

# Accessible POWYS

*A Guide to Accessible Activities*



1st Edition

## Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the Accessible Activities guide for the county of Powys. This brochure was researched and produced by Disabled Holiday Information (registered charity no. 1119972) in partnership with Powys County Council.

As there is such a wide variety of activities to try, we have divided the guide into the three former shires that together make up the present day county of Powys.

All the activities included in these pages have been tried and tested by members of our small team of awareness-led researchers, unless otherwise stated.

Some of the activities will require good upper body strength whilst others are suitable for those with very little physical ability. Each person with easy access needs will have their own individual capability. Therefore, to ensure the best possible experience, prior consultation with each provider about the suitability of the activity for individual personal requirement is essential.

Some of the activities included could be classed as 'extreme' sports and as such can involve an element of risk. Although the providers carry appropriate insurance, before taking part you may be asked to sign a waiver to say that you understand this, just like any fully able-bodied person.

Adverse weather conditions can also affect when some of these activities such

as paragliding, canoeing and gliding can take place. Therefore you may need to be flexible when making bookings.

In most cases pre-booking is necessary, to assist with this contact phone numbers are provided at the end of each activity. Our aim is to provide an insight into the kinds of accessible activities available in the area; as such there may be other activity providers that we have not researched.

Some of the clubs and organisations offering these activities are small and may not have large financial resources available, consequently some of the facilities (such as toilets) that they can offer may not be ideal for some wheelchair users. However, if you still wish to try out some of these activities, then the providers more than make up for this with positive attitudes and friendly assistance. Our volunteers felt that when choosing activities for inclusion in this publication, this was where the priority should lie.

Everyone who took part in this research has in some way either tried something new or been somewhere they did not know existed and enjoyed the experience. We hope that the knowledge of the amazing variety of accessible activities available to those with easier access needs within the county of Powys may prove useful. That it will not only encourage people looking for an exciting holiday destination to visit the county but expand the horizons of local residents.

The picturesque and often dramatic countryside of this area of Mid Wales also has a wide choice of accessible trails, accommodation and attractions. For more information please see the other guides in the Accessible Powys series:-

## Accessible Powys - A Guide to Accessible Countryside Trails and Sites

## Accessible Powys - A Guide to Accessible Accommodation

Please note; Disabled Holiday Information's web pages for Powys and our general UK accessible activities search pages will contain much more detailed accessibility data, full contact details as well as updated information for each activity included. It will also include any additional activities that have been researched since publication.

A new and exciting addition for this guide are five short film clips of some of the activities available to view on our website.

Website: [www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk/powys](http://www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk/powys)  
E-mail: [info@disabledholidayinfo.org.uk](mailto:info@disabledholidayinfo.org.uk)

For those without access to the internet, copies of this and the other guides highlighted above can be obtained from:

Disabled Holiday Information,  
P.O. Box 186, Oswestry,  
Shropshire, SY10 1AF

Please include an A5 (6 x 9 inches)  
S.A.E. (2 x 1st class stamps).



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## Montgomeryshire

Welcome to the accessible activities pages for Montgomeryshire. The principal towns are Llanidloes, Machynlleth, Montgomery, Newtown and Welshpool. This area of Powys has a wide variety of accessible activities to experience, many of which are located within spectacular countryside settings.

As previously stated on the introduction page for this guide, it is important to note that all people with easier access needs will have their own individual capabilities and personal requirements and therefore prior consultation about the suitability of each activity, with those providing it, is essential.

For ease of use we have chosen to list each activity in alphabetical order.



### Bird Watching - Lake Vyrnwy

There is an accessible bird hide located at Lake Vyrnwy situated in the car park overlooking the River Vyrnwy. This is adjacent to Artisans café, which itself is accessible and has an accessible toilet.

Looking out from the bird hide there are several feeding stations and on our researcher's visit there was a variety of birds feasting upon them. There is a RSPB shop located only a few yards away, which is accessed via an inclined pathway from the car park. It provides visitors with lots of information about the reserve and wildlife to be found in the area.

There is a wide variety of birds within the reserve and if you are lucky when visiting these could include Osprey and Crossbills.

**Telephone: 01691 870278**



## Canal Boating - Welshpool

The Heulwen Trust is a charity operating two canal boats from a wharf on the Montgomery Canal, just outside Welshpool. The boats are skippered by the Trust's volunteers and parties of up to 12 people can be accommodated. It is recommended that these are evenly proportioned between able-bodied members and those with disabilities.

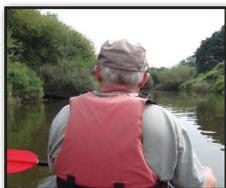
Each boat contains a basically equipped galley and you are welcome to bring along picnic meals to prepare and enjoy on the journey. Groups wishing to use the boats can contact the Secretary for availability, however please note that the boats are very popular, so you will need to book well in advance.

**Telephone: 01938 554810**



## Canoeing - River Vyrnwy

Gateway Outdoors provide activities including canoeing in a number of areas within the county of Powys. They offer a bespoke service which if required can be tailored to individual needs and abilities. Matt Craig who runs Gateway Outdoors has a wealth of experience and has been an outdoor instructor since 1999. Our researchers tried out this activity at Melverley on a section of the River Vyrnwy that straddles the border between Powys and Shropshire and they canoed down the river to just beyond the confluence of the rivers Vyrnwy and Severn.



The company specialises in a bespoke service, so for people with either very limited or no ambulant ability, other sites can be chosen. For example, if a location with vehicular access right to the water's edge and a level hard-standing to be able to be hoisted into the canoe is required, then the canal-side at Welshpool, as shown in the activity above, might prove ideal. This activity is suitable for children of school age as well as adults and if necessary a catamaran can be created by lashing two canoes together to form a more stable craft. This option can be ideal for groups with members who are not able to paddle themselves.

**Telephone: 01743 871166 / 07966 260745**



▶ Check out the video of this activity on our website



## Falconry - Castle Caereinion

Mid Wales Falconry Centre is located in a rural setting within Powys and offers a variety of individually tailored falconry experiences; these can extend from two hours up to a whole day. Following a discussion with the centre's manager, our researchers chose the two hour 'Owl Experience' as this is based in and around a courtyard and it best provided for their own easier access needs.

This activity is fully inclusive and if visitors are able to travel to the site then each person will be able to participate in some way, if they are able, this will include touching and handling some of the birds. The experience includes an extremely informative talk on the birds, the history of falconry and how terms that date back many centuries (though their original meaning is lost to most people) are still to be found in 21st century language.

**Telephone: 01938 850265**

*"The falconry was a brilliant experience and it was lovely to be able to get up close with what I can usually only hear around and about. I have a visual impairment and I was able to stroke some of the birds, to feel the different textures in the feathers."*  
- Lin Stapely

## Fishing - Welshpool

There are three landscaped lakes at Bluebell Park Fishery and the largest of these has good access all round. The site is located within rural countryside with stunning views and a variety of wildlife to be seen. All the lakes are well stocked with a wide variety of fish.

All pegs can be accessed from the car park and in good weather cars can be taken to the far end of the lake. Most manual wheelchair users will require some assistance to get back up to the car park from the pegs and lakes, however the on-site staff are always willing to offer assistance should visitors find this of use.

**Telephone: 01938 820424**



## Horse Riding - Llanymynech

Penycoed Stables are located at Pant between Llanymynech and Oswestry on the Powys/Shropshire border. The rural situation on Llyncllys Hill, which is accessed via a quiet country lane, provides a peaceful place for tuition and trekking. The stables are the base for Montgomery RDA (Riding for the Disabled Association) and they offer specialist support for people with disabilities. Experienced riders and newcomers can be catered for and the riding experience can be tailored to suit individual requirements. Our group of researchers from Avalon Day Opportunities ride there on a regular basis and have gradually improved their skills.

**Telephone: 01691 830608 / 07710 735575**



## Leisure Centre - Welshpool

The Flash Leisure Centre is located in Welshpool and offers a good variety of accessible activities. The swimming pool has an excellent accessible changing room with en-suite toilet where wheelchair users (with room for their carers/family members) can change and transfer to the wheeled pool chair. Access to the pool is via a ramp avoiding the necessity for a hoist.

It also has a rail for people with ambulant disabilities.



The bowling is open all year, however if you are not a club member then the summer months may be the best time to begin to access this facility, as it is quieter when many bowlers are using outside greens. It is important to note that this activity must be pre-booked. The hire of the bowls can also be arranged from the centre's reception for a small extra charge.

The gym suite has limited dimensions but our researcher found there was enough space to be able to undertake various exercises from a standard self-propelled wheelchair. An induction is required before being able to use the gym facilities; this assessment will identify personal requirements and abilities and there are pieces of equipment available to suit most needs.

**Telephone: 01938 555952**



## Outdoor Activity Centre - Builthy Hill

**Border Quads** is situated at Builthy Hill Farm on the Welsh/Shropshire border and as the name suggests is surrounded by picturesque hill country. It offers visitors a variety of activities to enjoy, from archery to laser clay pigeon shooting and quad-biking.



Archery takes place within the farmyard complex that is situated only a short walking/wheeling distance from the parking area. Visitors can shoot from a standing or seated position but will need to have sufficient strength in their arms to hold the bow and draw back the string before being allowed to fire an arrow.



The laser clay shooting range is down a sloping uneven path opposite the parking area and most manual wheelchair users will need assistance to negotiate the path down to it. Visitors wishing to try the shooting should be aware that the guns on site are of a standard weight and size and can feel heavy.

Quad bikes provide a unique 'off road' way to explore this beautiful area. They are operated by simple hand controls and it is possible to drive them if you only have right-handed control. There are basic physical requirements and in order to be able to drive them, visitors will need to have good manual dexterity in their right hand as well as the ability to mount/side transfer and sit astride the quad with good independent seated posture (NB there is no back rest).

It is possible to combine two or more of the activities to create a full day package. Visitors with disabilities are advised to avoid peak holiday periods and weekends when the farm can be extremely busy with large groups, as during quieter times there will be more opportunity for in-depth tuition.

**Telephone: 01743 884694 / 07970 884694**



## Outdoor Activity Centre - Cefn Coch

Red Ridge is located within the beautiful hill country of Mid Wales and has been offering accessible activities to people of all ages and abilities since 1978. It is a founder member of Adventure for All, which is a group of outdoor centres dedicated to enabling persons of all abilities to participate in outdoor pursuits.



There is a wide range of activities available at the centre including canoeing, abseiling, rock climbing, indoor caving and much, much more. Each activity is tailored to individual ability and there is a range of activities on offer for everyone.



Participants are able to try out activities at the centre and on location within the surrounding countryside. As well as the activities, Red Ridge offers strong social interaction with an opportunity to make and renew friendships and the camaraderie and bonhomie amongst visitors was very evident for our research team to see on the days they visited.

**Telephone: 01938 810821**



*"I enjoy the challenge of rock climbing. For someone with cerebral palsy like me who can only use one arm, it's a hard thing to do but if the climb is there to do, I want to do it and I rise up like a phoenix.*

*Each year I meet my friends here and I enjoy coming and getting better and trying harder things."*

- Neil Brayford

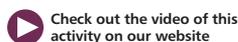


## Outdoor Activity Centre - Staylittle

Staylittle Outdoor Centre is located within the stunningly beautiful countryside in Mid Wales and has a wide variety of accessible activities on offer with tuition available from experienced instructors. Activities include sailing, canoeing, orienteering and archery.



Power boating is just one of several water sports on offer through the centre who work in partnership with Clywedog Sailing Club. This amazing activity takes place on Llyn Clywedog near Llanidloes with a stunning mountain landscape backdrop.



The sailing also takes place on Llyn Clywedog and access from the bank to the small sailing craft is via a floating pontoon, with alternative access for wheelchair users via a landing craft style wheelyboat. To utilise this, participants will need to be able to transfer themselves or be assisted in their transfer from this to the sailing boat.

The open canoes offer a slightly easier option for transferring into rather than the kayaks that are also available on site. As with the other water sports, participants will need to be able to transfer themselves or be assisted to transfer from the pontoon or wheelyboat to the canoe. For groups of participants the canoes can be lashed together to form a more stable craft.

**Telephone: 01686 430630**



## Paragliding - Moelfre

Beyond Extreme offer tandem flights from various sites in the Welsh Borders including the Gyrn Moelfre in Powys, which has vehicular access right up to the launch site. As you are strapped to an able-bodied person you will be supported during your 'take off' and landing. If you have no ability to stand, your legs can be strapped up as well and other able-bodied people will assist by running alongside you during 'take off'.

Unlike parachuting that involves an initial fast descent, this is a gentler but equally exhilarating sport offering wonderful views over the Welsh countryside that can be breathtaking.

**Telephone: 01691 682640 / 07703 979149**



## Shooting - Caersws

Mid Wales Shooting Centre is a family run business situated in 300 acres of beautiful countryside. They can cater for all capabilities, from the novice right through to the expert shooter, and they provide a vast range of shooting on site.

You can use your own gun or hire one there, if you do not hold a licence you will be accompanied by a qualified instructor. Our researcher found that good upper body strength is required to cope with the kickback when firing; however there are other types of gun with less kickback and lightweight ammunition available at the site.

**Telephone: 01686 430654**



## Ten Pin Bowling - Newtown

U - Strike Bowling is located in Newtown. It is a great family venue with a friendly welcoming atmosphere and staff on hand to assist if required. A great deal of thought has been given to ensuring that all visitors can fully enjoy their bowling experience.



There is ramped access to the four bowling lanes with bowling ramps available should players find this helpful. As with most bowling venues there is a variety of different weighted bowling balls to select from.

**Telephone: 01686 622688**



## Radnorshire

Welcome to the accessible activities pages for Radnorshire. The principal towns are Knighton, Llandrindod Wells, Presteigne and Rhayader. Radnorshire is located within the heart of Powys and has some great accessible activities to enjoy in a wide variety of settings, from a Victorian pleasure park to reservoirs surrounded by stunning mountain scenery.

As previously stated on the introduction page for this guide, it is important to note that all people with easier access needs will have their own individual capabilities and personal requirements and therefore prior consultation about the suitability of each activity, with those providing it, is essential.

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### Bird Watching - Gilfach

Gilfach Farm is the flagship nature reserve of Radnorshire Wildlife Trust and is situated near the confluence of the Marteg River and the River Wye, 2 miles north of Rhayader in the Cambrian Mountains of Mid Wales.

The reserve is a haven for wildlife and there is wheelchair access via a ramp (with assistance) to the Otter hide located by a stream, approximately a quarter of a mile before reaching the farm. The hide has foldable seating to enable space in front of a lower viewing window.

**Telephone: 01597 823298**



▶ Check out the video of this activity on our website



## Cycling - The Elan Valley

The Elan Valley Visitor Centre, managed by Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water, is located within the stunningly beautiful countryside of Mid Wales and is open 7 days a week. Among the attractions on offer is a wide variety of cycles available for hire. These cycles enable visitors to enjoy getting out and about to explore this wonderful area.

Included amongst the cycles available are: a side-by-side tricycle, a hand cycle and several electric cycles. The side-by-side tricycle has an additional power option for steeper gradients and advice is available at the visitor centre for the most suitable routes for each cycle chosen.

Please note the standard cycle hire charges also apply for these adapted cycles.

**Telephone: 01597 810880**



## Horse Riding - Bryngwyn

Bryngwyn Riding Centre is situated within the picturesque countryside of the Marches, midway between Builth Wells in Powys and Kington in Herefordshire. Riders have the unique opportunity to access a large area of common land adjacent to the stables that affords miles of 'off road' trekking. The centre offers riding sessions dedicated to people with disabilities and is part of the Riding for the Disabled Organisation.

It has a large soft surfaced school area where riders can learn the basic techniques of horsemanship. Once sufficiently confident, then riders can be provided with support to enable them to explore some of the surrounding countryside if they wish to do so.

**Telephone: 01982 551618**



## Indoor Bowls - Llandrindod Wells

Radnorshire Indoor Bowls Association first opened its doors to the public in December 1990, it now provides a six rink stadium, which attracts members from a wide area.

Open to members, local visitors and tourists, members of staff at the stadium are able to provide appropriate footwear and the bowls without charge for as many sessions as required. They also have six bowling wheelchairs of differing styles for use on site, with both left and right hand transfers available. High visibility bowls are also available for those with impaired vision.

**Telephone: 01597 825014**

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## Leisure Centre - Llandrindod Wells

The Centre is located within the town of Llandrindod Wells and situated on the High School campus overlooking the River Ithon; it offers a wide range of facilities and activities for all age groups and abilities.

The centre provides a pool hoist and there is a changing area with a full-sized adjustable changing bed.

**Telephone: 01597 824249**

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## Outdoor Bowls - Llandrindod Wells

Llandrindod Wells Bowling Club, situated in mid Powys, is the largest bowling club in Wales. Set in the heart of the Welsh countryside with panoramic views, there are three greens of international standard catering for all levels of competition. The club has six bowling wheelchairs of differing styles to use on site with both left and right hand transfer available. Bowlers will require pushing on to the green as the chairs are not self propelled. Assistance can be given if pre-arranged.

**Telephone: 01597 822504**

## Brecknockshire



Welcome to the Brecknockshire accessible activities pages, this ancient shire forms the southern part of Powys. Its main towns are Brecon, Builth Wells, Crickhowell, Hay-on-Wye, Llanwrtyd Wells, Talgarth and Ystradgynlais.

There are some exciting activities to try, some of which offer unique ways of viewing this stunningly beautiful area that contains some of the most rugged and wild landscape within Wales.

As previously stated on the introduction page for this guide, it is important to note that all people with easier access needs will have their own individual capabilities and personal requirements, and therefore prior consultation about the suitability of each activity, with those providing it, is essential.

For ease of use we have chosen to list each activity in alphabetical order.

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### Bird Watching - Talybont Reservoir

There is an accessible bird hide located alongside a minor road overlooking the Talybont Reservoir, near Talybont-on-Usk. The large stretch of water is home to a wide variety of wildfowl and migratory birds.

The scenery is beautiful, especially the views over the reservoir to the hills beyond. When our researchers visited in the early part of the year, there was a wide variety of wildfowl to be seen.

**Telephone: 01495 769281**



## Canal Boating - Brecon

**Dragonfly Cruises** operate on the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, from Brecon to Brynich, along a 2½ mile stretch of the canal. On the journey the boat travels leisurely through a lock and over an aqueduct. The trip lasts for 2½ hours.



Access on to the narrow boat is via a wheelchair lift from the quayside. There is room for two wheelchairs in the front of the boat along with a carer or companion. This area is protected from the weather and is part of the main cabin.

**Telephone: 07831 685222**



## Cookery - Llanwrtyd Wells

**J&R School of Cooking Master Classes** is an excellent cookery school that is situated in a small village approximately 12 miles from Builth Wells, on the A483. Normally the classes, run by the very friendly and multi award winning chef Peter James MBE, are held in the restaurant. However, as there are several steps to the designated cookery school area, Peter has set up an accessible kitchen for wheelchair users and those with mobility needs in the kitchen adjoining the village hall, which is situated approximately 50 metres from the restaurant.

There is a range of cookery classes on offer and during their visit our researchers did the half day taster course; this involved preparing and cooking a three course dinner, working together to learn new skills and re-enforce existing ones. Depending on the day's theme you may learn to fillet fish, joint poultry or prepare special cuts of meat. You will be cooking with the very best of ingredients, which are all locally sourced.

**Telephone: 01591 610264 / 01591 610563**



## Cycling - Hay-on-Wye

**Drovers Cycles** are based in Hay-on-Wye and offer visitors a wide range of cycling merchandise and cycle hire facilities. For people with easier access needs, they have two 3-wheeled cycles available, a side-by-side tandem tricycle and a hand cycle. Cycle hire sessions normally last for a half or whole day, however for new users of the adapted cycles, shorter sessions are now available.

**Telephone: 01497 822419**

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## Gliding - Talgarth

The **Black Mountains Gliding Club** is located on an elevated site above the town of Talgarth and surrounded by the stunning scenery of the Black Mountains. It is a small but very active club that offers members the chance to fly from the best wave and ridge gliding site in the UK.

There is a level launch site directly in front of the clubhouse, which provides easier access for people with limited mobility including wheelchair users. For those new to gliding, it is possible to purchase a trial flight that also includes three months' membership of the club.

**Telephone: 01874 711463**



*"I found it a fantastic experience to be lifted off the ground and to fly like a bird. The Black Mountain Gliding Club were so helpful in assisting me to achieve this. If you are able to do it, it's a wonderful experience to gain."*

- Roy Blight

 Check out the video of this activity on our website



▶ Check out the video of this activity on our website

## Golf - Brecon

The Disabled Golf Society is divided into different areas of the UK and the co-ordinator for Wales is Nicki Jones. Existing members cover a wide range of disabilities and ages including a junior section. The society provides information on accessibility at courses, tuition and adaptations for equipment, including buggies.

New members are warmly welcomed so whether you have played golf before or, like our researcher, you are new to the sport, it is a great way to learn or improve the skill. It also offers the added bonus of the camaraderie of team members who have an understanding of easier access needs and the ability to play golf against some stunning scenic backdrops.

**Telephone: 07794 593618**

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## Leisure Centre - Brecon

Brecon Leisure Centre has good accessibility and offers a wide range of accessible activities to enjoy from indoor bowls and ten-pin bowling to swimming. A great deal of thought has been given to assist people with easier access needs to enjoy this facility.



As well as designated changing facilities, the range of adapted equipment available on site includes a bowling wheelchair, ten-pin bowling ramps, wheelchair accessible gym equipment and a pool hoist.

**Telephone: 01874 623677**

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## Shooting - Brecon

Woodland Park Shooting Ground offers clay shooting in a beautiful location near Brecon. Set in ancient woodland between the Black Mountains and the Brecon Beacons, the park provides the perfect environment for simulated sporting targets and is suitable for people of all ages and abilities.

All visitors will be able to spend the day shooting, taking in the scenery and being coached by the owner John Butland who is a fully-qualified clay shooting coach. The tuition is available for novices and more experienced shooters.

**Telephone: 07811 189413**

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### ***Useful websites***

[www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk](http://www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk)

[www.powys.gov.uk](http://www.powys.gov.uk)

[www.MidWalesMyWay.com](http://www.MidWalesMyWay.com)

facebook: [www.facebook.com/midwalesmyway](http://www.facebook.com/midwalesmyway)

twitter: @MidWalesMyWay

youtube: [www.youtube.com/user/exploremidwales](http://www.youtube.com/user/exploremidwales)

[www.brecknockwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.brecknockwildlifetrust.org.uk)

[www.breconbeacons.org](http://www.breconbeacons.org)

[www.disabilitysportwales.org](http://www.disabilitysportwales.org)

[www.disabilitywales.org](http://www.disabilitywales.org)

[www.elanvalley.org.uk](http://www.elanvalley.org.uk)

[www.montwt.co.uk](http://www.montwt.co.uk)

[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

[www.rwtwales.org](http://www.rwtwales.org)

[www.visitwales.com](http://www.visitwales.com)

[www.wales.gov.uk](http://www.wales.gov.uk)

### ***Notes***



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**Please Note:** If you can read this, but know someone who can't,  
 please contact D.H.I, via e-mail or letter and we will try to provide this  
 information in a more suitable format.



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