



Owners services

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Services we provide

Places to stay in Whitstable is a local company and we like to keep things simple. We want you to manage your property in the way that suits you, while you let us take care of everything else.

Places to stay in Whitstable acts as a booking agent, taking bookings and reservations through our website and by phone from our office. We deal with the holidaymaker's initial enquiry through to accepting online payments for deposits and outstanding balances. We make the process of letting your property as easy as possible.

Our Online Booking System

We have integrated into our website a sophisticated booking system. Our system is very flexible in regards to what different types of breaks it allows you to specify for your property. Quite simply, the choice is yours.

You can allow 1, 2, 3 or 4 night breaks, mid-week and weekly breaks, weekend breaks (both long and short) and daily breaks. It is entirely up to you. If you want to create 'one-off breaks', say, to cover yourself for different changeover days during certain holiday periods such as Christmas and New Year, you can.

You can have different changeover days from low season to high season and you can charge different prices from one week to the next. If you want to limit holidaymakers to only weekly breaks, say, during the school summer holidays, you can and you have the choice to reserve your property for yourself, for as long as you like, whenever you like! Virtually any type of break you want can be integrated into our online booking system.

I think you can see just how flexible our system is! (You can specify what types of breaks you allow and different price bands when you submit your property to us on our 'Owner's Form').

Custom Booking Calendar

For each property on our website we have integrated into our system a 'custom booking calendar' which is unique to each property. This enables customers to see when a certain property is available or when it is booked. The calendar enables a customer to quickly select arrival and departure dates for their holiday accommodation and from there they are taken through to a secure checkout process to make a payment with their credit or debit card. The advantage of our system is that it is very straightforward and very quick for a customer to use.

All of the different types of breaks you allow as well as any 'one-off' breaks and 'special offers' appear on your 'custom booking calendar' as well as their respective prices.

We can also offer you a free 'SMS Text Alerts' service. This feature is particularly useful if you also take bookings yourself and/or use other booking agents. You cannot always be at your computer

checking emails, so to avoid the potential of double-bookings we strongly recommend this service. (Please see SMS Text Alerts section).

Prices Page

We have a unique 'prices page' for each property which displays all of the different price bands you have for your property reflecting different letting periods during the year as well as for all the different types of breaks you allow. This also includes prices for any 'special offers' and 'one-off' breaks you may have.

Special Offers

We also have a 'special offers' page that includes any offers or discounts that you may wish to include for your property during certain times of the year. Special offers are particularly useful during quieter letting periods in the year and they provide a great way of advertising periods that are hard to fill and can help you to maximize your occupancy.

Secure Hosting Payment

In configuration with our booking system we use a Secure Hosting Payment Process. This enables customers to make payments online quickly and securely with a credit or debit card, 24 hours a day. With our system, payments are instantaneous and a customer can secure a property quickly and with confidence and importantly, when they are in the 'right mindset' to go ahead and make a booking.

How we Market your Property

Places to stay in Whitstable creates an individual profile page for your property which goes on our website. This features a detailed description of your property, highlighting any unique features it has. We incorporate detailed and informative photos of both the exterior and interior of your property and a full inventory specification. We feature the 'custom booking calendar' as well as the 'prices' and 'special offers' pages unique to your property.

We advertise your property on other websites we think may generate more traffic for our website and in turn for your holiday accommodation. We advertise in local publications and we have strong links with local businesses and organisations which we use to your advantage. We establish links with other notable websites, which can help to increase your and our online presence. We use SEO (Search Engine Optimization) techniques to give our website higher rankings in Search Engines. We are totally committed in providing your holiday accommodation with as much exposure as we possibly can and in giving you a potentially greater rental income. What's good for you is good for us!



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Photos

The photos we use to market your property on our website is a very important consideration. We want to market your property to its maximum potential, so the photos have to be right. Any exterior photos of your property have to be taken in the right conditions and there are certain times of the year when this is not possible. Therefore, if you have any of your own photos we are more than happy to accept them provided they are of suitable quality. Alternatively, if you would rather have us take photos of your property we can arrange a suitable time and date to visit you at your holiday accommodation.

Online Owners Form

Our online 'Owners Form' allows you to give us all the information we need to market and advertise your property on our website. This includes the breaks you want to allow, the prices you want to charge, and all other accommodation specifications relating to your property. You can even send us your own photos! (Please read the notes on the form relating to maximum file size and format).

In fact, you can submit to us everything we need to get your property live on our website and to start taking bookings for your property!

Please note that the form may take a while to complete so it might be a good idea to have a look at it first and gather together all the information you need before filling it in. Also before you submit the form, make sure that you have completed ALL the form fields and if you have uploaded any files, please be patient after submission as the form can take several minutes to process. If for any reason you have problems sending the form with attached files, you can email the relevant files (photos etc) to Places to stay in Whitstable separately at: photos@placestostayinwhitstable.

Your Holiday Accommodation

To make your holiday accommodation a success it must be beautifully presented and at a price that reflects the facilities it offers. You will need to decide what type of guests you want to attract. Is your property suitable for a family or is it an apartment that would be more attractive for a couple? Does it have access for the disabled? Is your property in a quiet location or in a lively area? Are children welcome? Are pets allowed?

You can specify extra charges for cleaning and things such as towels and linen but why not include them in the actual rental price to make it easier for the customer and to make them think they are getting a better deal? Some customers might be put off with 'extras' and might view them as hidden costs. We recommend that all of the properties on our website include a standard inventory. The inventory we specify conforms to the NQAS standards (see NQAS section).

Take into account the number of guests you want to accommodate to obtain the best flexibility. Try to achieve the best combination of beds and types of bedrooms. If your space allows for two single beds, then this twin-room arrangement can be a very flexible option. It can accommodate a single guest, two guests traveling together or possibly a couple. Another consideration would be to have 'zip and link' beds. They allow a twin room to be made into a very comfortable double room, creating a king-sized double bed when two 3' single beds are zipped together.

Make sure your property is equipped with the sufficient amount of crockery and cutlery settings, dining chairs and seating for the maximum number of people you have specified to stay in your property. Leave adequate cleaning equipment including a vacuum cleaner at the property so that guests can leave your property in the same state of cleanliness as when they arrived.

We recommend that you leave all operating instructions for appliances, including boilers, washing machines, televisions etc in a folder clearly visible for guests, as well as details of refuse collections. Any information regarding local amenities, shops, attractions, doctors, dentists and the nearest hospital is also very useful and could be compiled into an 'Information Folder' for the guest.

SMS Text Alerts

We have integrated into our booking system SMS Text Alerts. Whenever a customer makes a booking online we can offer you the service of having a free SMS Text Alert sent straight to your mobile phone, the moment a booking is made. This service we offer is extremely useful, particularly if you are away from your computer and do not have Internet access (we cannot be tied to our computers the whole time!). If you take some bookings yourself and/or are with another booking agency this service can help protect your property from being double-booked.

Our SMS Text Alerts service is available to Owners at no additional charge and you can specify whether to have this service when you submit your property through the 'Owners Form'.

Our Charges

We believe in keeping things simple. We do not charge any registration or marketing fees. You can submit your property on our website for free and at anytime you like. We simply take a 10% commission on any booking we secure for your property and pass the rest of the payment on to you.



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Insurance for your Holiday Property

If you are using your property as a holiday let it is vital that you protect it with adequate insurance. You will need to contact your existing insurers to find out if you can amend your current policy as standard house insurance will not cover your home and its contents for holiday lets or legal liability insurance. We recommend that you look at insuring your property with a specialist holiday home insurance company.

Security Deposit

Places to stay in Whitstable takes a security deposit from the holidaymaker on your behalf, the Owner, for every booking we receive. This is normally £150. We specify in our booking terms and conditions that the property must be kept clean and in good order by the holidaymaker, who is responsible for any breakages and/or damages that occur during their stay. In the event of any breach of these obligations, you, the Owner, shall be entitled to deduct from this security deposit, the cost of remedying any such breach. If you want Places to stay in Whitstable to set a larger deposit on your behalf, we can, although it might be worth setting a figure around the same amount as your insurance excess, in the event of any potential claim. We generally find that £150 is more than adequate for most property owners.

NQAS

The National Quality Assurance Schemes provide ratings that guests can use to make an informed decision on where to stay. VisitBritain and many local authorities produce annual accommodation guides, which are also linked to their websites. In order that you can advertise with these organizations, you need to have your property assessed under VisitBritain's National Quality Assurance Schemes (NQAS). The scheme awards ratings according to quality. The higher the quality of accommodation, the higher the rating. The NQAS standards list the minimum requirements throughout your property, from bed sizes to furniture. These schemes provide assurance to guests that the advertised accommodation is meeting a recognized standard. To find out more about NQAS and the benefits of having your property assessed, contact Quality in Tourism: www.qualityintourism.co.uk.