

GROUP VISITS TO TINTERN ABBEY FOR PRAYER

Guidelines for Friends

Tintern Abbey is in the care of Cadw, the Welsh Assembly government's historic environment service. They are responsible for protecting and managing the whole site and for the wellbeing and best interests of visitors while they are there.

During public visiting hours Cadw have an obligation to ensure that all visitors can go round and look at every part of the Abbey unhindered and undisturbed. This means that certain restrictions have to be placed on group visits and gatherings, formal or informal.

1 Applying to Cadw for permission to bring a group

- To hold any kind of event in the Abbey, you must go through Cadw's formal application process to get specific permission for it. Without this permission you may not bring any invited group, public or private, large or small, to participate in a service or prayer gathering. Group activities are classes by Cadw as 'events'. The relevant application forms can be obtained from Susan Barnes, Site Operations, Cadw, Plas Carew, Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed, Parc Nantgarw, Cardiff CF15 7Q Tel 01443 336000.

This process is obligatory for all larger-scale events and most often for smaller ones too, depending on their duration and the number of visitors involved.

- You must check with Cadw in good time beforehand, to determine the status of your group visit and find out what requirements you will need to fulfil.

Section 4 below gives some specific guidance for groups wanting to make the new statue the main focus of their visit.

2 Planning the timing of Group Visits

It is worth remembering that:

- Groups of any size can apply to book the Abbey for events **outside normal visiting hours**, but there is likely to be an additional charge for this.

Small gatherings wanting to come **within visiting hours** are encouraged to schedule their visits for the **early morning** (from 9.00 am) when the number of other visitors is smallest.

At these times it may be possible, by prior arrangement, for some relaxation of the standard restrictions that are vital during the busier visiting hours.

Always contact Cadw well in advance about any group visit. This can help the staff to help you in various ways. They may be able to make sure your visit is not drowned out by noisy maintenance activities such as large-scale grass-mowing!

3 The Statue of Our Lady and Child

Please do not leave any items on or around the statue when you depart. Cadw will automatically remove them if you have not done so. You are asked to take them home with you.

4 Group Visits during visiting hours

It was only with Cadw's generous agreement to the project that the Friends of Our Lady of Tintern could go ahead to commission and finance the new figure of Our Lady and Child. The statue remains in the Friends' ownership. Cadw engaged to install the finished work in the Abbey for the foreseeable future. While sympathetic to the desire of individuals and small groups to pray and hold devotions close to the statue, Cadw have a duty to set guidelines so that all visitors can move freely in the Abbey and look at everything they want to see in peace, without hindrance or disturbance.

Friends of Our Lady of Tintern are therefore respectfully asked to comply with the following

REQUIREMENTS FOR GROUPS DURING VISITING HOURS

Please note that any flexibility allowed over these requirements is entirely within Cadw's discretion. Consulting with Cadw beforehand will avoid difficulty or embarrassment during your visit.

Please also remember that free entry to the Abbey – as to all other monuments in Cadw's care – is now available to those over 60 and those aged 16 or under **who live in Wales and possess a free entry pass**. The pass application form can be downloaded from the Cadw website: www.cadw.wales.gov.uk (Unfortunately no concession is attached to membership of the Friends of Our Lady of Tintern. Although this possibility has been investigated and considered at length, the operational problems of such a scheme put it out of court.)

Groups must abide by the following stipulations:

- No more than **10** people at most should gather for prayer round the statue at any one time. If your group is likely to be larger than this you must consult Cadw, who will advise on whether you should seek formal permission for the visit, by way of the standard application process for 'events' at the Abbey (see **1.** above).
- No group should stay together by the statue for longer than **20 minutes**.
- No musical instruments or amplification systems should be brought into the Abbey. (Unaccompanied singing is acceptable as long as the volume of sound is moderate!)

Needless to say, it is essential that the Friends of Our Lady of Tintern work in full harmony with Cadw's requirements. We are privileged to have our statue standing in the Abbey and would not wish to have to remove it from there because of any failure on our part to show Cadw as much courtesy and respect as they have shown to the Friends.

Tintern Abbey phone no **01291 689251**