

Visiting Sandringham – a few tips.

There is a lot to do and see at Sandringham, and because it is spread out, it takes time. So it really is a good idea to plan your visit, and work out in advance what you most want to see and do.

In terms of the layout – the House itself is surrounded by gardens and a wall; and the Visitor Centre (main Restaurant, Gift Shop and Plant Centre, toilets) and Church are outside the wall.

The car and coach park is close to the Visitor Centre, and from here it is about 200 yards to the House and Gardens Entrance, beyond the War Memorial. Many visitors choose to see the Church first; it is well worth a visit and opens at 11am. Then (maybe after a cup of tea or coffee) they go to the House and Museum.

To get to the house there is transport provided for people with mobility difficulties (from just inside the ticket office entrance); otherwise, it's a 10 to 15-minute stroll through the gardens. NB: the transport runs on a continuous shuttle service, but it can be a few minutes' wait if you've just missed one. Both House and Museum are very interesting, containing photographs and a variety of memorabilia which repay close examination. You should allow at least two hours to see them both.

After this you may need a substantial lunch – in which case you return to the Visitor Centre and its excellent self-service restaurant. If a sandwich is enough, you can call in at the Stables Tea-room, beside the Museum. NB: the only toilets inside the wall are here as well!

An optional extra: on Wednesdays and Saturdays at 11am and 2pm there is a Guided Garden Tour (walking) which goes to areas such as the walled garden which are not within the main garden. Information and tickets from the ticket office at the gardens entrance, the tour is about an hour long, but is not suitable for people with mobility difficulties.

Do take some time to stroll in the gardens. The North Garden, West Terrace and especially the Lake are a delight; there are seats scattered about where you can rest and take in the variety of vistas, as well as Queen Alexandra's summer house, the "Nest", overlooking the lake. From the delightful Stream Walk at the eastern end of the gardens you will get a view of York Cottage, once the bachelor quarters for King Edward's guests, later the much-loved home of King George V, and now the Estate Office.

Before you leave for your car or coach, allow some time for a potter round the excellent Gift Shop.