

## Social Story Guide

### A Visit to Glendalough



Glendalough is famous for its Early Christian Monastery founded by St Kevin in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. Many people were attracted to his life and a monastic settlement developed in the valley. This settlement grew to become one of the most important places of education and pilgrimage in Ireland during the Middle Ages. The site today includes a round tower, cathedral, stone churches and decorated crosses which date from the tenth and twelfth centuries. Glendalough remains to be one of the most visited places in Ireland and as well as being a famous National Monument is within The Wicklow Mountains National Park comprising of over 20,000 hectares protecting a range of habitats including blanket bog, heath and woodlands.

### **Your Arrival:**

Visitors arrive at the Visitor Centre Car Park. There is a €4.00 parking fee and the car park attendants will issue a parking ticket at the gate. This ticket can be used to get a discount off admission tickets into the Visitor Centre so please remember to bring it to reception if you wish to visit the Visitor Centre.

Sometimes there are sounds in the carpark that are not what you expect to hear in Glendalough. The leaf blower and lawnmower can be noisy but the ground staff want to make sure that Glendalough is kept clean and tidy. This is a video clip of this sound in case the ground staff are using the leaf blower today.



## The Visitor Centre

The Visitor Centre has an excellent exhibition on the history of St Kevin and Glendalough. It also has an Audio Visual Presentation called Ireland and the Monasteries which is about Early Irish Monasteries and Saints. Here is a clip of Glendalough Visitor Centre below.



The exhibition showcases Ireland's early monastic life.  
Follow the footsteps of St. Kevin, founder of Glendalough

## **Your Visit to Glendalough Visitor Centre:**

Please finish your food and drinks before you enter the Visitor Centre. There may be a queue into the Visitor Centre. If waiting in line is difficult, you can show the Visitor Centre staff your Autism I.D. Card and you can go inside without waiting.

The Visitor Centre Staff will ask everyone to wear a face mask before entering the Visitor Centre. If wearing a mask is uncomfortable for you, that is okay and you don't have to wear one. You can download a letter (<https://asiam.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Face-mask-letter.pdf>) and show it to the Visitor Centre Staff.

When you enter the Visitor Centre you will have to sanitise your hands. There will be hand sanitiser available at the reception area or you can bring your own.

### **Reception Desk**



You will see the reception/ticket desk on the left. This is where you collect your ticket before you enter the exhibition area.



## Visitor Centre Staff



You will meet the Visitor Centre Staff at Reception, the Ticket Desk and on the Monastic Site. The Staff can answer questions you have about the Monastery's history and they are here to assist you. If you are overwhelmed and need to go to the quiet space, you can ask one of the Guides/Staff to bring you there. The Guides/Staff now wear face masks or face shields. They don't have a uniform but wear dark colours, usually black & navy. The Guides wear badges and a yellow high vis vest outside or a jacket with the word GUIDE at the back



## The Exhibition

As you enter the exhibition area you will notice that it is dark. The screens light up as you walk past them. The exhibition was designed this way to save energy and to help to protect the environment.



Behind the picture of the Upper Lake there is a story corner about the legends of St Kevin and the animals. This is designed for children but adults also like to listen to the stories. Press the buttons as they light up and you can listen to each legend. You can look at how this works on the video below.



In the centre of the exhibition you will find a model which explains about what life was like in the Monastic Settlement in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. There is a button at the corner of the model and if you press this button you will hear a commentary. This is a clip of the model below;



There are many more interesting models and exhibits that will tell you all about Glendalough and life in an Early Irish Monastery. There is also an Audio Visual Presentation called Ireland of the Monasteries which explains about many of The Early Irish Saints and Monasteries. This video is 15 minutes long. It is shown in a theatre which is like a cinema so it is in a darkened room. There is a part of the video which talks about Ireland's Pagan Culture and there are faces on the screen which some people might find frightening. This is the clip of the video below so you know what to expect.



You can watch the Audio Visual show but if you do not want to watch the video and go outside for a walk this is okay just ask the Visitor Centre Staff for directions. They will be very happy to give assistance and any other information that you would like to know about the area.

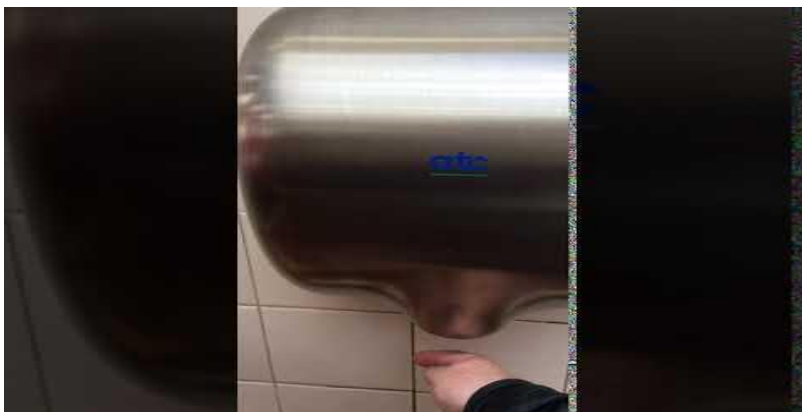


## Toilets

There are toilets outside the Visitor Centre that you can use before you walk to the monastery and the lakes.



Some people find the hand dryers in the toilet very noisy. This is a video of the noise they make below;



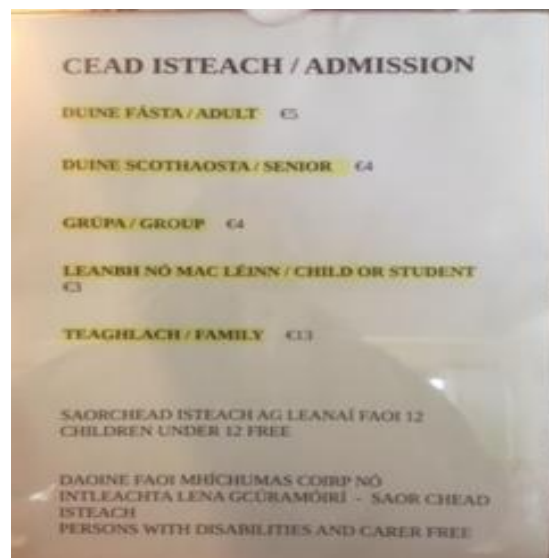
If you find this noise very loud you can ask the staff to turn off the hand dryers while you use the toilet.

## Signage

You will see a lot of different signs on your visit to Glendalough. You can ask the Guides/Staff if you do not understand a sign.



This is a sign with all the leaflets and postcards that you can purchase at reception.



This is the Admission sign where you can get information about getting a ticket



This sign tells you that food or drink is not allowed into the Visitor Centre.

FROM SOLITUDE  
TO COMMUNITY  
→  
AONARACHT  
IS COMHLUADAR

This sign directs you into the exhibition



This is a Fire Extinguishing point



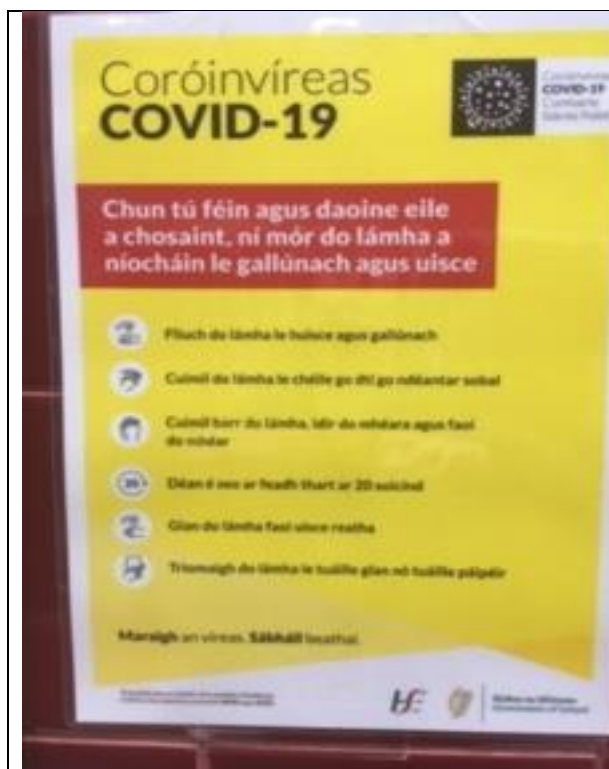
This sign tells you where the exit is



This sign tells you that you can leave through this door if there is an emergency



These signs tell you where the toilets are located



These signs near the bathroom sinks tell you how to wash your hands properly





These signs outside tell you how to keep safe during COVID 19



This sign tells you how important it is to keep 2 metres away from everyone during COVID 19



These signs are outside and they show you where to find the Monastic Site and all the trails. The trails start at the Upper Lake



This is a map of all the trails in Glendalough. This map is located at the front of the Visitor Centre and there is another map at the Upper Lake



You will find all the coloured arrows at the Upper Lake. Each colour is for a different trail. There are maps at the Visitor Centre Grounds and at the Upper Lake which will describe each walk.



The yellow arrows are for the Wicklow Way. This is a very long trail that starts in Marley Park in County Dublin and ends in Clonegal in County Carlow. It passes through the Glendalough Valley.



## The Monastic Site



When you leave the Visitor Centre you can follow the signs that say ALL TRAILS or you can ask a member of staff and they will give you directions to the Monastery and the trails. On the way to the lake you will see a bridge that takes you into the Monastic Site. This is where you will find St Kevin's Church, the Cemetery, the Cathedral and the Round Tower. There will be a member of staff on the site. You can talk to them and ask them any questions that you might have about the history and any other information that you would like to know about the area. After your visit to the monastery you can return to the path and continue walking to the Upper Lake. It is a 30-minute walk to the Upper Lake. Just before the Upper Lake you will see a white cottage on the right. This is the National Park Information Office where there are National Park Staff and they can give you more information about the area and the other trails that you can do in Glendalough.

We hope you enjoy your visit!