

Access Statement for Calf Observatory

This access statement does not contain personal opinions as to the suitability of the accommodation for those with access needs, but aims to accurately describe the facilities and services that we offer all our guests/visitors.

Introduction

The Calf of Man is an island situated half a mile off the south-west coast of the Isle of Man and it extends to approximately 600 acres. It is owned by the Manx Museum and National Trust.

The main building complex on the Calf of Man operates as a bird observatory but the estate and ornithology wardens welcome overnight visitors, normally from June to the end of August.

By prior arrangement and booking in advance through Manx National Heritage's agents (currently Island Escapes), visitors have the opportunity to stay at the Observatory for a minimum of 2 nights, in self-catering, bunk house style accommodation. Up to 8 guests can book accommodation on a room-only basis, depending on availability, favourable tides and local weather conditions.

Car Parking For Day Trips and Overnight Accommodation

There are no designated car parks or spaces for visitors to the Calf at Port St Mary or Port Erin therefore it is recommended that patrons follow local parking restrictions and signage around the surrounding streets of the harbours before leaving their car for any length of time.

Boat Trips and Accessing the Calf of Man

The Calf of Man is a fantastic destination for everyone to enjoy. It is important that all visitors have the information they need to plan a day out or overnight stay at the Observatory.

The Calf of Man and Bird Observatory is accessed by independent small boat operators running return trips from Port St Mary and Port Erin. Depending on

the vessel and port of departure, the average sailing time to the Calf one way ranges from 15 to 40 minutes in duration.

It is strongly recommended that you plan and book your boat journey in advance. The boat operators do not work to any set timetables and will run according to weather, tides and demand.

The vessel type serving the Calf ranges from more traditional craft with open decks and limited shelter to a modern boat with cabin seating.

Access for passengers from Port St Mary and Port Erin involves negotiating steep steps from the quayside or occasionally, from a slipway. The steps/slipway may be wet and slippery. Obtaining access to and from the vessels from quayside steps or slipways may involve stepping up or down on to a moving deck or sides.

Landing and disembarkation from the Calf may be at one of a number of landing points, depending on prevailing weather conditions and tides. Landing/departure may be via a sloping slipway, quayside or less normally, by passage over rocks. Both day and overnight visitors may need to be prepared to leave the Calf from a different harbour than the arrival point should weather conditions change or as determined by the boatman. This may entail a walk of approximately 1 mile over a rough track, including a steep climb.

The passenger boat operators will be pleased to provide help and advice. Full details on how to contact the boat operators can be found on our website.

<http://www.manxnationalheritage.im/our-sites/the-sound-and-calf-of-man/>

The Calf of Man is a rugged, island terrain with steep slopes, sheer cliffs, very uneven ground and footpaths that may be slippery.

The walking distance from the main harbours to the Observatory is approximately 1 mile over rough, uneven tracks.

Please keep to the footpaths and consult local warning notices and seek advice from the wardens during your stay.

There is no access for visitor's vehicles on the island but by prior arrangement, visitors staying overnight at the Observatory can request that our wardens meet them at the drop off harbour point to pick up luggage and supplies.

Dogs and Pets

The Calf of Man is primarily a Bird Observatory, nature reserve and farmland with large numbers of ewes and lambs at certain times of the year. For this reason, we cannot allow you to bring dogs or pets when travelling to or staying on the island.

We do welcome visiting assistance dogs by prior arrangement before booking your trip.

Facilities

As the Observatory is off-grid, electricity is supplied by generator linked to an inverter and battery bank. The system is designed to supply power for essential purposes only outside of the limited periods that the generator operates. Bottled gas provides a supply for cooking. Water is a scarce commodity and has to be used very sparingly and it is supplied by a combination of rainwater harvesting and wells. During drier spells, guests may be requested to bring a quantity of drinking water with them for their stay.

There are no televisions or radios within the visitor accommodation.

There is variable mobile phone signal coverage on the island. The wardens have VHF radios and a mobile phone which allows emergency services on the main island to be alerted should the need arise.

In 2024, the wardens will have improved internet access via a Starlink satellite service. Currently, wi-fi access is not provided to guests to preserve the uniqueness of a stay in the Observatory away from internet, emails etc and so visitors may need to ensure that they have adequate data/call subscriptions to cover their stay should this facility be required.

Accommodation

The property is an historic, traditional 2-storey 1870's farmhouse which includes some narrow doors and low ceilings.

In addition to the wardens' accommodation, there are three guest bedrooms. The single toilet serving the whole accommodation is separately located from the guest bedrooms in a different part of the building on the first floor and accessed via a separate staircase.

There is no ground floor toilet or shower room within the property.

Access to the property is through a stone gateway and uneven path to the front door of the Observatory.

There are two steps up into the entrance of the property.



Front door entrance to Calf Observatory

Guest Lounge

On the ground floor of the property there is a guest lounge with 2/3 seat leather sofa and a smaller sofa. All the furniture is moveable.

There is a tiled fireplace and projecting hearth containing an inset wood burning stove.

The concrete floor has a paint finish. The walls are painted white. There is good contrast between the floor and the walls.

All the lighting is overhead and low-energy lamps. There is natural daylight from the window.

Guest Kitchen

The Guest kitchen is accessed from a small corridor and narrow doorway on the ground floor.

It contains stainless steel worktops at a standard height, a wall cupboard and a freestanding cupboard. There is a gas-powered fridge/freezer. There is a gas, 4 ring stove and oven, with eye-level grill.

None of the kitchen units are moveable.

The floor is slightly uneven and painted with floor paint. The walls are painted white. There is good colour contrast between the floor and the walls.

The lighting is overhead with low energy lamps.
There is natural daylight through a small kitchen window.

There is a wooden staircase with handrail adjacent to the guest lounge to access the 3 upstairs bedrooms.

Guest Bedrooms

All the upstairs flooring is natural wooden floorboards with scatter rugs on the floor.

The lighting is overhead and low-energy lamps.
There is natural daylight through the windows.

Bedroom 1 – ‘Shearwater’
2 single bunk beds = 4 guests

Bedroom 2 – ‘Chough’

1 single bunk bed = 2 guests

Bedroom 3 – Fulmar’

2 single beds = 2 guests

Toilet/Shower Room

The toilet/shower room is accessed from the guest accommodation by corridor over an uneven stone floor into the warden’s side of the accommodation and then by a flight of timber stairs and a half-landing.

There is a single toilet with a handle flush and a wash basin with vanity mirror and rotary control hot and cold taps.

Shower cubical with one step-up access and rotary controls. Due to water restrictions, showers are only available for wardens or long-stay guests.

There are no grab rails in the shower room/toilet.

Please note that due to the very restricted water supply, the use of the shower is limited to the wardens and long-stay guests.

The Observatory building has fitted smoke detectors throughout the property and an audible fire alarm panel.

There is a no smoking policy throughout the property.

All bookings for visitors to the Calf of Man are currently handled by [Island Escapes](#).

Future Plans

We will review our property through feedback from our guests and make any changes accordingly.

We welcome your feedback to help us continuously improve if you have any comments please email us.

Travel Info:

For ferry travel to the Isle of Man contact the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company - www.steam-packet.com or call 01624 661661.

For flight information for travel to the Isle of Man and hire car options please contact the Isle of Man Airport - www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/isle-of-man-airport/ or call 01624 821600.

For bus timetable information contact Bus Vannin - www.gov.im/categories/travel-traffic-and-motoring/bus-and-rail/bus-vannin/bus-timetables/ or call 01624 662525.

