

All Stretton Bunkhouse - Access Information.

1. Introduction.

CEM was asked by the proprietors of the All Stretton Bunkhouse (the Bunkhouse) www.allstrettonbunkhouse.co.uk to carry out an access audit to enable them to produce an Access Statement. The aim was to enable a range of visitors including disabled people to have an informed choice about whether the bunkhouse may meet their access needs and to promote to disabled people who may be interested in staying at the Bunkhouse when exploring the hills around All Stretton and particularly the Long Mynd¹. The Bunkhouse is also promoted through the Youth Hostel Association. Visit Britain can advise further on the range of modifications required to be considered for inclusion in the National Access Standards, which enable owners to display the NAS logo on their literature Visit -

www.tourismtrade.org.uk/quality/assessmentstandards/nationalaccessiblescheme

2. Legislative Framework.

The Disability Discrimination Act requires visitor accommodation organisations to provide reasonable access for disabled people to goods, services and facilities. The Building Regulations - Part M have since 1987 set out the concept of providing reasonable and practicable access to buildings and new extensions to achieve access for all. The revised edition of the Building Regulations (2000) – “Access To and Use of Buildings” - Approved Document Part M; came into effect in 2004. This edition of Part M brings the technical requirements in the regulations in line with the recommendations of BS8300 (2001) Design of Buildings and their Approaches to meet the needs of Disabled People.

The Bunkhouse is located in the edge of the village of All Stretton, but on a steep track leading up to the Long Mynd. Vehicle access to the parking area is quite problematic given the steepness of the track. The bunkhouse which dates back to the seventeenth century is situated on two levels, although the ground floor is split level with one room off the kitchen which is accessed down three steps and another bedroom which is off the kitchen which is accessed by five steps. As a general rule the Bunkhouse is not staffed and visitors are given an access code to the main door to gain access. This general descriptive summary provides the context for providing “reasonable access” to the Bunkhouse.

3. Diversity of Need.

It is estimated that as many as 20% of the population has a disability. This is not just wheelchair users, who actually represent just 5% of the disabled community it also considers people with a wide range of mobility and sensory impairments and

¹ The Long Mynd is part of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The name *Long Mynd* means "Long Mountain"; in Welsh it is called *Mynydd Hir*, The highest point on the Long Mynd is Pole Bank at a height of 516 metres (1693 feet) and nearby Caer Caradoc at 459 metres (1506 ft). Mountain": in Welsh it is called *Mynydd Hir*. - www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Mynd

learning disabilities. For example, it is widely held that more than two million people in the UK have visual impairments and as many as nine million people are deaf and hard of hearing. Deaf people for example may not be affected by the physical environment and may feel that the Bunkhouse meets their needs. They are often dependent on information and signage which should be clear, concise and consistent². Similarly, people with visual impairments require information and interpretation which meets their sensory needs and they will benefit from tactile, large print and to some extent Braille information (only about 20,000 blind people in the UK actually read Braille³).

It is not possible to be specific about which groups of disabled people may wish to visit the Bunkhouse. The aim should be to provide them with an informed choice to enable them to decide for themselves if they feel the location and layout of the building meets their access needs. Organisations such as the Disabled Ramblers Association www.disabledramblers.co.uk, Guide Dogs - Blind Adventure Group, www.guidedogs.org.uk and the Ramblers Association www.ramblers.org.uk/INFO/everyone/disability may be able to provide additional advice and may also be promotional routes to disabled people who enjoy exploring wilder countryside. Additionally MENCAP www.mencap.org.uk and www.mencap.org.uk/html/cymru may be able to provide contacts for groups involved in outdoor activities.

It should be remembered that like other walkers and ramblers disabled people will normally visit the outdoors with friends and family or in groups and will usually have personal support systems in place to help to mitigate their disability.

4. Access Survey. i. Access Path and Entrance.



The path leading to the Bunkhouse is rough and steep. It is possible to drive up to the gateway, but it is best to reverse up to maintain traction and to avoid a difficult manoeuvre to decline. The path to the main door is firm, but some stones are larger than 5mm and loose. The first part of the path is reasonably level, then a short stretch of <1:6, before becoming > 1:20. The door width is 82cm and there is a step of 15cm leading into the bunkhouse. The Bunkhouse is accessed by a key code pad. Sensory planting could be provided near to the entrance to complement the sound of running water from the nearby stream.

Recommendations.

² Sign Design Guide (JMU).

³ RNIB.

- Provide a paved area to enable visitors to get out of vehicles on to a firm and level surface;
- Modify the slope to provide a path a minimum width of 150cm and not steeper than 1:20 where possible;
- Provide sensory planting to complement the sound of running water near to the doorway;
- Provide a hand rail alongside the pathway;
- Provide level access into the doorway or provide handrail;
- Highlight the key pad to make it more visible to people with visual impairments

ii. Kitchen/Dining Room



The kitchen/dining room is light and airy and generally the space is clear and without clutter. The kitchen units are of a standard height and design (height – 90cm and depth 61cm). The taps and the sink unit are of a standard design. The white electrical sockets do not provide a colour/tonal contrast with the plugs. There is a kitchen table and chairs; the table height is 78cm and the clearance under the table when seated is 61cm. There are a range of kitchen appliances, including, microwave, oven, tumble dryer, refrigerator. There is not a pan guard on the cooker which would be a generally useful safety measure and may be particularly helpful to blind and visually impaired users. The microwave is positioned so that it is necessary to reach over the cooker hob to operate it. There is some information and signage in the kitchen area, but none in “alternative format” minimum large print 14 point although 20 point is preferred by some people with visual impairments. Although only a relatively small percentage of blind people read Braille, labels can be produced fairly inexpensively and could be provided to identify key safety features and essential items such as electrical sockets powering individual appliances. There is also a large wall map which covers the Long Mynd area. This could be easily and cheaply provided in a tactile map format. People with learning disabilities often prefer to have visual images rather than written and therefore it would be useful to liaise with MENCAP to discuss how graphic images might be presented within the Bunkhouse.

The reception for mobile telephones is variable from the building and so a payphone facility is provided. The dial and receiver is 105cm from the floor level. As the kitchen area is the general meeting and social area for guests it would be helpful to people who are hard of hearing and use hearing aids to provide a portable audio induction loop in this area. The RNID will provide technical advice and specifications www.rnid.org.uk . A flashing and audio fire alarm system should be considered if visitors with hearing impairments are likely to stay at the Bunkhouse, the Fire Officer will provide additional advice on this point.

The Disabled Living Foundation www.dlf.org.uk is a good source of information and has a comprehensive database of assistive equipment and technology to benefit disabled people in domestic and residential type environments.

Recommendations.

- Provide clear colour/tonal contrasts to highlight electrical sockets and plugs to benefit users with visual impairments;
- Move the microwave to a convenient location so it is not necessary to lean across the cooker to operate it;
- Provide a cooker pan guard on the cooker and ensure that controls are easy to use;
- Consider labelling sockets, cupboards and draws with Braille signage - Kitchen - general safety – good practice to clearly label with symbols knife draws and other potential hazards;
- Provide information is large print – minimum of 14 point for body text and 20 point for notices and consider providing a tactile map of the area;
- Consider providing flashing and audio fire alarm system and hearing support induction loop system.

iii.

Novers Bedroom.



There are three steps leading from the kitchen to the Novers bedroom. The terracotta tiles in the kitchen continue throughout, including the steps into the bedroom. This means that there is not a colour/tonal to distinguish the steps from the general floor space. The width of the steps is approximately 58cm and there is a sign advising users to beware of the lower than average portal height. There is a separate toilet and washroom next to the Novers bedroom which has standard fittings. The sink height is 74 cm.

Recommendations

- Consider edging the steps to provide a colour/tonal contrast
- Provide a tactile mat at the top and bottom of the steps
- Provide a handrail alongside the wall
- Ensure that low head notice is provided in large print.

Caradoc Bedroom.



There are nine steps along dog leg staircase which lead to the Caradoc. The steps are 74cm wide. There is not a full handrail on the staircase. The bedroom door opens directly onto the staircase.

Recommendations.

- Provide colour/tonal contrast to highlight step edges
- Provide hand rail on stairs
- Provide safety notice to advise guests that doorway leads directly onto staircase
- Provide tactile mats at entrance to stairs

Synalds and Shower Room,



There are three steps to the landing with access to the shower room and a further two more steps to the Synalds bedroom. The steps are 78cm wide and each step is 16cm deep. There is not a handrail on the staircase. The terra cotta tiles extend from the kitchen and some people with visual impairments may find it difficult to visualise individual steps. There are two sets of bunk beds and child's cot in the room. The lower bunks are 50cm and the upper bunks 107cm from the floor.

The shower room has standard fittings with a step in shower unit. The chrome taps do not contrast well with the white sink and walls and a colour/tonal contrast might be provided to highlight them and to distinguish the hot and cold taps.

Recommendations.

- Provide a handrail on the steps
- Provide a colour/tonal contrast to distinguish the edges of the steps
- Provide a colour/tonal contrast on the bathroom fittings to assist people with visual impairments

Access Statement⁴.

In general the Bunkhouse is unlikely to be suited to groups which may include someone who is a full time wheelchair user as the building is set over three floors with internal steps and staircase. The Bunkhouse may be suitable to a person with limited mobility or other impairment who is able to stand and negotiate a minimum of three internal stairs. The location in the beautiful Batch Valley with immediate opportunities for hill-walking will prove equally exciting to people with and without disabilities who feel confident and capable in this type of environment.

Location and Approach.

1. Situated on the edge of the village of All Stretton on the track leading up to the Long Mynd.Church Stretton railway station is approximately 1.2 miles from the Bunkhouse. The YHA shuttle bus operates to the Long Mynd from surrounding areas. For further information visit <http://www.churchstretton.co.uk/visitors>
2. The access to the Bunkhouse is up a 200m steep track which eventually leads into the hills. It is possible to drive up this track as far as the Bunkhouse, but due to manoeuvrability restrictions near the gateway it is advisable to reverse up.

Entrance and Kitchen Area.

3. There is a single 15cm step leading into the Bunkhouse and the doorway is 82cm wide. The Bunkhouse is located on three levels with internal steps leading to each of the three bedrooms.
4. The light and airy kitchen area is well equipped with modern appliances including refrigerator, washing machine, tumble dryer, cooker and microwave, sink and kitchen units. The top of the kitchen table is 78cm and the height from the floor to the underneath of the table is 61cm. The kitchen unit working surfaces are at a height of 91cm.
5. The power points and sockets have been clearly marked with colour contrasting strips* to make them more visible
6. There is a portable hearing induction loop* kept in the kitchen
7. There is a payphone in the kitchen which is positioned near to the doorway at a height of 108cm.
8. Large print information, a colour map and tactile map* of the area are provided

⁴ "Read your statement and it seems okay. From the description I certainly wouldn't like to stay in the last room. I have found rooms opening straight on to stairs rather treacherous in the past. The other two rooms seem more convenient as they have wash/toilet facilities adjacent". Comment from a Blind Person

Bedrooms and Facilities

9. There are three bedrooms at the Bunkhouse all of which are accessed by internal steps, These are:-
 - a. Novers - situated down three steps and which has a door width of 59cm. There is an adjacent room with toilet and washbasin which is set at a height of 79cm
 - b. Synalds is located up five steps each with treads of 16cm. The stair width is 79cm. There are two sets of bunk beds, the lower bunk is 50cm and the upper one 106cm from the floor. There is also a child's cot available.
 - c. There is a shower room adjacent to Synalds with standard facilities and a step in shower.
 - d. Caradoc is situated up nine steps on a dog leg staircase. The width of the stairs is 74cm. The bedroom door opens directly onto stairs with no landing.

NB The items marked with an asterisk are recommended, although they may not yet be in place.

Other Information.

Assistance Dogs are welcomed at the Bunkhouse.

The local pub is situated at the bottom of the track ten minutes walk from the Bunkhouse.

The above information is designed to enable prospective visitors to make an informed choice as to whether the All Stretton Bunkhouse may meet their access needs. However, if you need any additional information please visit our website and contact us at www.allstrettonbunkhouse.co.uk and we will get back you as soon as possible, but please bear in mind that the Bunkhouse is not permanently staffed.

CEM Ltd
May 2008.