

Hesleyside Hut

Ref:

Erection of 1 No "Hut on wheels" to provide tourist accommodation at Hesleyside Hall, Bellingham, Hexham, Northumberland, NE48 2LA

Design and Access Statement

We are proposing to site a hut on wheels where visitors can stay in eco-friendly and sustainable tourist accommodation. The hut will accommodate 2 adults and will further support the Estate's desire to diversify and find ways to share in the beauty and history of the Estate. In doing so it will help generate much needed income to help restore, conserve and maintain the House at Hesleyside. The existing three huts at Hesleyside have proved very successful, providing low impact alternative accommodation which sits well within the surrounding landscape and has provided much needed income to conserve and maintain the Hall. The new hut will be constructed from sustainable and reclaimed materials in keeping with the surrounding landscape and will sit on wheels.

The proposed hut will be a similar size to the existing smaller Shepherd's hut, it will be situated in a completely private area and no one will be able to see it as it will be surrounded by tree cover. It will not be visible from the road, Hall or even from the existing huts. We have discovered a large demand for couples wanting to stay in eco glamping accommodation. The hut will be 18ft by 10ft and will have a pitched roof. Our glamping visitors are increasing looking for something different and enjoy the romance of the Estate parkland and position. The hut will be tucked away and remind visitors of an Estate folly or small chapel but will of course only be used as overnight and tourist accommodation.

A local craftsman from Bellingham will be commissioned to build the hut from reclaimed oak, reclaimed pitched pine and other sustainable materials. The hut will have a wooden door constructed from reclaimed oak with oak removable steps and 6 small windows crafted out of oak. The hut will be insulated using sheep's wool and will be clad in tongue and groove larch and oak. An example of the exterior is shown in the photograph below. The wood will be sourced to look like and blend in with the earthy colours of the surrounding trees, vegetation etc.

The hut will be 18ft by 10ft and will contain a large bed, stove/oven, table and compost loo. The roof will be pitched and covered with cedar shingles which will blend into the surrounding landscape.

The Hut will be placed in a private area of the overall site giving visitors privacy and minimizing the impact on the surrounding environment. Visitors will park where current visitors park and where there is ample existing parking. No additional signage is required and a single external low energy light which is dark skies compliant will be attached to each hut for safety reasons. The site for the hut will be fenced off from the adjacent grass parkland and cannot be seen from the road, public footpath or any other dwelling. Although the development will undoubtedly help us conserve the historic fabric of Hesleyside it will not have a detrimental effect on the historic setting of the hall and its

garden as the hut will not interfere with views and layout of the existing gardens and parkland views surrounding the House.

Additional facilities will be provided by delivering locally sourced breakfast baskets and highlighting offers and supplier in the locality. The hut will have a wood burning stove and sustainably sourced wood will be supplied to all visitors from the Estate's wood business.

This site offers high-end holiday accommodation with an emphasis on sustainability and use of eco-friendly materials. We will encourage visitors to leave their cars at Hesleyside and cycle and walk as much as possible. We are very happy to be part of the Dark Skies initiative and already supply telescopes and guides for star gazing. We also offer all visitors breakfast and picnic hampers containing locally sourced food. Meat, vegetables and eggs from the Estates farms including Kielder Organic Meats. We believe that visitors to this very special part of the National Park will be able to enjoy eco-friendly high quality accommodation in a beautiful and rural setting using the hut as a base to explore other parts, attractions and activities within the National Park.

We already employ one person to clean and service the huts and with this addition we would be able to employ a second additional person thus helping the local employment opportunities in Bellingham.

Environmental/Biodiversity Statement

Hesleyside's environmental policy is based on some key considerations:

1. Minimising impact of the Flora and Fauna of the area
2. Minimising the impact of activities of the Business on the environment in general
3. Using only eco-friendly/sustainably sourced materials on site
4. Providing visitor information about the natural environment at Hesleyside and within in the Northumberland National Park

Minimizing the effect on the environment will be tackled in the following ways:

- Creating a pack of information which will inform guests of the diverse habitats and wildlife to be found within the Estate
- Informing guests on preferred paths and /or access points

- There are no plants/trees of special scientific interest or protected species on site, nevertheless special attention will be given to minimize any risk of disturbance or damage to the close environment by visitors
- Use of an existing track means that there is minimal environmental impact.
- We could consider enhancing the site by planting local native flower species and a few native tree species such as birch and rowan to increase screening
- We will insist on guests only using the wood provided for them in the wood stores provided. This will prevent any damage to trees on the estate or guests picking up fallen branches or deadwood, which are a vital part of sustaining good insect and bird habitats
- The hut will be sited at an appropriate distance from the adjacent trees to prevent any damage from smoke or fire
- The site will be fenced off to prevent livestock entering this area
- Lighting will only be by torch and from a few low energy LED lights. Pathways will not be lit and the use of torches will be encouraged
- We already provide onsite composting of fruit and vegetable scraps again showing the cycle of composting and putting back into the land in our Kitchen Garden
- We already encourage our guests to recycle other waste by providing them with recycling bins. Other waste will be collected daily by us to prevent rats or other vermin
- Guests will heat their accommodation using wood burning stoves in the huts
- The visitors will be using only locally sourced wood from the Estate's wood business
- We will be encouraging guests to leave their cars at Hesleyside and to walk and use their bikes to explore the area. Therefore minimizing the environmental impact of increased vehicles in the local roads
- All materials used in the construction of the hut will where possible be sourced sustainably
- All materials for the interiors including bedding, rugs, furniture will also be sourced from organic and sustainable sources where possible.

Foul sewage and utilities assessment and Site Waste Management Plan

- There will be a recycling bin in the Hut. We will outline what is recyclable at the site.
- A bin for other waste will be provided and emptied every day
- There will be a small bin for compostable items that will be composted on site in the kitchen garden

Landscaping details

There will be no landscaping on site.

Lighting assessment

There will be no additional lighting other than:

- A few low impact low energy lighting in the hut.
- A small, Dark Skies compliant, low energy external light attached to the hut for safety reasons
- We currently ask all guests to arrive with torches to aid movement between car and huts

Noise impact assessment

The following measures are already taken:

- Giving guests some simple ground rules about noise and disturbance after 10pm at night
- We encourage the use of bicycles thus cutting down the noise from increased vehicles in the area.
- Other than Hesleyside itself there are no other residential buildings or dwellings nearby
- The whole surrounding area is privately owned with no nearby dwellings

Transport assessment

We intend to have no more than 1 extra vehicle parked at Hesleyside as a result of the hut. There is ample existing parking at Hesleyside and this does not interfere with the existing public roads. The access to the huts is dedicated and not used by any others.

Arboricultural implications

To summarise we will be taking the following measures to protect the trees on site by:

- Locating the hut at least 10 metres away from trees.
- Instructing guests to use only the sacked wood provided for heating and cooking and not to pick up dead or fallen wood on the site.
- Instructing guests not to break off or cut branches of any trees on site.
- We will endeavour to increase the amount of native/resident species on site over time and to increase screening of the huts if necessary.