



Quality in Tourism

Visit Report

Self-Catering Standard

Wheeldon Trees Farm

Earl Sterndale

★★★★ Self Catering 87 - 89%

Gold Award

Cyclists Welcome, Walkers Welcome, Welcome Pets!, Families
Welcome

Visit date: 08 Dec 2015

Visit type: Day

QiT No: 551133

Group/Unit Name: Sheldon Cottage

	Score
Exterior	
Appearance of buildings	4
Grounds, gardens and parking	4
Environment and setting	5
	86%
Management Efficiency	
Pre arrival info including brochure	5
Welcome and arrival procedure	5
In unit guest info and personal touches	5
	100%
Public Areas	
Decoration	5
Flooring	5
Furniture, furnishings and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	88%
Bedrooms	
Decoration	4
Flooring	4
Furniture, furnishings and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Mattress, bed bases and headboards	5
Bedding and bed linen	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	82%
Bathrooms and WCs	
Decoration	4
Flooring	5
Fixtures, fittings and sanitary ware	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	84%
Kitchen	
Decoration	4
Flooring	5
Furniture and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	5
Kitchen equipment	4
Crockery, cutlery and glassware	4
Kitchenware, pans and utensils	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	85%
Additional Facilities	
Laundry	4
	80%
Cleanliness	
Living and dining area	5
Bedroom	5
Bathroom	5
Kitchen	5
	100%
	87%

Key Scores and Sectional Consistencies

Overall

87% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

Cleanliness

100% = Level 5; (90% to 100%)

Public Areas

88% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

Bedrooms

82% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

Bathrooms

84% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

Kitchen

85% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

In order to achieve a star rating the following elements of the assessment need to be satisfied.

1. All Minimum Entry Requirements must be met. (See Minimum Entry Requirement page in this report for detail)
2. The Star rating will be no higher than the level achieved by the overall percentage.
3. Key Area Scores: All sectional consistency areas must be equal to or higher than the overall rating (No areas to be below the overall)
4. The Star rating will be capped if Key Requirements are not met at each rating level.

Group/Unit Name: Walkers Rest

	Score
Exterior	
Appearance of buildings	4
Grounds, gardens and parking	4
Environment and setting	5
	86%
Management Efficiency	
Pre arrival info including brochure	5
Welcome and arrival procedure	5
In unit guest info and personal touches	5
	100%
Public Areas	
Decoration	4
Flooring	5
Furniture, furnishings and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	5
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	88%
Bedrooms	
Decoration	4
Flooring	5
Furniture, furnishings and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Mattress, bed bases and headboards	5
Bedding and bed linen	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	3
	82%
Bathrooms and WCs	
Decoration	5
Flooring	4
Fixtures, fittings and sanitary ware	5
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	88%
Kitchen	
Decoration	5
Flooring	5
Furniture and fittings	5
Lighting, heating and ventilation	5
Kitchen equipment	4
Crockery, cutlery and glassware	4
Kitchenware, pans and utensils	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	90%
Additional Facilities	
Laundry	4
	80%
Cleanliness	
Living and dining area	5
Bedroom	5
Bathroom	5
Kitchen	5
	100%
	89%

Key Scores and Sectional Consistencies

Overall

89% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

Cleanliness

100% = Level 5; (90% to 100%)

Public Areas

88% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

Bedrooms

82% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

Bathrooms

88% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

Kitchen

90% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

In order to achieve a star rating the following elements of the assessment need to be satisfied.

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3. Key Area Scores: All sectional consistency areas must be equal to or higher than the overall rating (No areas to be below the overall)
4. The Star rating will be capped if Key Requirements are not met at each rating level.

Group/Unit Name: Wheeldon Trees Cottages

	Score
Exterior	
Appearance of buildings	4
Grounds, gardens and parking	4
Environment and setting	5
	86%
Management Efficiency	
Pre arrival info including brochure	5
Welcome and arrival procedure	5
In unit guest info and personal touches	5
	100%
Public Areas	
Decoration	5
Flooring	4
Furniture, furnishings and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	84%
Bedrooms	
Decoration	4
Flooring	4
Furniture, furnishings and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Mattress, bed bases and headboards	5
Bedding and bed linen	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	82%
Bathrooms and WCs	
Decoration	4
Flooring	4
Fixtures, fittings and sanitary ware	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	5
	84%
Kitchen	
Decoration	4
Flooring	5
Furniture and fittings	4
Lighting, heating and ventilation	5
Kitchen equipment	4
Crockery, cutlery and glassware	4
Kitchenware, pans and utensils	4
Space, comfort and ease of use	4
	85%
Additional Facilities	
Laundry	4
	80%
Cleanliness	
Living and dining area	5
Bedroom	5
Bathroom	5
Kitchen	5
	100%
	87%

Key Scores and Sectional Consistencies

Overall

87% = Level 5; (87% to 100%)

Cleanliness

100% = Level 5; (90% to 100%)

Public Areas

84% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

Bedrooms

82% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

Bathrooms

84% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

Kitchen

85% = Level 4; (75% to 86%)

In order to achieve a star rating the following elements of the assessment need to be satisfied.

1. All Minimum Entry Requirements must be met. (See Minimum Entry Requirement page in this report for detail)
2. The Star rating will be no higher than the level achieved by the overall percentage.
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Executive Summary

Overview

Wheeldon Trees Farm Cottages secure Four Star Self Catering ratings.

Results throughout all assessed areas and in all nine cottages are safe to high, in some cases touching Five Star standards. Housekeeping was again found to be exemplary, for which the owners and their staff are to be congratulated. These consistently strong results ensure that Gold Awards can be confirmed again for all cottages.

In attendance throughout the assessment were one of the owners Deborah Hofman, and her assistant Lisa Bagshaw. Mrs Hofman remains satisfied with and keen to retain the current ratings and accolades.

Units Seen

Accompanied by owner Deborah Hofman and by Lisa Bagshaw the following cottages were viewed:- Sheldon, Walkers Rest, Critchlow, Elliott, Lomas, Mycock, Nadin, Ollerenshaw and Priestley, which constitute the full complement of nine units.

Website Feedback

Adjusting to mobile devices is now important for a strong internet presence and the results of an online test of the website were positive. For more information go to www.google.co.uk/webmaster/tools/mobile-friendly

The website (www.wheeldontreesfarm.co.uk) featured well in laptop searches for self catering in Earl Sterndale and also near Buxton. A named search revealed the website on the first page of Google along with references on professional marketing sites. Of these the Tripadvisor site was viewed and found to contain many favourable reviews. The owners respond selectively to online reviews especially if comments are negative or suggest possible improvements.

A copy of the most up-to-date VisitEngland logo is being sent for display as proof of a professional evaluation of standards. The site is well categorised making it easy to go to items of particular interest. There are some very good ideas, including the 'My Favourite Things to Do' page, where guest sell the area to each other. Detailed accessibility information is provided for each cottage. Guests' comments and links to social networking sites are kept up-to-date.

This website does an excellent job of capturing the experience of a stay at Wheeldon Trees Farm, from the strapline 'In the middle of nowhere' to an atmospheric and informative video.

Cleanliness/Housekeeping

No dust, marking, smearing or other evidence of any lack of attention to the detail of housekeeping was seen anywhere in the cottages. Kitchen appliances are evidently deep cleaned regularly. Cupboards and drawers are neat and tidy and the contents gleam. Upholstery, bed linens and curtains are immaculately presented, and flooring is thoroughly cleaned into corners and behind doors.

Public Areas

Although the furniture, furnishings and fittings used in living areas are similar throughout the cottages, what gives them individual character is the intrinsic features that have been retained including supporting beams, stone walls and in some cases pillars. There is underfloor heating beneath the tiled flooring, fuelled by a ground source heat pump. Electric stoves and double glazing are further assurances of a warm, comfortable environment. Oak dining tables are presented set up for a meal, Christmas trimmings adding to the sense of occasion. Most easy seating is leather upholstered, cushions and woven throws an added touch of luxury. Coffee tables have been added and light fittings have been modernised over the last year.

Bedrooms

Zip and link beds add to the flexible usage of many bedrooms. Headboards are firmly fitted and covered in a wipe-clean material. High quality mattresses ensure a comfortable night's sleep. Bedspreads are gradually being replaced with an over-stitched cotton sort which are easy to wash. Satin stripe linens cover microfibre bedding - down filling might be a thought for future improvement although it is noted that guests are already given a choice of feather or man made pillow fillings.

Bedrooms are well provided with modern oak wardrobes and hanging space for dressing gowns and clothing.

Mirrors with integral shelving provide a space-saving vanity area in each room. Some handsome steel bedside lamps observed, but bedside lighting is more often than not wired-in, and in Elliott switches have been moved to improve access for each occupant of the double bed.

Carpet covers a very comfortable underlay and is free of major marks or signs of wear.

Bathrooms

The owners are looking for ways to improve storage in smaller bathrooms, since the shelving fitted is often full of toiletry items which the owners provide. Mirrored cabinets with integral lighting, shelving and shaver sockets might be worthy of investigation as they would not add significantly to the use of space.

In Nadin the basin has been removed so that new taps can be fitted to replace some which had become rusty below the basin itself. This is one of a number of cottages that might benefit from improved levels of storage.

In almost all cottage bathrooms LED light fittings have been installed. Ollerenshaw is the exception to this, with notably inferior illumination levels. Large heated towel rails and strong extractors are further assurances of a comfortable environment. Outward opening doors ease access into some of the smaller bathrooms, meaning that all are practical in terms of size.

Fixtures and fittings are all presented in very good condition. The accessible cottage Sheldon has the most generous provision of bathroom facilities, including a fully equipped wet room.

Kitchen

The age of furniture varies a little between the cottages, all remain in very good working order although new worktops are planned for Elliott and Nadin for the coming year. There are also changes planned for Critchlow, where the owners feel an extra storage cupboard and extended worktop would be of benefit. The veneer at the bottom of wall cupboards in Priestley is beginning to be peeled back by steam from the kettle; recommend that both the kettle and toaster are moved before heat damage becomes visible (and that other cottages are checked for similar problems).

There is a regular review of kitchen equipment and this year weighty new Lakeland oven dishes and electronic scales have been added. Kitchens now boast Joseph Joseph Totem bins which incorporate general waste and recycling into one neat unit. Appliances this year include dishwashers in all cottages. Laundry equipment is available for all to use in a communal room, although each cottage has its own iron and board. Denby crockery is replaced as it becomes worn to maintain standards. The William Welch cutlery is a very stylish touch. The Wheeldon Trees mugs are new this year as are the Denby pasta bowls.

These are well equipped rooms, well lit, with extractors over the hobs, and offering solid Four Star standards of appointment.

Management Efficiency

The strength of management efficiency lies in the fact that the owners are constantly striving to anticipate and meet the likely needs of guests. There are many examples of this, not least the high-vis jackets, torches and head torches provided in each cottage for late night dog walks. As well as the Long Room, which is fully equipped for communal meals and for 'wet weekend' entertainment, the laundry includes a small retail area with essentials and locally sourced products. Coffee beans are roasted in-house. A large freezer in the laundry is kept topped up with frozen meals that are cooked on the premises.

Guest information is comprehensive and well categorised. It is provided in folders in all cottages, and has also been loaded onto the TVs to make it even more accessible. The 'What's Around You' folders are new this year. Guests all receive a personal welcome and a memorable arrival package which has local touches but is also designed to reward repeat customers.

Potential for Improvement

Down filled duvets now come with hypo-allergenic covers and thus might be worth considering when bedding needs replacement.

Look online for bathroom cabinets with integral shelving, lighting and shaver sockets; these come in a variety of styles to suit modern and traditional bathrooms.

It was noted during the walk-round that bathroom facilities in Ollerenshaw still awaited LED fittings.

New worktops are planned for Elliot and Nadin.

Before damage becomes visible, suggest toasters and kettles are moved away from wall units, as discussed.

Highlights

The owners have made numerous changes over the past year in order to refine and improve the guest experience at Wheeldon Trees Farm, and these are outlined in each section of the report. Given that these are true cottage-sized properties, perhaps the most striking are the neat and very functional Joseph Joseph Totem bins, although modernisation of light fittings and the use throughout of LED bulbs also deserve to be highlighted. Guests can be confident of the highest standards of cleanliness at Wheeldon Trees Farm.

High standards of appointment, an exceptional setting, and excellent customer care are amongst the strengths of Wheeldon Trees Farm.

Walkers Welcome

Boot trays and rows of hooks near the main entrance to each cottage are provided for walkers. There are devices in each cottages for drying wet outdoor equipment. High visibility jackets (bearing the farm logo on the back) and a variety of torches are available for late night dog walks. Dog mats, bowls and food samples plus an option to purchase further supplies at a discount welcome canine guests. The farm has the Long Room where indoor play equipment is provided for the entertainment of children and others on wet days, and where groups and families can gather for communal meals. There are outbuildings where cycles can be securely stored. Wheeldon Trees Farm offers excellent facilities and fully meets the requirements of the Walkers, Cyclists, Families and Pets Welcome schemes.

Minimum Entry Requirements

Group: Sheldon Cottage
Standard: Self-Catering
Designator: Self Catering
Rating: Four Star Gold
Specialities: Cyclists Welcome, Walkers Welcome, Welcome Pets!, Families Welcome
(Sheldon Cottage)

For a rating to be awarded by VisitEngland a property must meet all Minimum Entry Requirements
Key Requirements, as appropriate to the Star level
Any Additional Requirements

At the time of our visit all of the Minimum Entry Requirements and Additional requirements/Key Requirements were provided.

Group: Walkers Rest
Standard: Self-Catering
Designator: Self Catering
Rating: Four Star Gold
Specialities: Cyclists Welcome, Walkers Welcome, Welcome Pets!, Families Welcome
(Walker's Rest)

For a rating to be awarded by VisitEngland a property must meet all Minimum Entry Requirements
Key Requirements, as appropriate to the Star level
Any Additional Requirements

At the time of our visit all of the Minimum Entry Requirements and Additional requirements/Key Requirements were provided.

Group: Wheeldon Trees Cottages
Standard: Self-Catering
Designator: Self Catering
Rating: Four Star Gold
Specialities: Cyclists Welcome, Walkers Welcome, Welcome Pets!, Families Welcome
(Critchlow Cottage, Elliott Cottage, Lomas Cottage, Mycock Cottage, Nadin Cottage, Ollerenshaw Cottage, Priestley Cottage)

For a rating to be awarded by VisitEngland a property must meet all Minimum Entry Requirements
Key Requirements, as appropriate to the Star level
Any Additional Requirements

At the time of our visit all of the Minimum Entry Requirements and Additional requirements/Key Requirements were provided.

Visit Report

Your VisitEngland quality assessment report, comprising scores, star rating and commentary reflects the experience of the Quality in Tourism assessor on the day of the visit.

Appeals procedure

If for any reason you wish to appeal against the rating awarded, VisitEngland has an established appeals procedure, which Quality in Tourism operates on its behalf. A fee is payable, which is refunded if the appeal is upheld. Applications should be made within 14 days of receipt of the report. For details please contact Quality in Tourism at qualityintourism@uk.g4s.com or telephone 0845 300 6996. Details can also be found at www.qualityintourism.com.

Additional visits

Visits are generally carried out annually, but if you are aiming for a higher rating or accolade and prefer an earlier visit during the same participation year, this can be arranged for an additional fee. Contact Quality in Tourism for details.

Publishing of reports

This report may, at your discretion, be displayed in its entirety in any printed material or via electronic media.