The box office where tickets are available in advance of the festival, and during the event, is on the ground floor through the double doors (always open) on the immediate left as you enter the building. There are no steps or ramps within the building to access the box office (see page 3 for building access details). Seating is available within the box office area. The floor in the foyer is a heavy duty lino, whilst the floor in the box office is a short pile carpet. The entire area is well lit with a combination of fluorescent tubes, spot lights and uplighters.

Whilst the counter is not a suitable height for wheelchair users, a lower table is available within the box office from there the visitor and box office volunteer can work together to deal with queries and orders as required. The payment desk within the box office and the information desk are open and do not have glass fronts.

All venues offer clear signage regarding events, payment methods and directions to other venues. The box office does not have a loop system, but all visitors are dealt with on a one to one basis. The box office can also offer a pen and pad to assist those who cannot verbally express their enquiries and for a volunteer who cannot express their responses to visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing. A wheelchair and tri-wheel walker are both available for loan from the box office, on request.

### Public Toilets

Public toilets are available within the County Buildings (see details on page 3) which are open during building hours. The Easy Access toilets described here all have clear space for a wheelchair and have grab rails to the left and the right of the WC. The horizontal rail to the right is a pull down rail to enable maximum space for access to the WC. Easy Access toilets are fitted with a red alarm cord. Toilets are well lit with ceiling spot lights. The floor is non-slip laminate. All sinks are fitted with lever taps. Additional public toilets are available at the junction between North main Street and High Vennel, beside the public telephone box, these have a shallow step in. These are open 24 hours.

### Catering

The Festival Cafe, within the County Buildings (see page 3) is located on the first floor and accessible by lift. The door to this facility is always wedged open during opening times and enables wheelchair access. The Cafe is level throughout, laid out with tables and chairs. During busy periods this area becomes tight for space, however in most instances space is available for wheelchair and pushchair access and in all circumstances staff will support those with wheelchairs or pushchairs to gain access to a vacant table. All tables are a standard height (approx 75cm). All chairs have backs and chairs with arms can be requested. The Cafe is lit by uplighters and has a wooden floor.

Menus state the availability of meals for different dietary requirements and staff are informed and willing to advise on the menu. The Cafe is a self-service area, however waitresses will bring meals and drinks to the table as required. Printed menus and blackboards are used, and staff are available to read out the menu. Table cloths are blue and white checks and white crockery is used.

The nearest and most accessible WC to the Festival Cafe is on the same level (first floor of the County Buildings), along the corridor beside the lift.

### Additional Information

Festival staff are trained in evacuation procedures and the use of evacuation chairs within the County Buildings.

Assistance dogs are welcome.

Festival staff are able to support in the booking of accommodation where an access statement is required prior to booking. For details, contact the office on 01988402036.

### Hard of Hearing

#### Loop Systems and Stagertext

The Festival Marquee, County Buildings Main Hall, and McNeillie Tent are all equipped with induction loop technology for the hard of hearing. In 2016, in association with Stagertext, the festival is trialling live subtitling, for people with hearing loss, on Saturday 24 September in the County Buildings, Main Hall. Subtitled events are marked (S) in listings. [www.stagetext.org](http://www.stagetext.org).

### Visually Impaired

If you require a large print programme, please contact the office where this can be printed on demand. In 2016, the Festival Bookshop will have a number of large print titles and audio books related to festival events. Signage is being upgraded as replacements are required, to ensure that colours, fonts and sizes are in line with guidelines for clear print material.

#### Carer Concessions

Concessionary (free) tickets are available for all carers where an individual is unable to attend an event independently. These can only be booked directly through the box office – in person, or by telephoning 01988 403222. Access requirements will be taken at time of booking and appropriate arrangements made based on the information provided. Unfortunately carer concessions are not available for tastings, lunches and dinners.

#### Under-26 Concessions

All tickets to Wigtown The Festival – the YA programme at Wigtown Book Festival – are free for under-26s. In addition, 5% of all Wigtown Book Festival tickets are available free to under-26s. These can only be booked directly through the box office: in person; by telephone on 01988403222; by text, including your name, address and ticket request on 07500336356; or by email to [wigtownthefestival@gmail.com](mailto:wigtownthefestival@gmail.com). The number of free tickets for under-26s per event is limited and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis so book early to avoid disappointment. Proof of age may be requested at time of booking or on arrival at any event.

#### Contact Information

**Address:** Wigtown Festival Company, County Buildings, Wigtown, DG8 9JH.

**Telephone:** 01988 402036 or 01988 403222

**Email:** [mail@wigtownbookfestival.com](mailto:mail@wigtownbookfestival.com)

**Website:** [www.wigtownbookfestival.com](http://www.wigtownbookfestival.com)

**Grid reference:** NX 43425 55375

**Hours of operation:** 5 August - 5 October: 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday; 10am – 4pm Saturday; 2pm – 4pm Sunday. 23 September – 2 October: 9am – 6pm daily

**Local accessible taxi:** McLeans Taxis 01671402925

**Local public transport:** Stagecoach 01776704484