

LONGSTONE
Lodge & Cafe

DESIGN & ACCESS STATEMENT

April 2016
Hiron / Jenkins



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The Process

Assessment

Longstone former Heritage Centre provides an exciting opportunity to attract a new market to the island's tourism industry by providing hostel style accommodation whilst also re-establishing a previous food outlet to service both visitors and locals alike.

Physical

Longstone is situated on the popular main Island of St. Mary's. It sits on an overall flat site of approximately three acres the property and occupies a very quiet, pleasant countryside location on high ground in the very centre of St. Mary's island. Surrounded by flower fields, with south facing aspect and sea views overlooking Porth Hellick cove and backing on to a pine tree plantation.

Less than one mile from the town centre of Hugh Town the Island airport and harbour, the property is conveniently situated for the visitor trade just off the Telegraph Hill road and close to the main nature trail.

There are no overlooking properties, although there is sight from the rear land owned by Porth Hellick House. The only public direct sight is from the road near pumping station, however this is obscured in places by trees.

The site borders with a residential property, Longstone Bungalow, and Longstone Farm land. This boundary is overgrown and in need of pruning and clearing, particularly on the road side and the field behind the buildings on site (see map right).



There is a large area of land that comes with this property and the boundary (shown in red on the previous page) is obscured in many places by overgrown vegetation and tree growth.

Currently the buildings and surrounding land are redundant. The Café has not been operated for 5 years, and the museum for much longer. The site is overgrown and slowly decaying.

The buildings are felt covered roofs with wooden cladded walls. The Café building is in the best state on the site, however is still in need of much repair and improvements. At present the roof is leaking, causing water damage and damp. Also previous work to the building has left the walls without any insulation or protection and a 'double skin' of wooden cladding has been applied which is not ideal for business operation (see photo right).



The public toilets have some fittings removed. These need to be reinstated. Considerable refurbishment is also required here to bring them up to standard.

The two 'tying shed style' buildings that were once the museum are in a state of disrepair with the northerly placed building being derelict (see photograph bottom right). This building has missing roof sections, rotten wood in the walls and roof, and an extensive amount of ingress of water and plant growth.

The concrete slab on which the buildings are constructed proves to be sound. Our plans are to build on the existing footprint of this concrete base, therefore the external walls of the proposed new building will not be any greater in size that the existing.



In 2007 there was a new septic tank fitted to deal with the café sewerage and grey water, however this will not be sufficient to cope with any new services, therefore an additional system will be required for further development.

Social

As this facility has a history of being a tourist focussed business the impact on neighbours should be relatively minimal. However compared to recent years there will be increased traffic accessing the site, particularly during the summer tourist season.

Adding accommodation to the site should not affect neighbours adversely however guests will be made aware of the residential aspect and surrounding environment to ensure a peaceful outcome for all.

Prior to any building work the residents of Longstone Terrace and surrounding Farm will be consulted to ensure the least inconvenience possible.

Economic

The Isles of Scilly is an extremely popular holiday destination during the summer season and some potential visitors are unable to visit due to a lack of accommodation availability or the high costs involved.

With more low-cost airlines to European and international destinations, some holidaymakers may opt for a trip abroad for a similar and sometimes cheaper price than visiting the islands.

We believe that our new venture could provide another more affordable option for tourists, catering for all ages and abilities, not just the perceived young 'backpacker' crowd. It would be most suitable for those visitors keen on walking and the countryside.

HOSTEL: The main aim of this project is to provide 4 star VisitBritain hostel accommodation for a market that is not yet catered for on the Isles of Scilly; that of the lower cost traveller market. Currently there is no hostel style property in operation here on the islands and therefore we would be aiming at the Youth Hostel Association (YHA) style traveller, both individuals and families, as well as visiting groups*. Also in the winter months we would be keen to explore any options for accommodation provision for tradesmen and business consultants as well as provision for Wildlife Trust volunteers and staff (see page 8 for suggested WT use).



CAFE: The café customers are perceived as 90% tourist and 10% local trade. This would be mainly on a seasonal basis from April to October. During this time the tourism market would consist of principally older couples during the majority,

whilst during the summer school holiday period customers would be primarily families.

These customers would expect high quality and fresh products, including locally caught seafood (crab particularly), as well as homemade cakes and good coffee.

Visitors to the islands are discerning individuals who, from analysing current food provision on the islands expect to pay relatively high prices. Although these prices are often driven by the extra freight costs incurred when sourcing food, as a business operation we are keen to endeavour to provide a 'value for money' menu with a competitive pricing structure.

Planning Policy

The Isles of Scilly Local Plan: Policy 4 – Economic Development states the following objectives:

To promote employment and economic activity by providing opportunities for businesses to support viable communities. Proposals based on the existing economic base of tourism, agriculture and fishing, as well as the distinctiveness of the islands, will be supported in the following cases:

(a) where such development contributes to the further diversification and essential modernisation of the islands' economy; or

(b) where it demonstrably improves the quality of existing tourist accommodation, including that of managed camping sites, or potentially extends the length of the tourist season; or

(c) where there is a change of use for a larger hotel or guesthouse (in excess of six bed spaces) to another form of tourist accommodation, provided it retains a residential unit for permanent occupation and does not result in an imbalance of the type of accommodation available to visitors to the extent that it would harm the tourism status and character of the islands; or

(d) where development provides either a hostel or bunkhouse linked to environmentally or educationally based activities on each inhabited island; or

(e) where self-contained tourist accommodation is provided as part of an existing farm holding, up to a maximum of two such units of accommodation per holding and is necessarily related to the latter's continued viability and overall land management

Essentially we are offering to meet the criteria on four of the five criteria; a,b,c and d:

a) In reinvigorating a redundant business our plans to provide a range of tourist based offers, will both diversify and modernise this former café and museum. For the islands economy, the attraction to a new market sector (low cost hostel style accommodation) will increase the overall appeal of the islands to the visitors.

(b) Although we are unable to concentrate solely on environmental or educational groups these visitors will certainly

not be discouraged and it is intended that a specific marketing campaign will encourage group visits in the shoulder periods and winter months to endeavour to extend the tourist season.

(c) Longstone currently has planning permission for a 19 bed bunkhouse, therefore in altering the use to a more inclusive hostel style lodgings, including the provision of accommodation for the onsite manager/owner and staff, the business becomes more sustainable and controlled, whilst only very slightly increasing the bed spaces that the recently expired planning permission granted (to 23).

(d) The provision of hostel accommodation is currently absent from the Islands, however has much potential to attract visitors. Activities will be offered to all guests, groups and individuals that will be environmentally linked, whether this be an appreciation of the local surroundings, wildlife and heritage or more specific experiences such as organised nature trips.

Involvement

Who we have consulted with:

- Duchy of Cornwall

The Duchy of Cornwall have been an important influence on our aims and aspirations for this project. As the landowners they have a strong steer on our proposals and we have taken much advice from them to ensure that they are content with our plans for this site.

- CIOS Planning Department

It was important to us to consult with the Council of the Isles of Scilly Planning Department at early stages of our ideas, and advice received throughout the process has been instrumental in our decision making process.

- Youth Hostels Association

John McGrath, Operations Manager at the YHA, has been very supportive of our plans and invaluable with his provision of advice on feasibility, standards, price points, bedspace organisation and market expectations. (See Appendix for a sample of correspondence)

- Islands Partnership

Islands Partnership are supportive of our plans, particularly the hostel element, where we will be aiming to attract a new market share of visitors to the islands. (See Appendix for letter of support)

- Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

The Wildlife Trust have indicated that they could be interested in utilising the proposed hostel facility to support their work on the islands:

"If we were to build volunteering back into our work plan, we would obviously need accommodation for them and budget, YHA style facilities fit very well with the demographic of volunteering, generally.

For us to be able to utilise your facilities we would need to be able to book volunteers in for 3 months at a time (there isn't any point having anyone for less time). These people are generally recent graduates in countryside/conservation related studies, looking for work experience with us. We would only be looking at a maximum of 4 at any one time, and it may only be 2. However, this could be guaranteed and throughout the year (if you plan to be open in winter)". Sarah Mason, Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust

They have also suggested that there might be opportunities to work together with the Trust on group visits throughout the year for 'working holidays' and environmental research, which we would be keen to explore further.

Sarah goes on to say; *"In terms of the infrastructure of the building, it would be fantastic to have solar hot water, PV, rainwater harvesting for flushing loos etc, this would be a real winner for us and such a great advertising tool. The inclusion of an outdoor classroom, would be good, however, with universities in mind, a room where they can de-brief and maybe even use microscopes etc would be equally worthwhile. I would also say that the inclusion of a drying room and plenty of space for wet-weather gear is essential for the types of visitors/ volunteers/ students you are talking about."*

- Similar Island Business: Local Café and Accommodation Provider

Sabine Schraudolph, owner Country Guesthouse and Kauffehaus Café has taken time to offer advice from her wealth of provider experience. (See Appendix for letter of support)

- Other Local Businesses:

Isles of Scilly Sailing and Windsurf Centre, Registrar's office, Isles of Scilly Weddings, Childrens Services, Historic tenants of the Longstone Heritage Centre, Local Restaurateurs and accommodation providers, taxi operator and Bike Hire provider.

We have spoken to a range of relevant business professionals on the Islands, all have offered encouragement, advice on specific elements of our project and many have suggested opportunities to work together once our business is 'up and running'. (See Appendix for letters of support from the Sailing Centre and Isles of Scilly Weddings)

- Mainland Cafe and Hostel Research:
We have taken time to look into and visit many cafes to observe all aspects of operation, design, facilities, products and pricing. We have also been to a selection of YHA hostels in order to fully understand this business, gaining a clear insight through personal observations and discussions. Lastly conversations with educational establishments have also assisted in guiding our business decisions.

Evaluation

***Visiting Groups: Why not accommodation for educational and environmental groups only?**

Existing planning condition restriction

Although we would encourage visits from educational groups (Environmental groups are often link to educational establishments) these are limited to travel during term times, avoiding exam periods. Therefore visits are usually confined to mid-September-early November and March- end of May, which is outside of our most lucrative tourist months: June, July and August. Other important factors to consider are the logistics and costs for a school group to get to the islands and common class sizes:

"School's biggest factor in choosing group accommodation is now generally travel cost. The Isles are expensive to get to. In any case a hostel which relies entirely on group trade would almost certainly not be viable financially, and if you further limit to schools groups, would definitely not be financially sustainable".

John McGrath, Operations Manager, YHA.

Who goes on to state that with regards to the required number of bed spaces for an educational group; *"Ideally we'd look for forty, that's a class and teachers / supervisors."*

In essence we would like to be able to offer flexibility for the lower cost accommodation market on the Islands, however if we are limited to environmental and educational groups only we feel this is would not be inclusive for all, and most importantly unviable for us as a project.

Other constraints are understandably overall cost, however a well-managed construction phase and our own hard work and appreciation of available assistance (i.e. accountancy advice) should ensure a successful ongoing project.

Attracting local clientele will be very important for the café business. It is hoped that our food and venue quality and also the added activities for all ages, such as the putting green, an outdoor children's playground and indoor baby play area will be attractive on those weekend and holiday walks. Following comments from local residents we would

also like to trial opening in the winter months during the weekends to endeavour to both protect and grow this local market.

We believe that the facility at Longstone can fulfil an as yet untapped market need within the Islands Tourism industry and are excited to see this project come to fruition. Putting heart back into these currently dilapidated buildings will be a welcome challenge but one that is achievable and hopefully appreciated by both visitors and locals alike.

When all is said and done though, we are looking to make a healthy profit from this business. But in order to do so we realise that we must provide a quality experience for all those that visit 'Longstone Lodge'. We look forward to it!

Design

We are aiming to provide a YHA standard of hostel.

(A particular favourite example of the quality and style we hope to achieve is YHA Boggle Hole, Whitby:

<http://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/boggle-hole>)

YHA have been in existence for many years and have a wealth of experience and proven success in the accommodation market. We are therefore paying close attention to their hostel format and quality of facility to ensure we deliver what clearly works for their members to enable us to take advantage of an as yet largely untapped tourism market for Scilly.

In recent times the quality of YHA accommodation is a long way from the historical 'bunkhouse or backpackers' that many people might remember. Current Youth Hostel properties offer quality accommodation at affordable prices. Their bedrooms now offer the majority of dormitory room occupancy no bigger than 4 person, they also offer of a high percentage of private rooms; particularly singles, doubles and family 5 beds, most with en-suite facilities. The proposal is to follow this proven trend.

The image shows a screenshot of the YHA Boggle Hole website. The header is green with the YHA logo and 'Welcome to YHA'. Navigation links include Home, Special Offers, Membership, Group Bookings, Places to stay, Things to do, and #LiveMoreYHA. A search bar and a 'Choose a property' dropdown are also present. The main content area features the YHA Boggle Hole logo, location 'Fylingthorpe, Whitby, YO22 4UG', and an 'Excellent' 93% Customer Satisfaction rating based on 191 scores. A large photo shows the interior of the hostel. To the right, there are promotional banners for 'Best Price Guarantee!' and 'Get 10% off Breakfast'. A pricing table lists: Beds from £10.00, Private rooms from £20.00, and Family rooms from £25.00. A 'START BOOKING' button and a 'CHECK AVAILABILITY' button are also visible.

We would like to offer décor that compliments the natural land and seascape of the islands, using rustic wood and natural colour schemes that are attractive and characteristic. This design scheme would follow through into the café. The rural location, landscape and sea views at the property are conducive for relaxation and the décor, layout and insulation of the building will not only aim to keep the neighbours content but aim to improve our customer satisfaction.

Our preferred option is to employ a farm building, mirroring the construction materials of Longstone Farm barns opposite. This will ensure that the new build will blend comfortably into the surrounding rural environment. However with regards to the internal construction of the inside of the building, quality and comfort will be the aim, providing a welcoming and contemporary atmosphere.

The external constructions: Outdoor Classroom/Wedding Ceremony room and Childrens play area are to be natural wood (see example photographs on page 12) where possible and the poly tunnel for growing vegetables and fruit would be sighted sympathetically and green coloured to blend into the environment as much as possible.



Use

The aim is to provide not just a hostel or a café but a leisure experience. Attracting a broad range of ages and interests. We will provide a clean and comfortable environment in which to stay and dine, with a light and spacious feel. There will be room and bed size options with some en-suite facilities. Other attractive facilities include a well-equipped, communal kitchen and dining area for hostel guests, on-site staff, barbeque and seating areas, Disabled access shower room and WC, baby bath, laundry, WiFi/computer access and a relaxing lounge area.

For both visiting groups and individuals there is plenty of outdoor space for learning and play as well as the café and guest lounge. We will ensure that there is a range of puzzles and games for visitors' entertainment and a free book exchange area. We will also use the wall spaces to display interpretive material to enable visitors and guests to learn about the islands and their history.

Also a dual purpose building would be available as an outdoor classroom or small wedding venue for those looking for a quiet space on Scilly for their nuptials (see photo below right of the style of outdoor classroom/wedding room we would like to include, approx 4m²).

We also have further opportunities to offer added services and attractions at Longstone, many of which will appeal to a range of clientele (guests and café customers; local community and visitors) in the form of bicycle hire (in partnership with a local operator), golf putting green, children's facilities, such as play areas, baby bath facilities and equipment use/hire. Also the café itself which will provide home-cooked fare and a licensed premises during the daytime. We will also stock a few other sports and beach items for hire.

The rural location of Longstone make it both the ideal place for a café and also provides a challenge in terms of attracting passing trade. The nearest food and drink business is the Holy Vale Vineyard, however we would not see this as a direct competitor as both outlets offer a different type of experience.

As our visitors will be providing their own meals in our communal kitchen, hostel residents would need to travel to Hugh Town (25 minutes walk) for the supermarket or use the available farm shops to source their evening meals, or alternatively access restaurants. The latter may require returning after dark. Taxis are available from external providers and we will look to partner with a local firm to offer an easy transfer. However when considering accessibility. We propose to make use of some external solar lighting which would be minimal to reduce light pollution, and torches will be available to hire from the hostel reception.

As we would be regenerating a historical business we will have the opportunity to include many environmentally friendly procedures and technology to ensure we can provide an attractive experience for visitors whilst contributing to the protection of the local environment.



We will ensure that the buildings, particularly the 'new build' will be carbon efficient, employing high grade insulation and low energy electrical outputs. We are also intending to install solar energy, rain water harvesting and create a purpose built recycling area, as well as growing our own local produce. To support these practices we will endeavour to work towards achieving an award from the 'Green Tourism Scheme'.

We also are conscious to ensure that the business is sustainable within the tourism industry. We are therefore hoping to include 'added value' to the customer experience to promote repeat visits, turning some café visitors into future accommodation bookings. As previously mentioned, 'added value' assets would include an external children's play area, outdoor games (football goal and 'pitch and putt'), outdoor classroom/small wedding ceremony venue, café heating and insulation for winter opening, improved access (both road access and DDA compliance), affordable visitor accommodation and onsite staff housing.

Amount

We are proposing to use the current footprint of the existing buildings for this project.

The Café will largely unchanged in terms of layout, the amendments include: a) enclosed access to the public toilets, to prevent customers having to exit the building in order to use the bathroom facilities, this would be particularly inconvenient in the shoulder periods or winter months.

b) a recycling area at the rear of the kitchen and store, this new area would both provide easier access for café deliveries as well as the space to ensure waste can be sensitively sorted, recycled onsite where possible (such as green waste) and reduced.

The Hostel would be a completely new build due to the current condition of the existing buildings. The two rear buildings will be replaced with a single construction on the current concrete slabs. This will enable both a better use of space, more comfortable and energy efficient accommodation and sighted on a single level improving accessibility. The old water tank walls will be removed.

The new building will be constructed using a wooden agricultural building which, due to the corrugated roofing material will allow for a reduced pitch roof, keeping the impact of the new building to a minimal, the apex being 300mm higher than the existing café roof.

Using advice from the YHA, we have kept our room occupancy low (YHA maximum room capacity is 5 persons), we have chosen 5 persons as this allows us to offer a family room for 5 persons, and flexible dormitory rooms of 4 that in the summer holidays could also be offered to families of 4 persons. The YHA also advised that we offer a mix of en-suite and shared bathroom facility rooms, which we have included. Other local accommodation providers have also strongly recommended that we provide single occupancy rooms, therefore two have been incorporated into our design.

Much of the business that we are proposing has already been operated on this site. When Longstone Heritage Centre was in operation the café, pitch and putt, outdoor events, evening opening, commercial cultivation and out of season group engagements were catered for with much success. Therefore it has been proved that a varied offer will both attract custom and work in harmony with the local area.

The proposed outdoor classroom/wedding ceremony room will be located in the top right hand corner of the entrance field, this will be a secluded corner with sea views. The building is proposed to be 4m in depth and width (octagonal in shape) and constructed from natural wood. The interior will be flexible seating with room for a minimum of 6 persons for a wedding or a small group of children and teachers/staff when used as a learning facility by visiting groups.

In order to deal with increased sewerage a secondary system will be installed, consisting of a sufficiently sized septic tank and soak away. Aforementioned rainwater harvesting will be employed as grey water for the toilets and irrigation for the poly tunnels and horticulture.

Layout

The layout has been limited to encompass the current footprint, therefore offers no alteration to the orientation. We proposed to also place the main entrances to the hostel at the sight of the previous Heritage Centre entrance, reemploying the access routes from the road. The café entrance will be moved over only slightly on the east elevation, just to allow for the bathroom access to be enclosed.

We have included access from the café into the hostel reception. This will allow for a flexible facility. For example a resident group may wish to use the café for a meeting out of customer hours, or in the future the café may provide evening meals for hostel residents. Also should reception in the Hostel need to be closed during café trading hours, Café staff would be onsite to assist with any resident's issues.

Existing services have been considered when placing the communal kitchen to ensure that this can be easily installed and ventilated.

Many of the hostel facilities have been considered in view of the Enjoy England/VisitBritain standards document for Hostel Accommodation. As a service we would aim at achieving a 4 star accommodation and therefore have taken the opportunity to layout the accommodation to best help support the achievement of high quality provision.

Private en-suite rooms have been positioned at the front of the building to allow the slightly more expensive rooms to take advantage of a sea view.

The residents laundry/drying room and staff laundry need to be spacious but well ventilated, and with ease of access to services.

Staff and Owners accommodation needs to have separate access to customers, allowing privacy for all parties. Both Owners and staff have kitchen and bathroom facilities to allow comfort and valued separation from residents.

Scale

Please see plans for accurate building scales.

Landscaping

There is potential to undertake many activities in the outdoor area. Both to support the business; home grown fruit and vegetables, eggs. Recycling, renewable energy and rainwater harvesting. Also activities for the customer, as previously mentioned, children's play and family activities, small weddings, group learning and larger outdoor events (i.e. in recent years the local Vets Support Group Dog Show has been held on this site).

Plants will be limited to island native species to ensure that they are both hardy and will grow well on the site. Minimal additions will be required however a hedge of Oleria will be used to screen the access and parking area and agapanthus plants and a few other indigenous species will be incorporated for decoration and longevity. It is envisaged that any existing trees will be beneficial to the site environment, and apart from a little pruning here and there will not be affected.

Outdoor installations will be natural wood, this includes doors and windows, hand rails, some seating, fences, play area and any other structures. Some lighter weight seating, enabling less agile visitors to be comfortable may also be employed (such as rattan in natural colours). Or in the case of the proposed poly tunnels, green covering will be employed to ensure blending with the landscape.

The layout of the landscape has been chosen using both lessons learnt from previous site use and sensible organisation based on the sloping nature of the main field as well as sensitively sited so as to minimise impact.



Appearance

We are conscious that the design and layout of this scheme should embed itself into the landscape as quickly as possible. Many of the facets of the overall appearance are already in situ and by renovating the buildings and land use should enhance rather than alter the site environment.

We are investing in the following statement “**décor that compliments the natural land and seascape of the islands, using rustic wood and natural colour schemes that are attractive and characteristic**”. Therefore our choices on construction, layout, materials and decoration have all been guided by this notion.

We have and will continue to endeavour to select materials that can be easily maintained and hold their quality appearance well into the future. Furniture, fixtures and fittings need to be durable to ensure that they are both attractive and good value for money.

Access

We aim to provide accessible facilities, including DDA compliance where possible (including a disabled access WC and shower room location within the Hostel), and in the wider term by improving the access road to allow less-abled walkers, novice cyclists, pushchairs and golf buggy use. As Longstone is ‘off the beaten track’ signage and a wide variety of advertising and PR will also be required to highlight the available facilities and how to get there.

Signage will be positioned to indicate access to the Café and Hostel. These signs were currently in situ for previous incarnations of the business, therefore would be proposed to be reinstated in these positions: The main sign will be at the junction of Longstone Lane and Telegraph Road. Further signage would be sighted opposite the main entrance to

Carreg Dhu Gardens on Longstone Lane, and also the southerly road access point to Carreg Dhu (opposite Old Town Lane junction), and lastly in Holy Vale opposite the footpath through to Longstone.

During non-daylight hours the access routes will be highlighted by solar powered lighting, with low energy/wattage at reception to light the access slope and entrance.

Vehicular and transport links

The access road is challenging from Longstone Terrace to the site, the road is constructed of ram and full of deep potholes. This is currently very restrictive for customer access in terms of most methods of transport.

Onsite, there is currently only grass areas for a vehicle to park or turn around. When this site was 'Longstone Heritage Centre' there was an access road, parking and turning area constructed from Ram. Some of this we would like to reinstate to provide an attractive entrance and ease of access. (see plans for full details of proposed layout)

Emergency vehicle access is available along the main road to the front of the Café and Hostel and will be improved via the new Café delivery point at the rear of the building.



Inclusive Access

The site can be accessed from Holy Vale, via a footpath, through Carreg Dhu Gardens or from the main road at Sunnyside. Currently due to the poor state of the main access road, only those who are in possession of good mobility can easily reach the site. However once the road is resurfaced, and the entrance ways reinstated, access for all should be relatively simple.

In the proposed hostel area the flooring levels currently differ in height between the front and rear existing buildings. However this will be rectified in order to provide a facility all on one level which will combat any internal issues particularly for reduced mobility and wheelchair users. There will also be ramped access to both the Hostel and Café.

Appendix

1. Supporting Correspondence:

- a. John McGrath, Operations Manager, Youth Hostel Association
- b. Sabine Schraudolph, owner Country Guesthouse and Kauffehaus Café
- c. David Jackson, Executive Director, Island Partnership
- d. Richard Mills, owner Isles of Scilly Sailing Centre
- e. Jackie Gwennap, proprietor Isles of Scilly Weddings

a. John McGrath, Operations Manager, Youth Hostel Association

Subject: RE: YHA Affiliation / Isles of Scilly project
From: johnmcgrath@yha.org.uk
To: amyhiron@hotmail.com
Date: Fri, 2 Oct 2015 11:24:55 +0000

Hi!
See below. Hope this helps
John

1. Looking at accommodating educational groups, could you outline their usual preferences in travel and the viability of just being a group accommodation facility? Groups biggest factor in choosing group accom is now generally travel cost. The Isles are expensive to get to. In any case a hostel which relies entirely on group trade would almost certainly not be viable financially, and if you further limit to schools groups, would definitely not be financially sustainable.

2. In order to take booking for school/educational group travel what number of bed spaces would you advise as a minimum (for the entire hostel)?

Ideally we'd look for forty, that's a class and teachers / supervisors. Private schools, (smaller market again) perhaps less.

3. What are you most popular booked rooms at present? Do these usually have ensuite facilities?

Our most popular room size is family 5 en-suite. That's a bunk set, and a double with bunk over. This works for Family & Individual trade, and does not preclude groups, giving the best set up of all. We wouldn't, unless forced by some outside circumstances (listed building where we can't add or take down walls etc.. for example) we shouldn't build any room bigger than six beds, and mostly 4's.

4. What are your usual maximum dorm sizes? See above.

5. What other products are popular in the current market in terms of bookings and/or facilities?

"Groups" is by no means schools exclusively, in fact it's the smaller part of the market, though generally profitable as they may well take food as part of the package (breakfast where there's a cafe') – Exclusive Hire – where the whole place is hired, usually by a large family gathering, on a similar basis to a holiday cottage – thus no staff or servicing. It's often three weekend nights, thus meet and greet, and walk away until the cleaning needs doing on the Monday. This is our fastest growth product, and very efficient. It's also useful to be an accom provider for

other standard packages and events, such as the Govt's NCS programme, or Duke of Edinburgh, etc.

6. We are interested in working with you on the provision of a YHA affiliated hostel, would this be a possibility?

YHA's Charitable objective is to enhance the lives of all young people. To achieve that we need a broad representation geographically. We operate a scheme which affiliates existing hostels to our brand family, and providing we are not creating a clash of interests or competition, then the criteria we apply to join us is that:

- 1 There is a compelling reason to visit
- 2 That it's a place where YHA wants a presence, but will not be likely to invest itself
- 3 That the financial projections support the viability, given the work involved in setting up and maintaining marketing channels

Given what we have briefly discussed, I am confident that we'd be happy to take a formal Expression of Interest application to join the scheme, and consider it further.

I hope this helps to answer your questions, please don't hesitate to make contact if I can be of further assistance.



The image shows the footer of a promotional email from YHA. It features a green background with white and yellow text and icons. At the top left is the YHA logo, a green triangle with 'yha' in white. To its right is the website 'www.yha.org.uk' and a phone number '+44(0)1629 592 700'. Below the logo are four service categories: 'YHA Exclusive Hire', 'YHA School Trips', 'YHA Summer Camps', and 'YHA Breaks for Kids'. To the right of these are the company number '282555', registered charity number '306122', and the address 'YHA, Trevelyan House, Dimple Road, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3YH'. A 'GET SOCIAL' banner with icons for Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube is followed by a link to a video about YHA's 80th anniversary. Below this are three award logos: 'THE SUNDAY TIMES 100 BEST NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS TO WORK FOR 2014', 'INVESTORS IN PEOPLE Gold', and 'Best Marketing 2014'. A 'Think before you print' icon and text are present, along with a security warning about credit/debit card details and a confidentiality disclaimer. At the bottom, it mentions the email was scanned for viruses by MailMarshal / Sophos Anti-Virus.

www.yha.org.uk
+44(0)1629 592 700
YHA Exclusive Hire
Company Number 282555
YHA School Trips
Registered Charity Number 306122
YHA Summer Camps
YHA, Trevelyan House, Dimple Road,
YHA Breaks for Kids
Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3YH

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You can learn about the 80 years of YHA, in just four minutes by watching [this video](#).

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b. Sabine Schraudolph, owner Country Guesthouse & Kauffehaus Café.



Ms Amy Hiron
Rope Walk
Porth Loo
St. Mary's

26th January 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Support for a Café/Hostel business at Longstone

I fully support a development as a Café/Hostel business at Longstone, St. Mary's.

Tourism is our main income on the islands and our visitors should have a choice of different services. The location of Longstone Café is perfectly situated and in the countryside with no other service nearby. A hostel type accommodation would cater for a different sort of guest.

I have no doubt that Ms Hiron would provide the above services at a very high standard, which would add to the overall performance of our tourism industry.

Yours sincerely

Sabine Schraudolph

c. David Jackson, Executive Director, Island Partnership

Amy Hiron
The Rope Walk
St. Mary's
Isles of Scilly
TR21 ONF



23rd March 2016

Dear Amy

With reference to your planning application for the development of Longstone, you will appreciate I'm sure that without sight of or detailed knowledge of your plans, I am unable to comment on the specifics of your application. However, I am happy to provide a general note of support - in that the Islands' Partnership welcomes new investment of this nature into the islands, providing it is appropriate, sustainable and able to contribute to the growth of the islands' visitor economy.

With regard to the nature of your intended application, I would certainly attest to the fact that there is a growing trend for 'alternative' styles of accommodation amongst both domestic and overseas markets. Included within this, but also reflecting a parallel trend in recent years is the growing demand and popularity of hostel and bunkhouse style accommodation. This style of 'no frills' accommodation – flexible, group friendly, locally distinctive and affordable is currently lacking on the Isles of Scilly, which in itself is a missed opportunity given its potential to attract a different clientele to our traditional market. Any professional and well managed development of this nature would be a welcome addition to the islands.

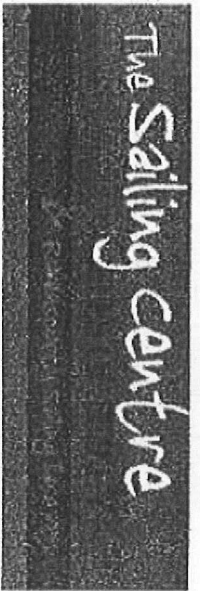
May I take this opportunity to wish you luck with your application - and if myself or the Islands' Partnership more generally can be of any further help, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

[Redacted signature box]

David Jackson
Executive Director
Islands' Partnership

d. Richard Mills, owner Isles of Scilly Sailing Centre



April 11th 2016

Planning Officer & Committee

Reference: Longstone Heritage Centre Conversion.

Dear Sirs

I would like to register my support for the application to convert and develop a small "YHA" style hostel at the Longstone site.

The opportunity for hostel style accommodation on Scilly will be a fantastic offering. Scilly is in desperate need of alternative forms of accommodation to the standard hotel, b&b and self catering options. The current offerings are often beyond the financial means of many independent travellers or the lack of flexibility in duration of stay puts them off.

This type of accommodation will attract families and active people with a desire to get out and enjoy Scilly, and take part in all Scilly has to offer.

As a water sports provider we get many individual and groups contacting us wishing to do an activities holiday here and require this kind of accommodation. School parties, university groups and specialist water sports groups such as kayak expeditions would all use this facility and would without doubt take part in other activities available on the islands but also spend well on excursions and in the shops, restaurants and bars, being good for all of the islands economy.

I hope this application is viewed favourably as it is an excellent opportunity to encourage a new venture that will provide a much needed service, and improve Scilly's offering.

Yours sincerely

Richard Mills

The Sailing Centre, Portluncheon, St Mary's,
Isles of Scilly, TR21 0NE
Tel 01720 422060
sailing@scillysailing.com

e. Jackie Gwennap, proprietor Isles of Scilly Weddings



Colin Jenkins, Amy Hiron and Suzy Hiron
The Rope Walk
St. Mary's
Isles of Scilly
TR21 0NF

29th March 2016

Dear Colin, Amy and Suzy

I am delighted to hear that you are looking at a creating a new wedding venue on the Isles of Scilly.

As a wedding planner I do struggle to offer clients a choice of venue. The majority being located in a hotel setting and not private unless you want to pay for exclusivity which most just cannot afford. Visiting wedding parties on the islands are relatively small due to the location and difficulties of getting guests to and from the islands.

I think what you are planning is a fantastic idea and I know that my clients would definitely like to use this as a wedding venue. Please keep me updated with your plans I would be happy to include this information to my clients as soon as/it becomes available.

Maybe we can look at working together in promoting this as a wedding venue in the very near future.

Wishing you lots of luck

Kind Regards


Jackie Hayman

Email: jackie@islesofscillywedding.com or Tel: 07971 980466

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