



## Executive Summary

**Overview** Long Barn Luxury Holiday Cottages are presented and maintained to a high standard and have comfortably retained the Four Star Self-catering grading for each of the 4 properties. The continuing commitment to all aspects of the business and the ongoing reinvestment and enhancements has also ensured that the Gold Awards are also successfully retained. Scores have been further strengthened this year due to the upgrades that have taken place and the percentages now reflecting these changes. All the criteria for the Families Welcome Scheme also continues to be well established and implemented. Mr and Mrs Lane reconfirmed that they prefer to "under promise and over deliver" and are satisfied with the current rating and associated awards as being a true and fair reflection of the quality and standards in place.

**Units Seen** All 4 properties were seen (Hamledown, Honey Bag, Huccaby and Long Barn) albeit with Honeybag in the process of being finished ready for Friday's arrivals. The show round was conducted with Mrs Sandra Lane and the resulting summation was then conducted with both owners Mr Mike and Mrs Sandra Lane. **Website Feedback** When a laptop Google search was made for Self-catering properties near Newton Abbott the website was listed 5th with the Google map pin locator detailed. The secondary Google search implementing the name and area specific then seen the details being listed first. The website is regularly monitored ensuring a wealth of information is provided. Images and descriptive text for each individual property are well defined and correctly represented; it was noted that additional images are planned later this year to reflect the changes now in place. Contact details being well promoted at the top of the landing page. All relevant and required information is well detailed along with full terms and conditions. Secure on-line booking available. Social media sites are used to further promote the business and a Blog is in place to allow any interested parties to keep up to date with what is happening. Trip Advisor excellence certificate also in place although for 2014. The website being available to download as a mobile friendly App.

The Correct VisitEngland grading, associated award and Families Welcome Scheme logos are prominently displayed as well as the Access Statement also correctly defined. The website is very user friendly and straightforward to navigate also being easily located and downloaded from the Google search engine used.

**Cleanliness/Housekeeping** There continues to be an excellent standard of cleanliness throughout all areas, which certainly consolidates the quality perception for this grading level. As previously mentioned Honey Bag was still to be prepared and this was duly taken into account when assessing the other 3 pristine units. All high and low level ledges and fittings were presented and maintained dust and cobweb free, the tiled and wooden flooring where fitted being maintained to a very high standard of cleanliness. Furniture, soft furnishings and fittings presenting to a similar superior

standard; bed linen immaculately pressed. Bathroom fittings and sanitary wear spotless; glazed surfaces and tiled surfaces pristine. The dining arrangement along with kitchen also showing the same exacting standards and attention to all aspects of the detailing, this high level of housekeeping being consistently maintained as well as being a key element of the overall guest experience.

**Public Areas** The crisp smart painted finishes continue to be presented and applied to a high standard; refreshing of the paintwork is continuous to maintain the appearance across all units; the exposed beams have all been repainted as part of the ongoing attention to presentation. The presentation and quality perceptions further enhanced with the exposed stone detailing, beams, and new artworks where applicable, along with the superior quality hard wearing slabs and exposed wooden flooring where fitted.

New carpeting now in place for the stairwell and corridors in the Long Barn, and it was noted that new drapery is due to be fitted in this area to co-ordinate with the new colour detailing.

All the furniture items, comfortable seating along with the various fixtures and fittings all appearing to be in very good condition further consolidating the scoring for these key elements; all the various dining tables with matching chairs also being suitably maintained, new oil cloth has been implemented for the table in Huccaby.

There are superior levels of well- placed lighting, controllable ambient heating which is supplemented with a focal log burner, plentiful natural light and ventilation throughout all the public areas. Comfortably furnished and configured to maximise the generous amount of space. The Long Barn having the advantage of separate lounges as well as the choice of dining options; the scoring for ease of use, comfort and space has been increased as it was felt that this did provide an excellent level for the amount of accommodated guests. Huccaby being slightly more restrictive in its overall spatial perceptions.

**Bedrooms** The décor remains as last seen across all the properties and continues to be applied to a high standard; the sense of light has been enhanced by the owners having now painted the applicable windows and shelf in White Matt. Carpeted flooring continues to deliver a high level of comfort underfoot with no signs of deterioration noted. There is ample hanging and storage provided with all the free standing items appearing to be in very good condition. Drapery is well fitted and care has been taken with the overall co-ordination in regards to the soft furnishings dressing the beds. Robust beds supplemented with deep mattresses which continue to deliver a superior degree of comfort and support. 100% cotton bedding is used. The bedrooms have been carefully furnished and arranged to allow for a very good sense of space, ease of use and comfort to be achieved.

**Bathrooms** The biggest change this year has been implemented to the quality and specification of the en suite and family bathroom in Huccaby; these having now been totally redone and careful reconfiguration and lowering of the bath allowing for a shower to fitted. Superior quality tiled finishes to the main wet areas as well as the flooring which has seen an increase to the overall scoring for these key areas. New sanitary ware along with the fixtures and fittings also been implemented along with new wall mounted heated towel rails and recessed lighting. This has also been done in Honey Bag which is due for completion. A more modern bathroom in regards to design and finishes has also been fitted in the Long Barn's Master en suite; whilst the remaining facilities in this property and a more modern styling in Hamledown remaining to a high standard; the decorative finishes remain most practical and well maintained. It was noted that the carpeted flooring in the shower room en suite in Hamledown is being considered for replacement with a comparable

superior flooring as the rest of the properties. There continues to be very good levels of well placed lighting, ambient heating as well as extraction and natural light and ventilation throughout. The owners continue to supply an excellent range and quality of towelling, individual toiletries as well as useful sundry items. All bathrooms are fitted to enhance ease of use, the ratio of facilities to guests more than meeting the levels for this grading level.

**Kitchen** Well configured kitchens making the best use of the available space and natural light. The painted and tiled decorative finishes continue to be well presented and maintained to a high standard. High quality units and worktops ensure suitable amounts of storage and preparation space in proportion to the amount of accommodated guests; the contemporary design and presentation very much in keeping with style of the individual properties. The hard wearing flooring remains in excellent order and continues to be well maintained; all appliances are of a top quality and also appeared to be very well maintained. New free standing Fridge/Freezers now in place for Huccaby and the Long barn, the owners look to replace as and when required to maintain the quality and standards. All kitchen continue to be fully stocked with all the required and relevant items, these being of a uniformed high quality; a wide range of ancillary items also in place more than meeting the requirements at this level. Lighting is well placed to ensure all key areas are suitably illuminated, grease filtration in places well as plentiful natural ventilation ensures any cooking odours are dealt with at source. The open plan arrangements does allow for greater interaction with an additional dining table provided in the Long Barn. A separate utility room in the Long Barn houses the washing and drying appliances and is also well maintained. It was suggested that the appearance of the boiler could be enhanced, could look to enclose this area with consideration still being given to access and ventilation.

**Management Efficiency** Excellent marketing and booking procedures continue to be very well-managed, with well- practised arrival procedures in place. All guests are met on arrival with a full and comprehensive orientation given. The owners live adjacent to the property, being on hand to assist in any matters that may arise. Guest manuals are regularly updated and continue to be user friendly with a superior amount of useful and relevant information included. The current range of suitable and useful accessories and in house welcome touches provided continue to enhance the guest experience with a full range of television channels and Wi-Fi as standard. Long Barn now benefits from Fibre Optic Wi-Fi and the owners are looking at the feasibility and practicalities of adding this to the other properties.

**The Families Welcome Scheme** continues to be a major part of the attraction of these properties with a well equipped Play barn and stylish heated indoor pool along with secure and safe outdoor play areas. Potential for Improvement It was most positive to see that there were no significant issues raised or discussed at this assessment; due to the fact that the owners remain most proactive in ensuring all aspects of their business continue to be presented and maintained to the levels required for this grading to continue in the longer term.

The reinvestments made are commendable, with the quality and standards being further strengthened. Since the last visit the owners have enhanced the flooring around the swimming pool and in the changing rooms along with enhancing the shower fittings and fixtures. Exterior painting to the windows has taken place and plans to paint the more weathered areas where applicable. Highlights Comfortable and very well-appointed properties providing a very high standard of self-catering accommodation for various range of guests, families and groups. Exemplary standards for housekeeping remains a key element. Games Barn and a stylish indoor heated swimming pool area continues to be an enticing marketing tool as well as being well received facilities. Each property

benefits from its own enclosed garden space with brick built barbecues and stylish well preserved outdoor furniture. Communal areas are also provided with a range of children climbing frames and swings; it was also noted that the guests do make use of the fenced in field for outdoor games. The Cottages and Long Barn are adjacent to each other and to the owner's house yet still affords a very good sense of privacy. The semi-rural location adds to the overall guest experience and yet is easily accessible to the local and main road links to all parts of Torbay and further afield.

#### Minimum Entry Requirements

##### **Long Barn Unit:**

Rating: **Four Star Gold**

Self-Catering Self Catering

Standard: Designator:

**Families Welcome Specialities:** 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.

##### **Hameldown Unit:**

Rating: **Four Star Gold**

Self-Catering Self Catering

Standard: Designator:

**Families Welcome Specialities:** 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.

##### **Huccaby Unit:**

Rating: **Four Star Gold**

Self-Catering Self Catering

Standard: Designator:

**Families Welcome Specialities:** 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.

##### **Honeybag Unit:**

Rating: **Four Star Gold**

Self-Catering Self Catering

Standard: Designator:

**Families Welcome Specialities:** 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.