

OUR BENCH HOLIDAY COTTAGES

OUR A-Z GUIDE OF USEFUL INFORMATION - PLEASE READ

UPDATED FOR 2025



WELCOME TO OUR BENCH HOLIDAY COTTAGES

We're delighted to have you here and hope this guide will help you make the most of your stay. If you have any questions or need assistance, we're always happy to help.

Since establishing Our Bench in 2001, we've had the pleasure of welcoming countless guests. Over the years, we've gathered information about local facilities, attractions, and other useful details to enhance your experience.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

ARRIVAL

Please notify us upon your arrival so we can greet you and address any questions in person. Just send a text message. If it is slightly cold, note that the windows have been open for airing the cottage until 3pm or when the arrival text was sent. The thermostat on the wall may be turned down—the ideal temperature is marked.

FIRE

In case of a fire, follow our fire action notice and notify nearby neighbours.

To minimize risk:

- Please do not light candles inside the cottage and refrain from using the BBQ indoors or near doorways.
- Ensure that any small electric items and chargers you bring are safe for use.
- Our cottages and grounds are strictly non-smoking areas, including electronic cigarettes. We enforce a zero-tolerance policy regarding smoking.
- At the Garden Bench property, only use the wood burner with the fire rug in place. If you are unsure, please seek assistance.
- A fire extinguisher and fire blanket are available; please inform us if either has been used.
- The driveway must be kept clear of parked vehicles to ensure wheelchair access via plant containers. Do not block this exit or move the pots.
- The fire assembly point for Little Bench / Bench Cottage is located at the front of the drive, next to Garden Bench, with seating provided.

POWER FAILURE

In the event of a power failure, emergency lighting will activate in the bedroom and near the exit door, remaining on until power is restored. Hoists can be manually lowered; refer to emergency instructions for details. We are not responsible for any external power failures but may provide an alternative power source for essential equipment upon request.

FIRST AID / MEDICAL EMERGENCY

- 📞 **Ambulance:** Call 999
- 📞 **NHS 111 Service:** For urgent medical concerns when you are unsure of the next steps, the NHS 111 service is available. It can connect you with a nurse, emergency GP, pharmacist, provide medication advice, and offer self-care guidance. Call 111.
- 📞 **Doctors:** The nearest surgery is Chawton House Surgery, SO41 9ND. Temporary resident registration may be required. Contact number: 01590 672953.
- 📞 **Nearest Hospitals:**
 - 📞 Lyminster (SO41 8QD) – Minor Injuries Unit, daytime operations only.
 - 📞 Southampton General (SO16 6YD) – Comprehensive A&E department.
 - 📞 Bournemouth Hospital (BH7 7DW) – Comprehensive A&E department.
- 📞 **Pharmacy:** Pennington Pharmacy (SO41 8ED). Contact number: 01590 673745
- 📞 **First Aid Box:** Located in the kitchen cupboard. If used, please leave unsealed and complete the medical book enclosed within the box for component replacement.
- 📞 **Mobility Equipment:** Should additional equipment be required, the nearest mobility shop is New Forest Mobility Services, 1 Mallard Buildings, Station Rd, New Milton BH25 6HY. Contact number: 01425 411095

HELP?

For problems or questions, you are welcome to call or text: 0775 1064167.

In emergencies, use: 0777 985 2372 or 0787 0341640 if the first number is unavailable.

BREAKAGES / SPILLS

We understand that accidents can occur. We kindly request that you promptly inform us of any breakages so we can replace the item and maintain full availability of our facilities for future guests. If a spill or fluid leakage incident happens during your stay, please notify us immediately. This is crucial for ensuring the safety and comfort of incoming guests.

We are committed to maintaining the cleanliness and freshness of our accommodations. Timely reporting allows us to perform necessary deep cleaning of carpets and other areas to keep them in optimal condition. Ideally, we aim to address these issues on the same day they occur. All guests have a duty of care towards our fixtures and fittings.

SECURITY

When leaving the premises, please ensure that the cottage is thoroughly locked and secured. It is important not to leave any animals or children unattended. You may either take the key with you or place it in the lock box.

Our door locks feature an internal turn lock, as recommended by fire regulations—therefore, you do not need a key to lock the door from the inside. This allows one person to go out while another remains safely locked inside. We advise storing the external key on the key hook near the door to prevent misplacement while indoors. Please note that lost keys will incur a charge for both the key and a replacement lock.

There is a small alarm on the door that can be activated using a switch. This alarm will make an audible noise if the door is opened, which can be helpful as a warning. If you are unsure of its operation, please request a demonstration. The alarm will be set to off when you arrive.

Cameras are positioned around the exterior of the cottages. These cameras are activated by movement and record 10 seconds of footage within their range during the hours of 11pm to 7am solely for security purposes. We can remotely activate these cameras in response to noise complaints from our neighbours or other concerns. The recorded footage is stored in the cloud and automatically deleted after 30 days, except when a specific issue arises that requires further investigation.

WASTE / RUBBISH DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS.

PLEASE REFER TO THE POSTER ABOVE THE DUSTBINS FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

- **Green Bin / Clear Sack:** takes paper, tins, cans, aerosols, and plastic bottles
- **Black Crate:** takes glass and jars.
- **Compost Bin:** for fruit and vegetable peelings, dead flowers, empty eggshells, tea bags. *Cooked food is not permitted.*
- **Black Bin / Black Sack:** general household waste, plastic pots and trays, cartoons, foil.
- **Electrical Goods:** Items with a plug, battery, or cable cannot be disposed of in the bins. These should be donated or recycled, which includes hearing aid batteries and vapes.
- **Health Care Waste:**
- **Infectious Waste and Sharps (Yellow Waste):** Infectious waste and sharps (waste that may cause harm to others) - we are not registered for this and waste must be taken home. A definition could be found here: <https://www.newforest.gov.uk/article/983/Healthcare-waste-collection>
- **Offensive Waste:** (*used incontinence products, sanitary items, disposable nappies, catheter bags, stoma bags, syringes, tubing, EG or stomach-feeding equipment etc*) can't be disposed of in general waste – IT MUST BE BAGGED before putting in the yellow sack, and then placed next to the bins on departure.

Little Bench and Bench Cottage: The bins are located next to the green shed on the drive, behind the outside staircase.

Garden Bench: The bins are situated behind the garage.

WIFI / INTERNET

We have a secure WIFI connection, we cannot guarantee it is always available. Please select “OurBench” and input the security code H4ppyHolid4ys

We kindly ask our guests to use the internet connection provided responsibly. This means:

- Refraining from accessing or downloading illegal, harmful, or inappropriate content.
- Avoiding activities that may disrupt the service or pose security risks.
- Using the connection within reasonable limits to ensure a smooth experience for all guests.

It is a rural connection, and speeds may be limited. Fibre is not yet available here.

If you experience any issues with the internet, please let us know—we're happy to assist!

DEPARTURE

Departure time is by 10am on your departure day, and access to the property will be required from that time. If possible, please leave earlier as changeover day is very busy. Please leave the cottage in a tidy condition; wash up, wipe down all surfaces, and place used towels on the wet room floor. There is no need to strip the beds.

Ensure that you log out of any accounts (Netflix, YouTube, Amazon, etc.) on the television in the lounge to prevent access by the next guests. We are not liable for any accounts left logged in and cannot deactivate them once new guests have arrived.

Turn the heating down low, open all the small windows that are not visible from the road, lock up, and leave the key in the key safe upon departure to ensure the property is aired before the next set of guests arrive. Please inform us via text message that you have vacated the property unless we have seen you at check-out.

If anyone in your party becomes ill within 48 hours of departure, notify us as soon as possible.

Return the key to the key safe as it is necessary for the next guests, when you get home leave a review and consider booking to visit again!

INSIDE YOUR HOLIDAY COTTAGE

SPECIALIST EQUIPMENT

We offer a range of specialist equipment and aim to provide everything requested for your stay. Should you encounter any issues, please inform us promptly. While you are using the equipment at your own risk, we conduct regular servicing, including LOLER checks through an external company. It is crucial that you notify us immediately if any damage occurs, as the equipment may be essential for other guests.

BEDROOMS / HOISTS / ELECTRIC BEDS

Hoists are restricted to a maximum weight of 130kg. Users must provide their own sling and possess appropriate training for lifting. After use, please return hoists to their original location to ensure they remain charged for subsequent guests. Emergency instructions are located in the kitchen cupboard; kindly review them before operating the hoist.

Each cottage is equipped with height-adjustable beds featuring head and foot risers. These beds are vital aids and should be handled carefully. Please refrain from moving the beds as they are heavy and could sustain damage. Do not place any items between the mattress and the bed base that may impede movement. If the electric functions of the bed are not required, it is advisable to unplug it entirely. The height-adjustable profiling bed includes bed rails for safety, which can be removed at your discretion, though this is done at your own risk.

The master bedroom features a Freeview television with a remote control. Ensure the remote control remains in the bedroom for the convenience of future guests.

Blankets are provided as standard in the wardrobe. Should an additional blanket be necessary, please ask.

Please avoid using products with P20, Oxybenzone, Octanoate, and Avobenzone such as Suncream / Moisturiser as they cause yellow stains on bed linen, which leads to disposal of the sheets and potential forfeiture of your cleaning retainer.

KITCHEN

A microwave, oven, dishwasher, coffee maker, and washing machine are available for use.

Tumble drier: Garden Bench has one in the garage, Little Bench and Bench Cottage share a tumble drier in the green shed. A donation for usage is appreciated.

The washing line is available for use; pegs can be found near the tumble drier.

A range of cleaning products and anti-viral sprays are provided in the kitchen cupboard. Please use them as instructed on the labels. If young people are staying, please be aware that these products are present.

An iron and ironing board can be provided upon request.

LOUNGE / DINING ROOM

Electric Riser Recliner Chair - Avoid placing this chair near walls to prevent damage. Raise it to the desired height before sitting, and lower it gently once seated. Ensure the chair is only moved when unoccupied.

The dining table has gate legs with stored chairs inside. Fully extend the gate leg before use, and leave chairs out if used.

The lounge TV is a smart TV with apps like Netflix and Amazon. Use Chromecast named after the cottage to cast content from your device. Remember to log out of any personal accounts at the end of your stay.

WOOD BURNER (GARDEN BENCH)

Only use the wood burner if you are experienced, as it poses a fire risk.

- Wood basket, gloves, lighter, matcher and firelighters are in the garage.
- Place the fire rug in front of the wood burner to protect the carpet and reduce fire risk, but be aware this is now a trip hazard.
- Use caution with burning wood; it can fall out.
- The stove gets hot, so be careful around vulnerable adults and children.
- Ensure all vents are closed before leaving.
- Empty the ash daily into the compost bin once cold.

WET ROOM / SHOWER ROOM

The floor can become wet and slippery – we encourage you to use the “mop” to reduce any slipping risk.

The wash basin can be lowered and raised as required. This must only be done when the sink is empty. Lift the lever, press your hands on the hand guide and then lock back into position.

Towels are not to be taken out of the property.

HEATING & HOT WATER

The gas central heating system operates automatically and is regulated by a thermostat, which you are welcome to adjust. The recommended temperature is highlighted and may be lower upon your arrival as we fully air the cottage prior to your stay. A card within the property indicates the recommended temperatures as suggested by our local council. Additional blankets are available in the wardrobe; we provide one per guest upon request. All cottages warm quickly, so please be mindful of the environment and reduce the heating when windows and doors are open. An additional fan heater is stored in the kitchen cupboard; please do not leave it unattended.

The combination boiler supplies instant hot water. It can be very hot, so please use it carefully and supervise any guests who may need assistance.

GARDEN

Please use the garden considerately and be mindful of others. Be aware of the needs of individuals in shared spaces. There is a limit of eight people per cottage on the premises, but any Government guidance supersedes this.

Garden Bench has a private, secure garden. Note that the side gate can be bolted at the top for additional security.

The garage contains a garden umbrella, pegs for the washing line, a BBQ, and some beach toys. Cushions for the hanging egg chair are provided

Little Bench and Bench Cottage share a communal garden space, accessible from either side of the properties.

Cushions for the seating at the front of Little Bench and Bench Cottage can be found in the large storage box - — please return them overnight or during rain. Some toys and a sun umbrella are available in the green shed.

Little Bench and Bench Cottage also have access to the garden opposite, which includes a wooden swing seat, and areas where vegetables and wildflowers are being cultivated. This space is occasionally in use, so please vacate if necessary. Children must be supervised in this area.

Feel free to replenish the bird feeders and the bird bath as we are encouraging wildlife. Inform us of any sightings.

Additional bird food is available in the green shed near the rubbish bins (Little Bench/Bench Cottage) or in the garage (Garden Bench). Avoid placing meat, slices of bread, etc., on the lawn as this attracts vermin. We would love you to share details of sightings on our Facebook page.

DOGS

Garden Bench is the preferred property for dogs. We must accept registered carer dogs in Bench Cottage and Little Bench, but we prefer not to. Dogs are not allowed on furniture or left unsupervised, and there is direct road access from all front doors.

Please clean up after your dog promptly; bags are provided for booked dogs. Unbooked dogs breach our terms. An outside hose and watering can are available for cleaning. We can suggest nearby dog walking spots.

We may be on the premises for maintenance or cleaning with our Border Collie, Sparky, who loves playing ball with children and adults. If this concerns you, please let us know.

BBQ

There is a BBQ in the green shed – under the external stairs (Little Bench and Bench Cottage) and in the garage (Garden Bench). It is available for use, please make sure to clean it after use, allow it to cool completely, and place the used cold coals in the compost bin. If you use our BBQ coals, please put a donation in the box so they can be replaced for the next guests. When using the shared garden at Little Bench / Bench Cottage, ensure it does not pose any risk to other guests.

PARKING FOR YOUR CAR

GARDEN BENCH: Please park on the widest section of the driveway in front of the house, ensuring that you do not block the fire exit. Additional vehicles should be parked on the road. Parking too close to the property can obstruct emergency service access if needed. Therefore, it is essential to park only on the wide section of the driveway. If side access for a ramp is necessary, please park on the road as the lawn is soft, and the brick edging of the driveway can be damaged. There are no parking restrictions.

LITTLE BENCH AND BENCH COTTAGE: Each cottage has one designated parking bay. Please ensure there is enough space for vehicles to turn around and for emergency access. Additional vehicles must be parked on the road. The gravel gateway opposite is frequently used, and access must always be maintained. You may reverse onto the gravel to turn around.

There are no parking restrictions on the road. Please avoid obstructing gateways or partially parking on the pavement, as this limits access for disabled residents and parents with pushchairs who use the local nursery. The road is also on a bus route, with the bus stopping outside.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING POINTS

For your convenience, we have installed two charging points on the Voltshare network. You will need to download the Voltshare app (<https://voltshare.net/>), have a smartphone, and possess a type 2 charging lead. Instructions for use are provided on the chargers and are managed by Voltshare.

The electrical wiring in your holiday cottage is not designed for charging an electric vehicle using a domestic socket. Doing so could disrupt the electricity supply to neighbouring properties, which may rely on electricity for essential needs such as hoists, oxygen equipment, etc.

SCOOTER / WHEELCHAIR / BIKES

- Little Bench and Bench Cottage offer a charging point in the green shed, as well as an outside socket located on the side of the garage for wheelchairs, scooters and e-bikes.
- Garden Bench provides a socket inside the garage, allowing scooters to be left outside.
- Both cottages have access to a hose that can be used for cleaning wheels after forest walks.
- Bicycles should not be taken into the cottages; they can be securely locked outside.

EVENTS AND SPECIAL OFFERS IN THE AREA

There are often lots of events on in the New Forest – we regularly share details on our Facebook page – anything from festivals to pub quiz's, fete's and discount vouchers: <https://www.facebook.com/OurBenchSelfCatering>

DISCOVER LYMINGTON

Explore local attractions, playgrounds, Changing Places facilities, dining options, and more: - <http://www.ourbench.co.uk/Lymington.html>

NEW FOREST ADVENTURES

Find ideas for exploring the New Forest, including accessible bike routes, beautiful gardens, and major attractions with links to their accessibility policies: <http://www.ourbench.co.uk/AccessibleNewForest.html>

DAY TRIPS BEYOND THE NEW FOREST

Plan exciting excursions such as boat trips, visits to the Isle of Wight, zoo experiences, and shopping adventures: <http://www.ourbench.co.uk/AccessibleDayTrips.html>

PUB, RESTAURANT, CAFE NEARBY

There are many pubs and restaurants in the Lymington area; our favourites are listed on our website. Most have accessible toilets.

- Discover these pubs: The Lamb and Lion (SO41 8FZ), The White Hart (SO41 8DF), The Ship (SO41 3AY), The Mayflower (SO41 3QD).
- Discover these cafes: The Lighthouse Milford (SO41 0PY), the Tea Rooms at Sammy Millers (BH25 5SZ), The Noisy Lobster at Avon Beach (BH23 4AN), and the Lookout at Lepe Beach (SO41 0TP).

Advance bookings are recommended, especially for accessible seating, as some venues are very popular.

WHEELCHAIR /ACCESSIBLE WALKS

Discover accessible walking routes via our website or refer to the printed suggestions available in the black folder on the shelf: <http://www.ourbench.co.uk/Blog/WheelchairWalks.html>

ENTERTAINMENT

Pennington Sports and Social Club offers various events: free pool and snooker on Tuesdays, bingo on Wednesdays, poker evenings on Thursdays, live music on Saturdays, and more. They have ramp access, great beer prices, Sky and BT Sports packages, and occasional outside catering or ice cream vans. Temporary membership is available for guests at £5 per person per week, a form must be completed and handed in – 48 hours before access starts – so please ask about this, and it can be arranged in advance of your stay. Learn more about upcoming events here: <https://www.facebook.com/PennoClub>

Opposite at cottages – you will see a sign for a puzzle swap – just inside the fence is a covered box containing a huge variety of jigsaw puzzles – the local community are encouraged to swap – you are welcome to take a couple to do during your stay, take home to finish! Further down the road you will find a plant swap, you are welcome to take a plant home with you -

SHOP – NEAREST LOCATIONS

- Tesco Express (SO41 8GN) is approximately 2 minutes away by car and nearly as quick on foot. It offers a bakery for morning croissants, newspapers, fresh produce, and household essentials. Opposite, there is a One Stop and post office that also provides essential items. Further along South Street, you will find our local chemist. These locations are indicated on the map.
- Supermarkets in close vicinity include Waitrose (SO41 9GF), M&S Simply Food (SO41 9NA), and Tesco Metro (SO41 9AP), all of which offer off-street parking and are located around Lymington High Street. Slightly further afield, you will find Tesco superstore (BH25 6BP), Aldi (BH25 5WB), Lidl (BH25 6PR), and Morrisons (BH25 6HY).
- Lymington Highstreet has an amazing Charter Market which dates **back to 1257**, and is on every Saturday.
- We welcome supermarket deliveries between 11 am and 1 pm on the Friday of your arrival, provided this is arranged beforehand. Please confirm with us in case we are unavailable onsite.

TAKEAWAY

- There is a fish and chip shop in Pennington Village opposite Tesco.
- There are four more takeaways at Fox Pond, South Street (SO41 8DW), including Fish & Chips, Chinese, Thai, and Indian. Additional options in Lymington include Dominos Pizza and Rivaaz (Indian), both of which offer delivery. Orders for Rivaaz can be placed via their app.
- A selection of menus is available in the leaflet area.
- There is limited delivery options – and it depends on the availability each day.

TAXI

There are a number of local taxi firms, but only a limited number of wheelchair accessible taxis locally – they do need to be booked in advance as limited availability.

- Pennington Based Taxi - Brian - 01590 674764 or 07850 126844
- Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Service - 0771 8907898 or 07781 907898
- Ian Pain - 0742 8380877
- Driving Miss Daisy – 10590 467679 – assisted transport for family gatherings, outings etc.

CARERS

There are a number of local care companies and independent carers who are able to provide carer and assistance for our guests, we recommend arranging this in advance of your stay. There are details on our web site.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We invite you to share your holiday photographs or recommend a preferred location during your stay. You could inspire future visitors.

We also offer our guests the opportunity to have a family portrait taken in our accessible photography studio. Details are available on our website. Should you wish to arrange this during your stay, please send us a text message, and we will do our best to accommodate your request.

LOCAL TREATS AND PRODUCTS TO LOOK OUT FOR DURING YOUR STAY.

- Lymington Times – A local newspaper, printed every Friday, including events for the upcoming week and details of local restaurants.
- New Forest Ice Cream – Produced in Lymington and available in local restaurants.
- New Forest Sausages – Handmade at the butchers in Sway (SO41 6AA); local venison is also available there.
- New Forest Cider – Produced in Burley (BH24 4ED); available for direct purchase. They also offer country wines and handmade pottery.
- Bakehouse in Brockenhurst (SO42 7RB) – Known for its fresh bread, pastries, and doughnuts.
- Coastal Bakery in Milford on Sea (SO41 0QF) – Offers a lardy cake among other baked goods.
- Ferndene Farm Shop (BH25 5SY) – A farm shop offering fresh baked goods, fruit and vegetables, butchery selections, flowers, and plants.
- New Forest Fish and Shellfish (BH25 5QU) – A local fish shop providing fish caught in the Solent and offering a Tuesday night set meal takeaway via their Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/NewForestFishAndShellfish>
- Forest Wyrd – One of the local gins available: <https://wyrdsprits.com>, along with Conker Gin made in Dorset, Mermaid Gin from the Isle of Wight, 820 Gin from Lymington, and Winchester Gin. Check out Solent Wine Cellar (SO41 9ND).
- Local Wines – B58 make the Beaulieu Red which is a lovely smooth red wine – available from Priory Wines (SO41 8LZ) our local wine merchant – Wharie Orion is a white wine with a lovely aroma and Wharie The Rosé, a lovely deep red rosé, from a vineyard in nearby Sway – which you can visit for a wine tasting -
<https://www.wharie.co.uk>

COME AGAIN?

We appreciate returning guests and strive to simplify the booking process for you. We try and ensure your preferred equipment is available upon booking, and we can transfer your cleaning retainer to your next booking if made before departure. If you have booked through a third party, please visit our website or email us to join our mailing list. Customers who book directly with us always receive the best price available.

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