



Showcase
& Awards
2023

Pontefract Racecourse

Category - Diversity and Inclusion

Through the eyes of others – making Pontefract more accessible

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Objectives



In August 2022, LiveTourism carried out an inspection on the accessible facilities at Pontefract Racecourse.

Following their report, and in conjunction with the Industry commitment to improving racing's Diversity and Inclusion, we compiled a programme of works that would vastly improve the existing facilities with the aim of opening the Course to a more diverse audience of visitors who live with visible, or invisible disabilities and enable them to experience a day at the races in the same way as anyone else.

Using the 5 pillars of the industry commitment as our base, we focused on the key aims of:

- Education and Awareness Raising,
- Celebrating Racing's Diversity and, in particular,
- Engaging New Audiences.

With this in mind, we wanted to create a more accessible and welcoming venue for:

- Wheelchair users,
- Customers with special learning or educational needs,
- The Deaf Community,
- Neuro divergent racegoers or families with children living with autism,
- Dementia patients.

With other improvements schemes already financially accounted for, all work was to be carried out 'in house' by our Groundstaff team.

We set ourselves the ambitious target of offering the best comparable accessible facilities of any venue in the area with the culmination of the work being an 'open house' raceday on Monday eve 12th June – ***Racing For Everyone*** with a target of increasing the attendance on this day by 10%.

Complete details of this event have been submitted in the ***Raceday Category***.

Delivery



Using the LiveTourism assessment, we started work in the off-season to upgrade the facilities. Working on recommendations from the Report, the team visited local tourist attractions and sporting stadia to investigate ‘best practice’ for those venues. With regular online meetings with Jacob and Mandy from LiveTourism, we set out to improve the facilities below:

Accessible Viewing Areas – Racecourse and Parade Ring

All were increased in size and paved. Hardstanding paths were installed to give easy access. All areas were fitted with plastic chain and signage to prevent unauthorised access. Viewing areas were created both on ground floor and first floor level.

Accessible Toilets

Every accessible toilet was refurbished with colour contrasting grab rails/walls. Low level coat hooks, sinks, shelves, vanity mirrors and a full length mirror were added alongside a screened area in case the customer requires the presence of a Personal Assistant.

Step Free Access

Ramps were created for areas that could not be made step free to allow equal access to all parts of the Racecourse.

Hearing Loops

Hearing loops were installed in 5 bar and / or restaurant areas and training given to the Managers running these areas.

Entrance videos

We [created a video](#) showing new racegoers how to access the Racecourse entrances from the Car Parking areas.

Designated Quiet Area

A quiet space was created in a corner overlooking the horses in the Parade Ring with ‘Sunflower Benches’.

Tote and Catering Services

In conjunction with the tote, we ensured all low level counters were able to process payments by cash or card to suit the customer.

Areas to Reminisce

Dedicated areas were created with historic photos of the Racecourse through the 20th century allowing racegoers to reminisce.

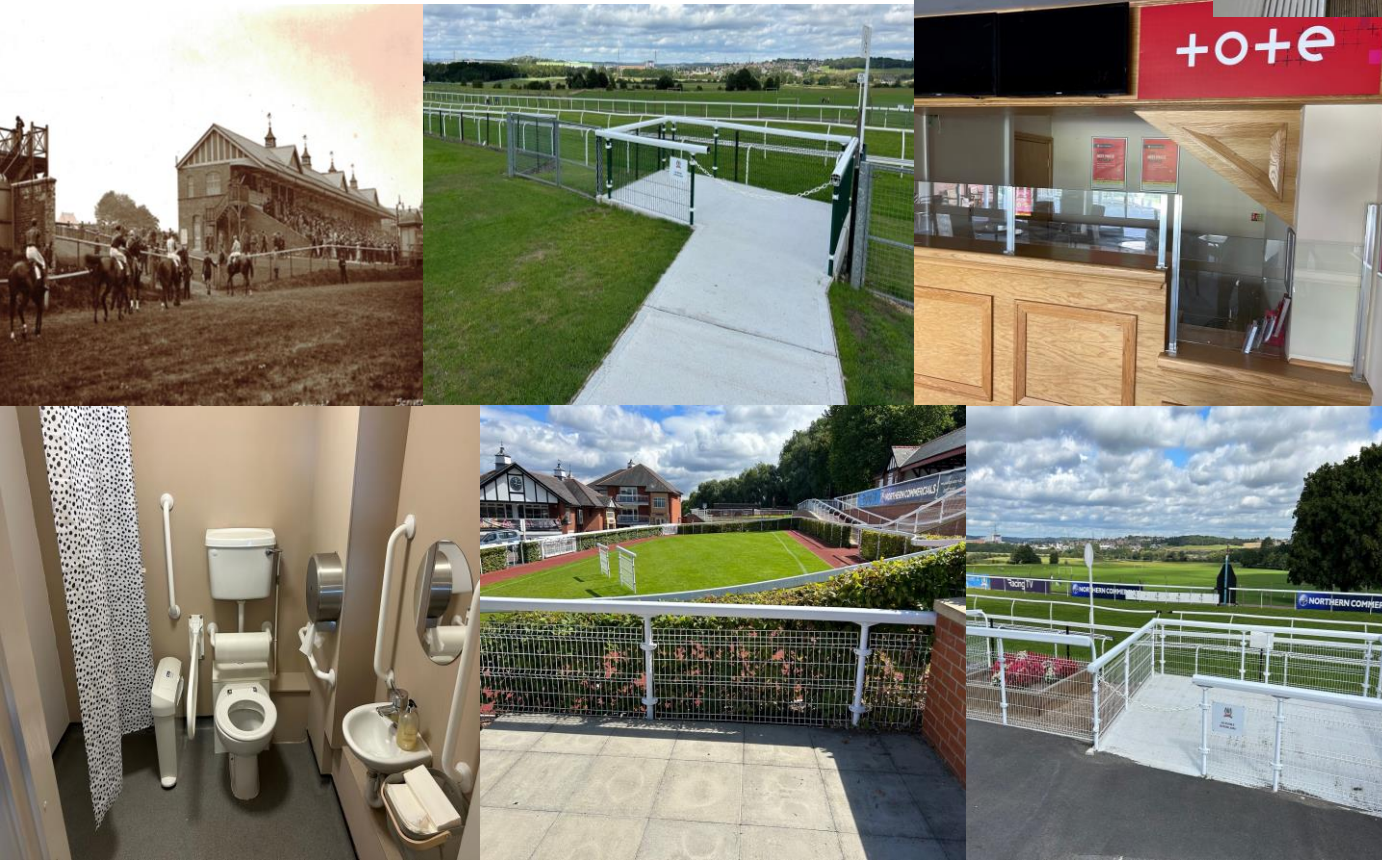
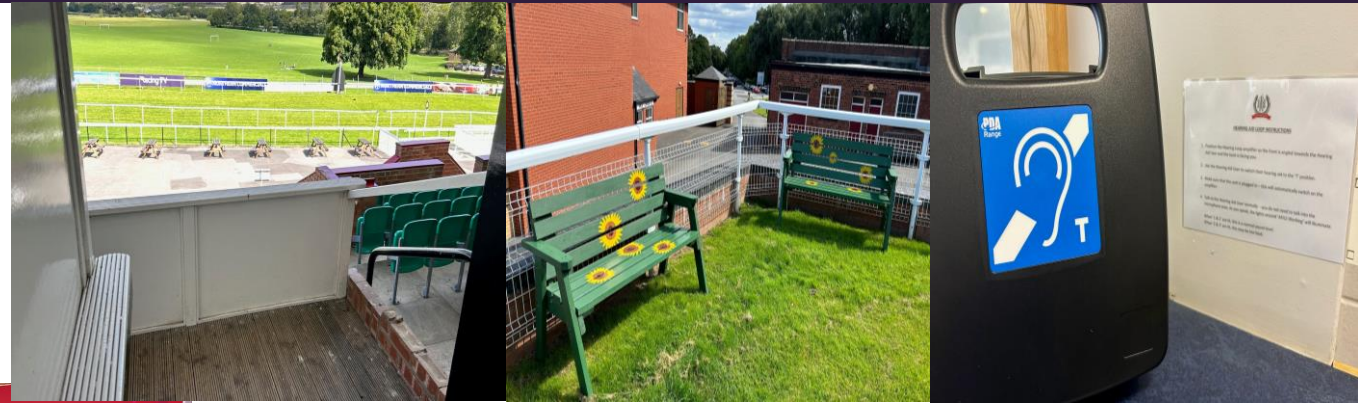
Accessibility Hubs

On the recommendations of LiveTourism, we created 5 separate ‘accessibility hubs’ – areas that incorporated an accessible toilet, an accessible bar and tote counter, a viewing area and a hearing loop.

Results

The most effective way to show the results is visually.

Our Council **Safety of Sports Ground Officer and Building Control** liaison manages all Sports Stadia in the region and now showcases our accessible features as the regional standard and would like to bring the local Rugby clubs to view the improvements.



In figures,

- We've created 5 new complete 'accessibility hubs' through the Racecourse for racegoers in every enclosure.
- We've increased the size of each of the accessible viewing platforms by between 25% and 40% allowing uninterrupted viewing for an additional 32 wheelchairs if required.
- We've increased our database of racegoers with additional accessibility requirements by more than 200% allowing us to create bespoke offerings specifically for them.
- All the improvements were carried out in house by our team of groundstaff at a total cost of under £8,000.
- The Racing For Everyone Raceday saw an increase of 13% on the previous year with the highest recorded attendance at this raceday since 2015.
- With these improvements, there are now just 2 rooms in the entire site that are not accessible for wheelchairs users⁴.

Supporting Information

Great feedback from the LiveTourism team, an email from Jill, our Safety of Sports Ground Officer, [a feature blog for Groundsweek](#), some wonderful email and social media feedback and a fantastic acknowledgement in the [RCA Global Accessibility Press Release](#)

From: Fletcher, Jill
Sent: Thursday, June 22, 2023 3:24 PM
To: Info | Pontefract Park Race Co. Ltd <info@pontefract-races.co.uk>
Subject: During Performance Inspection 28th September 2023

Good Afternoon Mr Gundill/Richard

Looking forward to our visit on the 28th September. Planning to be with you around 12.30.

I just wanted to let you know that there will be several members of the Safety Advisory Group in attendance, I will confirm names when I have them.

I am very pleased to say that our new Service Director Joe Jenkinson has accepted the invitation. He is keen to push SAG forward and get things back up and running again. Having seen your efforts to improve the accessibility at the Racecourse this year, and the wonderful race meeting you had on 10th June, we're keen to show some of the other groups in the area your hard work.

In particular this refers to the Rugby Clubs and the way they are managed as I have eluded to many times.

With regard to Joe attending its always a good idea to start with the best!!!

Kind Regards

Jill

As a wheelchair user with cerebral palsy, it is often difficult for me to have the same experience as others. Ive been coming to Pontefract for a few years but have been blown away by the improvements to the course this year. Being able to see the horses right on the winning line is incredible! It makes me feel like a VIP rather than someone with a disability.

Cant wait to be back

Billie x



That is superb!! Amazing work done by you and your team to have this done!! I look forward to my visit for a great days out racing!

Best wishes
Jacob



Global Accessibility Awareness Day: Racecourse Accessibility Project Update
For immediate release

The Racecourse Association (RCA) and Racing Foundation have shared an update video from the Racecourse Accessibility Project in support of Global Accessibility Awareness Day.

The video, which can be viewed [here](#), includes commentary from the RCA, Royal Windsor Racecourse (a leading racecourse for raceday accessibility) and broadcaster Jacob Pritchard Webb on how the project has progressed with updates on action taken since the audits occurred.

Since the completion of year one of the project, racecourses have begun implementing improvements to enhance the raceday experience for racegoers with access requirements. These include:

- As a direct result of their LiveTourism assessment, Pontefract Racecourse used their off-season to transform accessible viewing facilities, making them bigger and laying hardstanding paths to remove the need for racegoers using wheelchairs to traverse across grass. The Pontefract team also refurbished all accessible toilets, adding colour-contrasting facilities, new mirrors and appropriate shelving.
- In addition, Pontefract Racecourse will host an inaugural 'Racing For Everyone' raceday on Monday 12th June. Full details can be found [here](#).

