

# GROUP VISITS

# THE OLD HOUSE OF KEYS

**Welcome to the group visitor information for the Old House of Keys situated in Castletown. Here you will find everything you need to plan a visit.**



The Old House of Keys is the former home of the Manx Parliament and centre of nineteenth century political life on the Isle of Man. Animated portraits of Keys members and a simulated model of Mr Speaker bring the debating chamber to life. The Secretary of the House welcomes you to join in the debates on law in this fun, participatory experience.

Things to see and do:

- Meet the costumed secretary of this historic building
- Take a seat in the finely restored debating chamber
- Watch as the talking head of Mr Speaker and animated portraits of the Members of the House come to life
- Discover how democracy developed on the Isle of Man
- Listen carefully as Mr Speaker demands 'order!'
- Shape the Island's future and introduce motorcycle racing to the Island's open roads
- Discover how democracy developed on the Isle of Man
- Decide whether women should get the vote
- Shout 'aye' for those in favour and 'no' for those against!

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## **Opening hours 2019**

Sittings take place at 11.00am, 1.45pm & 2.45pm daily from 1 April to 3 November.

## **Opening hours 2020**

Sittings take place at 11.00am, 1.45pm & 2.45pm daily from 1 April to 1 November.

The maximum group size per sitting is 25 adults.

Please note that other timings and back-to-back sittings can be arranged on request for groups. Please provide at least two working days' notice for this.

## **Timing your visit**

A sitting lasts for 45 minutes with time at the end for any questions your group might have.

Manx National Heritage recommends that a visit to the Old House of Keys is timed to coincide with other attractions within walking distance in Castletown:

- Castle Rushen, one of the world's best preserved medieval castles
- The Nautical Museum, where you can discover the story of the late Captain George Quayle, his eccentric boathouse and his most significant surviving creation the Peggy. The Peggy has temporarily been removed to a specialist building for a long-term programme of stabilisation, conservation and study.
- The Old Grammar School where rows of benches and desks are a reminder of early Victorian school days. This site can be opened for pre-booked groups by special request.

A visit to the Old House of Keys can also be easily combined with a visit to Rushen Abbey in neighbouring Ballasalla or the National Folk Museum at Cregneash which is a ten minute drive away.

## **2019/2020 admission prices**

Pre-booked group £5 per adult\*

\*To qualify for the pre-booked group rate, groups must consist of at least 15 people and must be paid for 7 days in advance.

Holiday passes providing multi-site admission can be pre-booked at a discounted rate of £22 for groups and are also available at the standard price of £25 from all Manx National Heritage sites. Passes must be shown on entry to each site.



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A combined Go Heritage Explore card is also available to groups of 20 or more which offers, during normal operating times, unlimited access to Manx National Heritage sites and unlimited travel on the heritage railways, buses and Douglas horse trams for up to 5 days. The group rate for the **2019** Go Explore Heritage card is £58.50 per person.

Manx National Heritage have reciprocal agreements with a number of other heritage organisations such as National Trust, English Heritage and CADW amongst others, providing free or reduced admission on presentation of a valid membership card. Refunds are not available for tickets purchased.

### **Booking your visit**

Booking in advance is recommended and achieves a number of benefits for your group including a discount on the standard admission price and speedy, hassle-free entry to the site.

To book your group visit please contact the group bookings office. Payment is due a week in advance. On receipt of payment, a group bookings permit will be issued to you for presentation at the site entrance on the day of the visit.

### **Access information**

The Old House of Keys is fully accessible to wheelchair users, although there is a small step at the entrance to the building.

Detailed access information is available at <https://manxnationalheritage.im/visit/getting-about/accessibility-information/>

### **Visitor information**

- Toilets are not available within the Old House of Keys, however there are a number of public conveniences throughout Castletown
- Photography and filming (for personal use only) is permitted
- Mobile phones should be turned off during sittings
- Small gift shop



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## **How to get there**

Enter Castletown via the Douglas Road (from Douglas) or Alexandra Road (from the South). Follow Victoria Road into Castletown, crossing the harbour bridge. The Old House of Keys is situated in the heart of Castletown between the town square and Castle Rushen.

By bus: from Douglas, Peel, Port Erin and Port St Mary

Steam Railway: The Old House of Keys is signposted from Castletown station.

For timetables please see [www.iombusandrail.info](http://www.iombusandrail.info)

## **Coach parking**

Coaches may drop off or collect visitors at Castletown town square and free coach parking is available in the area behind the George Hotel on Farrants Way, adjacent to Castletown fire station. Please note that speed limits apply in Castletown and there are narrow streets within the town.

