



## **ACCESS POLICY TO SITES OPERATED BY SHANNON CASTLE BANQUETS & HERITAGE LIMITED FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, WHEELCHAIR USERS AND PERSONS WITH MOBILITY ISSUES.**

### **Policy Statement.**

Shannon Castle Banquets & Heritage Limited (Shannon Heritage) is a private, limited liability company incorporated under the Companies Acts, 1963- 2009 and is wholly owned by Shannon Free Airport Development Company Limited, a semi state company. Shannon Heritage operates and manages a wide range of visitor attractions in the mid-west of Ireland, many of which are heritage sites and buildings protected as National Monuments under the National Monuments Act, 1931 and under the Planning & Development Act, 2000 and / or sites of historical importance. As such, Shannon Heritage is necessarily limited and restrained in what works and improvements in terms of access it may undertake to, or in the vicinity of, such sites and visitor attractions. Subject to the foregoing legal constraints and health and safety legislation, Shannon Heritage is fully committed to ensuring, in so far as is reasonably practicable, that all sites under its management and control are accessible to as many persons as is reasonably possible. Shannon Heritage is also especially concerned and interested in ensuring that persons with disabilities, mobility issues and / or wheelchair users would be facilitated, again so far as is reasonably practicable, to visit our sites and attractions and, to that end, a proactive policy has been put in place and implemented to ensure that all potential, and actual, visitors to our sites by wheelchair users and / or persons with disabilities or mobility issues, are catered for to the fullest possible extent. This policy will be kept under regular review.

### **Information.**

It is our policy to provide all actual and / or intending visitors to any of our sites with the best and most up to date information regarding access by persons with disabilities, wheelchair users and or persons with mobility issues.

Please note that whilst Shannon Heritage makes every effort to ensure that the premises and sites which we manage and control are accessible for wheelchair users and persons with mobility and similar difficulties, we cannot guarantee full access to all sites. Parts of the sites and premises are inaccessible due to the nature and inherent structure of the premises and sites in question. Also due to urgent repair and / or conservation works which may be necessitated or required from time to time, certain sites or premises or parts thereof, which would otherwise be wheelchair accessible, may be closed off or access thereto restricted in whole or part at short or no notice.

Please also note that, pursuant to the **Occupiers Liability Act 1995**, if you enter any of our premises (or if owned or managed by the Company, any car park or other facility) and enter or pass you are entering and are on a premises, **TAKE NOTICE** that the occupier of the Premises

listed hereunder, given the nature character and activities of the said premises, hereby in accordance with section 5(2) of the Occupiers Liability Act 1995 *excludes the duty of care towards visitors* under section 3 of the Act.

### **Individual inquiries.**

If you contact us by telephone and / or individual email, and you make us aware of your particular situation, we will endeavour to furnish you with the necessary information orally over the telephone and confirm the same in an information guide which will be sent to you by email and / or post the same day. The contact number for central reservations is +353 61 360788 or email at [reservations@shannonheritage.com](mailto:reservations@shannonheritage.com).

### **Company website.**

This information guide will also be placed on the Company website. We will endeavour to update our information guide and website on a regular basis, as and when reasonably practicable. General information on all of the sites mentioned herein may be obtained on [www.shannonheritage.com](http://www.shannonheritage.com).

### **Group / Third party bookings.**

Where inquiries are received or bookings received by Shannon Heritage from, or through, tour companies, travel agents or any group of third party source, we will endeavour to furnish the information guide as soon as practicable to that organiser for onward transmission to such intending travellers as necessary and appropriate. It will be appreciated however that, unless we are actually made aware of any specific or special requirements which you or any member or members of the group might have, we cannot assist with the same unless we are advised of the full facts beforehand and in good time. Please note that Shannon Heritage cannot and will not be held responsible for any information not being furnished or misinformation furnished to any intending visitor or inquirer who makes a booking or inquires about a booking through a third party (not being Shannon Heritage). It shall be the exclusive responsibility of all tour operators, travel companies and / or agencies to furnish and make available the information to their customers or clients.

**We would strongly recommend, in the event of any doubt, that any person or group intending to visit any of our sites, with any person with any physical disability or with mobility issues, would contact us and make the necessary inquiries BEFORE booking, so as to avoid possible disappointment and / or misunderstanding.**

## 1. **BUNRATTY FOLK PARK & BUNRATTY CASTLE.**

Bunratty Folk Park situate at Bunratty, County Clare has a car park immediately opposite the main entrance with ready access into the reception area. The entrance doors to the admissions building are manual access only but are constructed to be sufficiently wide to accommodate wheelchairs access. Please note that some of the actual traditional houses might have steps into them. Others have narrow doorways which might cause certain difficulties with, and / or restrict, wheelchair access into every room.

The main paths around the various traditional houses are all wheelchair accessible. However there are varying and slight gradients in various parts of the paths and grounds which might necessitate a manual (non motorised) wheelchair user having their own assistance.

The dining restaurant areas are all fully wheelchair accessible. "The dining restaurant areas are all fully wheelchair accessible. Please note however that bathroom facilities at Mac's Public House for persons with wheelchairs and some other mobility issues using this facility is approximately some 300 yards away by the Admission Building at the Main Entrance."

Specific toilet and restroom facilities for persons with disabilities, for wheelchair users and person with mobility issues have been specifically provided, are centrally located in the Park and are clearly signposted.

**The Traditional Irish Night** is held in The Corn Barn in the Folk Park and this is a fully wheelchair accessible venue with full disabled toilet facilities.

### **Bunratty Castle**

This 15<sup>th</sup> century castle is located within the Folk park itself and was designed and built at the time to be primarily defensive in nature. This, of necessity, severely limits access.

A wheelchair accessible ramp has also been installed which provides access as far as the **courtyard** at the base of the castle which is approximately 300 yards from the admissions building.

The **cellar** of the castle is situated at ground level and is wheelchair accessible. A detailed display outlining the history of the castle, its restoration and some of the main characters involved with the castle is available for viewing here.

Access into the **castle** itself is by means of 19 wooden-cased steps to the top of the drawbridge and 6 stone steps into the castle and the banqueting hall.

**Unfortunately, access to the Great Hall in which the medieval banqueting reception is held is NOT wheelchair accessible.** However we do welcome and permit wheelchair users to the banquets but it is strictly subject to you bringing sufficient help with you to lift you up the stairs. For health and safety reasons Shannon Heritage staff or the catering staff employed by any independent contractor are **not** permitted to assist you. In addition we cannot take any responsibility or accept any liability for any such lifting and it must be done entirely at your own risk and at the risk of those lifting you. We would ask that you co-operate with the staff in arranging seating for you. Every possible effort will be made to ensure that wheelchair users will

be seated with their family and friends. Obviously the staff must take safety, access, egress and evacuation routes into consideration and we would ask for your co-operation and understanding in that regard.

The **upper rooms and chambers** above the great hall are accessed by mean of a narrow spiral stone stairs and we would **NOT** recommend that persons whose mobility is seriously impaired, or persons who are experiencing difficulty with, *inter alia*, heights, balance and / or vertigo, for your own safety and that of other visitors, ascend these stairs.

## 2. **DUNGAIRE CASTLE**

Dunguaire Castle, which is located in Kinvarra, County Galway, is situated on a rocky outcrop on the shore of Galway bay. Essentially only the grounds of the Castle are wheelchair accessible and then only with the assistance of a helper due to the location of the Castle itself.

The car park available and set aside for persons visiting Dunguaire Castle is situated some 300 yards distant, on the main road, from the main entrance to the Castle. There is then a further walk up a small incline of 75 yards approximately from the main entrance to the Castle itself. Please note that whilst it may be possible for persons to disembark at the side of the road at the entrance to the Castle itself, this is strictly not recommended for safety reasons. Persons who disembark other than at the car park and in a safe place and manner do so strictly at their own risk.

The area between the car park and the Castle is a public road and footpath over which Shannon Heritage has no control. The public path is uneven and there are no wheelchair ramps or pedestrian crossing. There might therefore be some difficulties experienced by a wheelchair user in traversing the distance between the car park and the entrance to the Castle and, if one is attending a banquet at the Castle, additional time ought to be allowed for this. If a person with a disability or using a wheelchair alights at the gate of the Castle, they do so **entirely** at their own risk. Shannon Heritage does **not** encourage this practice on the grounds of health and safety.

On arrival, there is a steep gradient up to the Castle with a further 3 steps to enter into the ground floor of the Castle which will require the wheelchair user to have their own independent assistance and or helper at all times. The ground floor only is wheelchair accessible.

**Unfortunately, access to the Banqueting Hall, on the first floor, in which the medieval banquet is held, is NOT wheelchair accessible.** We would not recommend this visitor attraction as being suitable for wheelchair users. Regrettably due to the legal provisions protecting these premises, we are unable to provide such services at this site.

## 3. **KNAPPOGUE CASTLE & WALLED GARDENS,**

### **BANQUETS, WEDDINGS & ACCOMMODATION.**

Knappogue Castle which is situate near Quin, County Clare is fully wheelchair accessible with disabled toilets situated on the ground floor. This is an elegant and extremely popular venue for weddings, corporate events and parties generally.

The Castle is spread over a few levels. Banquets, weddings and other events are held on the ground floor of the Castle which is fully wheelchair accessible. The other floors and state rooms are not wheelchair accessible.

Limited accommodation is available in the State Rooms situated on the upper levels. All access to these areas is by means of stairs and so these areas are not wheelchair accessible. However, depending on the level, range and restriction in mobility the wheelchair user may be lifted up the stairs by his or her companions. Please note however that the toilet facilities in the State Rooms are not wheelchair friendly, unlike the facilities on the ground floor.

The Walled Garden at Knappogue Castle is accessible to persons using wheelchair users and persons with mobility issues provided contact is made to Central Reservations (telephone +353 61 360788 and email [reservations@shannonheritage.com](mailto:reservations@shannonheritage.com)) in advance to ensure that the main gates into the Walled Garden are opened. This however will not always be possible. There are also bathroom facilities available for persons with disabilities at Knappogue Castle. Please note however that these are historic gardens and care ought to be taken by all persons entering the gardens as certain areas and paths may be uneven. Persons who are unable to remain standing for long periods and who do not bring a wheelchair with them ought to consult with reception or else telephone+ 353 61 360788 in advance.

For health and safety reasons Shannon Heritage staff or the catering staff employed by any independent contractor are **not** permitted to assist you. In addition we, our employees, servants, contractors and agents cannot take any responsibility or accept any liability for any such lifting and it must be done entirely at your own risk and at the risk of those lifting you. Obviously the staff must take safety, access, egress and evacuation routes into consideration and we would ask for your co-operation and understanding in that regard.

#### **4. CRAGGAUNOWEN – The Living Past Experience**

Craggaunowen, situated on hilly wooded land, is a reconstruction of some of the homesteads which existed in Ireland over 1,000 years ago. It also contains typical animals and artefacts from that period.

The car park is adjacent to the entrance and has a somewhat rough and uneven surface. The pathways are of varying gradients some of which are quite steep with uneven surfaces which will require the wheelchair user to have their own assistance at all times.

Disabled toilets with wheelchair accessibility are readily available on site.

#### **5. KING JOHN'S CASTLE & VISITOR EXHIBITION**

King John's Castle is a 13th century Castle on 'King's Island' in the heart of medieval Limerick City. Parking is available at adjacent public car parks and also on adjoining streets. Wheelchair accessible ramps are available.

The entrance to the castle itself, the courtyard and the extensive visitor centre located on the ground floor are all wheelchair accessible.

The various upper chambers and stairs in the castle itself are not wheelchair accessible. Also please note that archaeology excavations are taking place in the courtyard of the castle and so parts of the courtyard may be inaccessible.

King John's Castle is scheduled for refurbishment in the near future. Within the confines and restrictions of the National Monuments Act, 1931 and the Planning & Development Act 2000, as amended, and other limitations on works, every effort will be made to ensure that persons with mobility issues will have ready access to bathroom facilities on site. All persons with mobility issues ought to inquire from the Company on 53 61 360788 or email at [reservations@shannonheritage.com](mailto:reservations@shannonheritage.com).

#### **6. BRIAN BORU HERITAGE CENTRE, KILLALOE, COUNTY CLARE**

The Brian Boru Centre is a small building adjacent to the main bridge over the River Shannon, on the Killaloe side. This contains a small tourist office and is wheelchair accessible. Toilet facilities are not provided in the actual centre but full facilities including disabled facilities are available across the road in the car park approx 50mtrs from the Heritage Centre.

#### **7. CLIFFS OF MOHER RETAIL SHOP**

Clare County Council operates and manages the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre near Liscannor, County Clare. Shannon Heritage manages one retail outlet at the Cliffs of Moher which is fully wheelchair accessible. Disabled toilet facilities are available at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Centre.

#### **PLEASE NOTE**

**The Company reserves the right to alter and amend this Policy from time to time as circumstances or operations dictate. In the event of any alteration, every effort will be made to alter this Notice but in all cases and especially in the event of doubt it is strongly advised that any intending visitor make contact via telephone or email to ascertain the up-to-date position before booking and or travelling.**