

## Booking with Exmoor Character Cottages

### Frequently Asked Questions September 2020

#### Can I book with you for dates later in 2020 or for next year?

We are open throughout the year and have already started to book peak weeks in 2021, therefore don't leave it too long to reserve your break for Autumn/Winter 2020 - or beyond. You can book directly with us at any time, our website is open 24x7, with availability and pricing updated in real time. If you wish to ask any questions before booking, please email Lucy at any time: [info@exmoorcharactercottages.co.uk](mailto:info@exmoorcharactercottages.co.uk)

#### Are my bookings protected?

We pride ourselves on being flexible and transparent with bookings made directly with us. During the Coronavirus Crisis Period, we also added extra protection should UK Government advice requires either party to cancel their bookings due to COVID-19. Bookings made direct with us in this period are covered by our [Protected Bookings Guarantee](#) which will be mentioned on your booking form if you are covered by it.

With effect from 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020, a vast majority of our bookings, whether booked direct or via an agent or booking portal will be protected by **Master Cancel Insurance**. Master Cancel Insurance covers all advance bookings (except for very late availability offers) and guarantees a refund of all payments made to date should you cancel your stay - up to and including 48 hours prior to arrival. (Please note that cancellations made for any reason within 48 hours of arrival will not be covered and we will be unable to refund any payments made.)



#### What happens if I wish to cancel my holiday?

If you booked on or after 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and paid your 30% deposit in full, you may cancel your holiday and obtain a refund from Master Cancel Insurance of all payments made up to

two full days before arrival. This is a no quibble refund and you do not need to provide a reason for cancellation. To cancel, you must send us an email from the person who booked the holiday, with your booking information so we can locate the booking. We pass this to Master Cancel as proof of your cancellation, so please include as much information as you can.

If you booked via an external letting agency such as cottages.com or booking portal such as booking.com, in the first instance, please contact them directly. For bookings made directly with Exmoor Character Cottages, please [email Lucy](#): Refunds made by Master Cancel Insurance will be paid directly to you one day after of your scheduled departure date.

If your break was booked between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 and 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020, we will do all we can to reschedule your booking until a later date or will refund any payments made in full.

For bookings made prior to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, please refer to your T&C document or contact your agent, booking portal or for direct bookings, please [email Lucy](#).

### **What happens if I become ill with COVID-19 symptoms before our holiday?**

- If you fall ill with COVID-19 symptoms, you should first report these to the Government Test & Trace service (T&T).
- Our advice is **not to travel during** any quarantine period, but you will need to make this decision and notify us accordingly.
- If you choose not to travel, we will do all we can to move dates or refund all rental fees paid to us by those guests that have booked direct with Exmoor Character Cottages only **when we are in receipt of evidence from T&T**.
- For bookings made on or after 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020, payments will be covered by Master Cancel Insurance for cancellations up to two full days (48 hours) before arrival.
- Guests who have paid their refundable security deposit will have that returned.

If your break was booked between 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 and 4<sup>th</sup> August 2020, we will do all we can to reschedule your booking until a later date or will refund any payments made in full.

For guests who booked prior to 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 you may choose not to travel and to claim via your holiday insurance. We are happy to provide written evidence of our refund policy to assist your claim.

If you have booked with one of our external letting agents, you need to speak to them about any refunds or transferring dates. If you have booked direct with Exmoor Character Cottages, your holiday will be covered by our [Protected Bookings Guarantee](#).

### **The 'Rule of Six', which came into force from 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020**

#### **Up to a maximum of six people can stay in one of our cottages**

- You do not need to come from the same household. However, if you are not in the same household, you need to maintain social distancing in the cottages and outside.

#### **Support bubble**

- If you have formed a support bubble with another household or group prior to 14<sup>th</sup> Sept, you may travel and stay with that support bubble - even if it's more than six people.
- **Babies and children** are included in the total number of people that may stay.

### **Are there any other charges or additional costs when staying at one of your properties?**

All electricity, gas, water, linens and towels are included within your rental payment. In order to protect our cottages and the furnishings and fittings, a refundable security deposit of £250 is payable 21 days before arrival and will be refunded within 7 days of departure providing no loss or damages are incurred.

### **Do I need to take out separate holiday insurance?**

We always recommend purchasing holiday insurance to cover you for any risks which fall outside of the protection provided by Master Cancel.

Master Cancel Insurance is provided free of charge by Exmoor Character Cottages with very few cover exclusions.

### **What are you doing to protect guests when staying at the cottages?**

All guests arriving at one of our cottages from 4<sup>th</sup> July 2020 will be required to complete a health questionnaire before travelling. We will ask you to agree the contents of the health questionnaire in our usual pre-arrival telephone call.

### **What will I find when I get to the cottages?**

We hope that all our guests will find everything as usual – but with a few added touches to make our cottages even safer.

- We have further enhanced our [hygiene and cleaning regimen](#) to provide for a COVID-secure environment and have exceeded all measures detailed in official guidance.
- We will continue to update our procedures and staff training as new advice is received and will notify all booked guests via email should anything materially change before arrival.
- We have done our very best to maintain all those special touches you'd expect from each our cottages, but have removed some board games and other superficial items to ensure compliance with the latest risk management advice. If you have further specific questions, please ask.
- To comply with hygiene best practice, we have also removed tea, coffee, sugar and other condiments. Don't forget to pack those essentials or stop to buy them en-route as we all enjoy a cuppa after a long journey! Don't worry – the cake will still be there on the welcome tray fully wrapped and fresh milk in the fridge ready for you to enjoy!
- You can contact us at any time, but we'll check in after you've settled in and before departure to ensure you're happy and have everything you need.

### **Is Exmoor and West Somerset open?**

Many local independent stores, shops, pubs and cafes are now open, but many are operating with significantly reduced capacity so you may have to book for lunch, dinner or afternoon tea. Supermarkets, smaller food stores and delicatessens are open as usual but

with social distancing measures in place. You will need to wear a facemask in all retail establishments and when collecting takeaway food (our guests are offered handmade facemasks).

At time of writing, the West Somerset Railway and Dunster Castle are currently closed, but many other attractions are fully open, albeit with social distancing deployed. Please follow our social media pages, Exmoor365 or Dunster365 on Facebook for all the latest news.

We have teamed up with local delicatessen and farm shops to ensure your food needs are covered during your stay. [Stuart Lowen Farm Shop](#) in Minehead and [The Deli in Dunster](#) will both deliver your pre-ordered groceries to our cottages.

### **Is the local community welcoming?**

By being compliant with all legislation and working closely with our local communities, we're pleased to say that our neighbours are largely welcoming of respectful visitors. We have instigated a 10pm closure time for our Hot Tubs (in our Minehead properties) in order to maintain the night time peace and quiet in the Higher Town neighbourhood.

Exmoor and West Somerset have been relatively untouched by Coronavirus and many local residents are proud of their compliance with government advice and how visitors to the area have behaved. We have no reason to believe this will change and everyone here knows how important tourism is to the economy.

### **Can I invite people to sleep overnight or visit us whilst I'm staying at the cottage?**

In order to comply with fire regulations and our own insurance policies, we have always asked that you notify us in advance if there are any changes the number of guests staying at the property. Of course, we realise that some guests may have friends and family in the local area and therefore may visit you during your stay. Under the latest Coronavirus guidance, we will require their name and contact details to be held for 21 days following your departure and we request these are left with us when you leave.

### **What happens if I become ill with COVID-19 symptoms whilst staying with you?**

- For the wellbeing of our staff, our community and future guests, our clear advice is to prepare to return home immediately, with all your party – but first, please contact us via telephone on: 07817 698366 or 07810 651673
- We respectfully request that in these circumstances you do not use the hot tub and try to minimise touch-points within the cottages. Of course, please also do not use local amenities or facilities.
- When you return home, you must contact the NHS T&T service and provide the details of your prior locations and contact points. We can assist with providing these details if you wish.
- In the event of a guest displaying symptoms, we will immediately commence a deep-cleaning procedure using sophisticated anti-viral fogging techniques.

**What happens if you become ill with COVID-19 symptoms when you return home?**

If within 21 days, you must notify us via email straight away as we may need to provide support to the local T&T service. We will immediately commence a deep-cleaning procedure using sophisticated anti-viral fogging techniques.

Thank you for your consideration.

Exmoor Character Cottages

September 2020