

VisitEngland 

## Hoe Grange Holidays: From cows to cabins

ACCESS  
MORE  
BUSINESS



## Hoe Grange Holidays: From cows to cabins

Providing accessible log cabins alongside farming has proved so successful for the owners of Hoe Grange, that they have added further units.

Hoe Grange is a traditional family run farm on the edge of the Peak District National Park. David and Felicity Brown focus on providing a ‘home from home’ experience and first welcomed guests in 2006. They have four VisitEngland-rated 4 star log cabins. The cabins are built to a high specification for comfort and luxury with a traditional log-fired Swedish hot tub in the garden.

Owners David and Felicity talk about their approach to improving the quality of the visitor experience.

“It proved to be an excellent move as our accessible cabins are always booked months in advance”



### Why did you decide to establish an accessible accommodation business?

As a traditional hill farm we recognised that we needed to diversify and bring in extra income. We felt that self-catering would fit in well and help sustain the farm business.

We had to do a lot of market research to get a grant and that is when we discovered just how big the market is. Demand for accessible accommodation is growing and disabled people have considerable spending power. It was a market we could not ignore and there was little local competition.

## Where did you go for advice on being accessible?

Both the architect and the builder were really helpful, as were the National Accessible Scheme (NAS) standards. We also looked at nearby businesses that already offered easy access. We expected them to view us as competition and be reluctant to work with us, but everyone was really supportive. We now have a network of contacts and help each other out and refer bookings.

## How did you obtain a grant for the development?

We have had grant funding for farm diversification from two different sources over the years, both through Defra. The most recent funding, for an all-terrain wheelchair for guests to hire, came through The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) as part of the LEADER in the Peak District Rural Action Zone.

Most of our funding was discovered through Business Link and networking; don't be afraid to ask!





## What do you offer guests who have access needs?

We offer everyone a friendly welcome as well as the peace and quiet of the countryside. Our contemporary cabins have been designed so that we can cater for a wide range of needs.

Direct from the car park there are easy access ramps, with level thresholds throughout and adequate space to manoeuvre. There are spacious wet room showers with grab rails and height adjustable washbasins with lever operated taps.

Over time we have invested in a wide range of equipment including, profile beds, a shower stool and chairs, bath boards, a toilet seat riser, bed rails, bed blocks and a mobile hoist.

Door frames, skirting boards, door handles and handrails are in contrasting colours to help guests with visual impairments. For guests with hearing loss, we have alarm clocks with flashing lights/vibrating modes, a portable door chime and all televisions have subtitle facilities.

Our latest exciting addition is a Boma 7 all-terrain wheelchair so that less able guests can cross the farm fields and get onto the local trails, enabling them to have a memorable experience with their family and friends.

“We welcome assistance dogs as they too deserve a holiday!”

## How do you reach your potential markets?

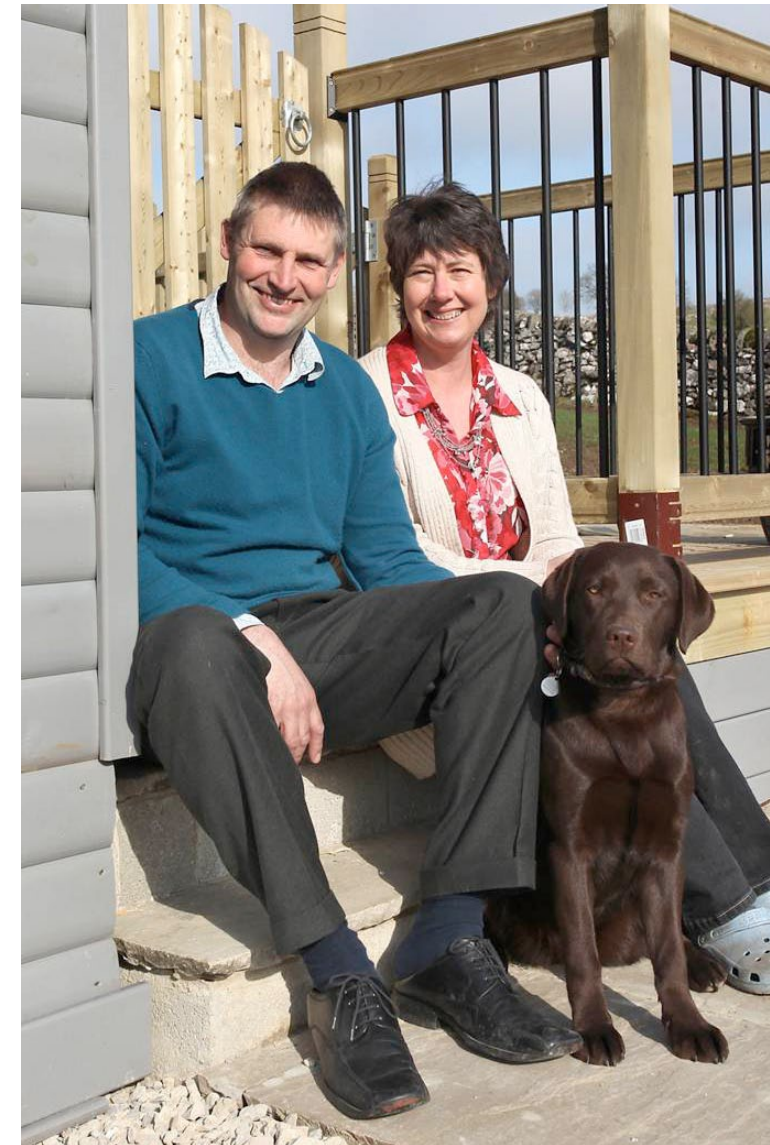
Our website has an Accessibility page with floor plans and a full Access Statement. The National Accessible Scheme logos are prominent on our website and print which reassures guests.

We advertise on specialist websites such as Disability Now and Disabled Holiday Info. and attend national exhibitions and conferences to raise our profile. It is important to know your market so we use social media to engage in conversation on access issues.



We also enter regional and national awards, such as the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence Access for All Category, which offers invaluable PR opportunities and media coverage.


“We use social media to engage in conversation on access issues”



## What has being accessible meant for your business?

A wide range of people benefit from our easy access approach. Older people for example find the fixtures and extra space helpful. The wet room shower is ideal for kids and there is no worry about water going everywhere.

People actively choose us because of our accessible facilities. Over 65% of our guests have someone in their party who has an impairment. They book in advance and become loyal customers who return again and again; one group has been 19 times in four years!



“I don’t think our business would be so successful if we had not addressed accessibility”

When we came to expand the business with two further cabins we made sure they were fully accessible and NAS rated; it just makes sound financial sense.

## What advice would you give to businesses looking to be more accessible?

Don’t be put off by the unknown. Being accessible isn’t complicated and doesn’t have to cost a fortune; you can choose your level and there is lots of help available.

Listen to your guests to find out what they really want, not what you think they need!

The rewards are amazing and you meet some remarkable people.

Visit  
[www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk](http://www.hoegrangeholidays.co.uk)

For guidance on how to improve accessibility please visit

[www.visitengland.org/access](http://www.visitengland.org/access)  
[www.visitengland.org/nas](http://www.visitengland.org/nas)

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