

## **ACCESS STATEMENT** **for Cromer House Barn**

### **1. Introduction**

Cromer House Barn offers self-catering accommodation ideal for walkers and cyclists. We can accommodate two people, including one wheelchair user, and 1–2 infants. The Barn has a secluded location in the quiet village of Frosterley in picturesque Weardale. Weardale is in the Durham Dales and is surrounded by the North Pennines Area of Outstanding National Beauty.

### **2. Pre-arrival information**

Cromer House Barn provides self-catering accommodation approved by Enjoy England and has accredited Walkers Welcome and Cyclists Welcome rating. The Barn has also achieved level 2 accreditation for its Mobility Access provision, it offers particular provision for one person requiring wheel chair access.

Cromer House Barn is part of the Green Tourist Business Scheme and has been awarded Gold, and we work with our visitors to maintain their Gold standard. We have worked closely with the North Pennines Area of Outstanding National Beauty (itself a Gold Green Tourism business) in making ourselves a greener business. The Barn has gained grants from the North Pennines (which is a European Geo-Park) for both a thermal store and a 'flush for free' Raincatcher system. As a green tourist accommodation provider, we are featured on their website and in their handbook. The thermal store is a British made highly insulated heat exchanger that is like a giant multi-feed immersion tank. It was fitted by approved local specialists, Alternative Energy Contracting Ltd based in Crook, and electrician Martin Jeal from Killhope. It processes the hot water produced by a solar panel on the south-facing roof of the main house and from the wood burning stove in the Barn. This system heats the radiators in the Barn and provides all the hot water. The Raincatcher system was also provided by a British manufacturer, Combined Harvesters Ltd, who endeavours to use where possible components of UK origin. It was fitted, along with the wood burning stove heating system, by local plumber Brian Graham of Rookhope who enjoyed the challenge of fitting the new latest alternative technology. The 'flush for free' system collects rainwater from the Barn roof which is stored in a large tank. The water is then filtered twice before being used to flush the toilet

and supply the washing machine. The water collected can also be used unfiltered to wash the mud off visitors bicycles and boots, and water plants in the garden beds around the Barn.

The Barn is close to bus stops for the 101 service that comes into Frosterley via Wolsingham from Crook and Bishop Auckland and goes further up through Weardale to Stanhope and St Johns. The local bus timetables are available online at [durham.gov.uk](http://durham.gov.uk). There are connections by bus from Crook and Bishop Auckland to Durham City, Darlington, Consett and Newcastle/Gateshead. Bishop Auckland also has a railway station with a connection to the national mainline network at Darlington. The Weardale Railway, an independent company already provides a heritage service through Weardale from Stanhope, stopping here at Frosterley, to Wolsingham and Bishop Auckland. Their schedule includes some steam trains. Future plans include providing a service further up Weardale again, as far as the proposed eco-village on the site of the former cement works at Eastgate.

Frosterley is famous for its distinctive black fossil encrusted limestone, known as Frosterley marble, which is still quarried here. It was used for the columns in Durham Cathedral, a world heritage site, and a fine example locally is the carved font in St Michael's Church which is located just behind the Barn. The 'marble' can also be seen in the bed of a stream a short walk away (see 'In Search of Frosterley Marble on our 'Attractions' web page), and is found in the fossil covered rocks strewn along the beautiful River Wear that flows through Frosterley. Harehope Quarry is an environmental education centre on the outskirts of the village that runs a variety of courses and has an eco-classroom that operates on the latest alternative energy technology. Frosterley has two friendly pubs: the Frosterley Inn on the green and the Black Bull down at the Batts, where the archers of the village were traditionally trained. The Black Bull provides excellent meals that can be booked, real ale and guest meals in a traditional setting with open fires and stone floors. The Frosterley Inn has bar snacks.

Further up Weardale are the Durham Dales Visitors Centre in Stanhope, the Weardale Museum at Ireshopeburn, and the Killhope and Nenthead Mining Museums. Spectacular waterfalls can be seen at High Force and Low Force in nearby Teesdale, along with the tranquil and sheltered Ecclestone Gardens and the Bowes Museum. In the beautiful Derwent Valley is the picturesque village of Blanchland and for couples with young children Hall Hill Farm

and Broom Hill Farm. Only a little further away is Beamish Open Air Museum which recreates County Durham of the past.

### **3. Booking arrangements**

Booking can be done online via Hoseasons.

Full details on how to find us are available on our website, with directions for travel by car, bus and bike. Our website also provides information about local attractions, special events and visitor offers.

### **4. Arrival and car parking**

There is parking for one car in the drive adjacent to Cromer House. Please do not drive down into the courtyard. If required, there is also additional parking in the village car park for casual visitors which is a 2-3 minute walk away.

When you arrive you can park across or at the top of the drive to the left of Cromer House and call at front door. There are two steps to the front door.

Having parked in the drive, access to Cromer House Barn is down the gently sloping block paved driveway.

There are no steps to the Barn. In addition we can provide a fine wooden ramp to enable wheelchairs and buggies to move smoothly over the lip of the door.

Local taxi companies recommended by the Durham Dales Visitors Centre are as follow:

Weardale Private Hire, Stanhope Tel: 01388 527272

Walton's Travel, Stanhope Tel: 01388 526850

Paul Hutchinson, Wolsingham Tel: 01388 526328

Lincab Taxis, Crook Tel: 01388 763500

The semi-circular amenity space for visitors is at the rear of the Barn and reached from the courtyard. It has been landscaped with raised beds. There are patio chairs and a circular table. There are no steps in the courtyard and generally the ground is hard block paved and quite level. There are some

areas where there are natural stone flags which have a slight unevenness of surface. The Barn dates back to the eighteenth century and some parts of the courtyard retain the original stone cobbles that used to cover the whole of the courtyard.

## **5. On site**

A Guest Information Pack is available in the Barn, which provides details of local services and contact numbers.

We ask visitors who have special requirements to give us 24 hours notice of their needs. For instance, guests may have a disability or couples may have infants or babies, and we can ensure that the barn is appropriately prepared for your arrival. Assistance dogs and well behaved dogs are welcome.

Because the Barn is located in the courtyard behind our own house, we feel we can give our guests an individual and friendly welcome. We expect to greet guests in the courtyard and will come out to meet you as you arrive. Please note we have our own personal amenity space which separates us from the Barn and gives both ourselves and our guests some privacy.

If you indicate you are disabled, we can help you unload if you wish.

We provide good access for a single wheelchair user. The entrance door is exceptionally wide, as required by building regulations for public venues, and opens outwards. It is fitted with handles that are easy to grip and a horizontal pull bar on the inside for ease of closing, both at the recommended levels. It has a magnetic catch that will hold the door open when needed, but is easily released when the door is pulled. Inside, the entrance hall light comes on automatically via a sensor that detects your movement, which you can switch to remain on once inside if you wish. In the dining area you will find chairs both with and without arms and plenty of space to transfer from your wheel-chair. We can organise your check-in from there. Access and other visitor information is in the Guest Information Pack in the dining area.

There is plenty of room for a wheel chair user to move around on the ground floor level. We can provide detailed plans of the Barn if you are concerned about the space available for your visit. From the open plan downstairs area a wide door gives access to the continental style wet-room which has right

hand transfer spaces for the toilet and the shower, and a generous sized hand basin that has sufficient space underneath for close access. All are fitted with the necessary vertical, horizontal and drop down support bars. The main food preparation work surface in the kitchen is adjustable, and we can put it at the level recommended for a wheel-chair user – or we will try to meet individual requirements if possible, provided we are given 24 hours notice. The taps in the kitchen are of a traditional style, but they only require a light quarter turn to put them on fully and they are oversized so operate like a push/pull tap.

We have completed up to date fire and safety checks. We have smoke/heat alarms fitted that are very sensitive, so do please use the extractor fan in the kitchen when cooking – especially if you use the grill in the top oven for something like cheese on toast, or if you think there is any risk of any rapid heat from cooking being released. The fan has a high setting that is one of the quietest and most efficient on the market – please use it in these instances. We have fitted three fire extinguishers that may help in an emergency and there is a fire blanket fitted on the wall opposite the cooker. The evacuation procedure in the event of a fire is in the Guest Information Pack in the Barn. Please keep the entrance hall and stairs free from obstruction – as you will find them on arrival – in case of an emergency.

We are a non-smoking establishment.

Cyclists can store their cycles securely inside the garage which is adjacent to the Barn and for the use by visitors to the Barn. Cyclists and walkers can use the area around the thermal store at the back of the garage to dry clothing and gear. In addition there are hooks for drying clothes just inside the entrance to the Barn and upstairs.

In the colder months or if the weather is unseasonally chilly, we will light the wood burning stove (located upstairs) in advance of your initial arrival to heat the (downstairs) radiators.

There is a washing machine inside the adjacent garage for use by our visitors. We can supply eco washing liquid in one load amounts for a small charge. Our modern machine is easy to use and A rated for efficiency. The washing machine and the toilet are run off rain water – when available – collected off the barn roof and double filtered before use (see our green business policy).

We can supply a cot for infants at no extra charge. We can also supply a high chair in the dining area, and a baby bath that can be used in the shower area.

We are keen gardeners and although the garden is not very large around the courtyard, we have constructed several stone-walled raised flower beds. Although we are still planting these up, we have already managed to fit a lot of plants in and the garden now benefits from a range of interesting colourful and fragrant displays throughout the seasons. Many of the raised beds are at a convenient height to be enjoyed by wheel chair users. We attract a number of different garden birds – including chaffinches, thrushes, pied wagtails, swifts, blackbirds and bluetits – while pheasants often explore the lane by the side of the house in the early morning and at quiet times of the day.

Across the lane from Cromer House Barn is the village playing field and a small recreation ground – the latter has a small play area, swings, climbing frames and slide. This is popular and safe for children to play in. A little way behind the house off the lane is the Church, and a tree lined private parking area. The Barn is sheltered by a high wall around a secluded amenity space where you can relax or enjoy eating outside. The Barn is not overlooked by the houses in the immediate surrounding area.

The local Co-op is excellent. It is a small supermarket with a wide range of products and fresh fruit and vegetables, also houses our Post Office, and is less than 50 metres away. Monday to Saturday it opens 8am to 7.30pm, but is closed on Sundays. Check in the shop for special opening hours on bank holidays. Access to the Co-op is quite wide and level.

There is also a very good traditional fish and chip shop next door to the Co-op, which is open Tuesday to Saturday at lunchtimes and from 4pm-7.30pm in the evening. The chippy entrance has two standard doors to negotiate, but food can be booked by phone and they are very friendly. If you are a wheelchair user they will ring and look out for you if you when your food is ready – they will be able to see you coming along the street.

Next to the Chippy you'll find the Village Hall, which has had disabled access and toilet provision. They have a variety of events on each week, and special events throughout the year. The Hall has a licensed bar and snooker tables.

## **6. Future plans**

We intend to review our access provision annually. We would welcome feedback from our guests and will endeavour to respond to any comments or suggestions.

## **7. Contact details**

Cromer House Barn  
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Frosterley  
Weardale  
Co. Durham DL13 2QS  
Telephone: 01388 526632  
Minicom: none  
Fax: none  
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