



BUNKBARN IMPROVEMENTS

Spring 2024



Purpose of the project

The purpose of the project was to improve Bunkbarn facilities for our users, especially community groups and to provide a more efficient and sustainable energy source. We did this by:

- Installing an air source heat pump with underfloor heating & insulation
- Extending an outbuilding (piggery) to house the controls
- Reconfiguring and updating the toilets & showers
- Heritage double glazing- new doors, windows and roof lights
- New kitchen
- New furniture including new Eco mattresses

Why was it needed?

The Bunkbarn, a Grade II converted stables, was damp and expensive to heat. The toilets were cramped and the kitchen difficult to keep clean. The windows and doors were ill-fitting and let in draughts. The mattresses and other furniture were suffering from wear and tear.

Who was involved?

Stephen Grindrod Ltd, a local conservation builder was the main contractor, with Dalliam Heating, a local sustainable heating engineer putting in the air source heat pump and plumbing. Other local contractors were engaged for specific jobs such as flooring, high level painting and joinery. We also worked closely with the Lake District National Park planner, building control and Crosby Granger architects. There were regular site meetings at least once every 2 weeks to oversee the project.

Volunteers helped to clear the Bunkbarn at the start (late November 2023) and put everything back at the end of March 2024. They also put together all the furniture, painted the bedrooms, did some DIY and put the site back after the builders had left.



Beneficiaries

Already since the beginning of April 2024, 13 groups have stayed, including Quaker groups, Forest Schools training, women from the local refuge, a refugee group, a creative trauma recovery group, women dealing with addictions and a cultural group from Barrow in Furness. In the rest of 2024 a further 47 groups are booked in already, including schools, Scouts, youth groups and commercial guests whose stay supports the running of the charity.



Rookhow puts at least 5% of its bookings income into a fund to support community groups who would not otherwise be able to afford a break away. Local Quaker Meetings and individuals also support this fund. In Round 7 we have just given out a further 9 grants which will benefit 200 people, including many children and young people who will be nourished by the peace and beautiful natural woodland at Rookhow.

Impact & outcomes

The Bunkbarn is already feeling warmer and drier with the underfloor heating and good air flow now that we can open the rooflights. The guests are enjoying the new kitchen, comfortable beds and more spacious toilets and showers.

Quotes

"The beds are so comfy with the new mattresses!"

"The renovations are terrific"

"It's a lovely place to stay!"

"Verging on luxury now!!!!"

Any setbacks/ challenges

With the Bunkbarn only closed for 4 months and groups booked in from Easter, we were on a very tight schedule. Along the way we identified with the contractor anything which could be put back to a date later in the year and blocked out 2 weeks in August as a contingency. In the end they were not needed as Stephen's team worked tirelessly to ensure that everything was completed in time. There was an inevitable last rush a few days before, with volunteers working around contractors, but with positive goodwill and homemade cake, we all pulled the job off together.



There were some additional costs such as electrical upgrading for safety and extra flooring costs but we were able to pull in more funding for specific jobs and draw on Rookhow's reserves.

What have we learned?

As we had already worked with Stephen Grindrod and Dalliam on the Meeting House renovations and air source heat pump installation, we had a good working relationship and knew what to expect from each other. Investing in quality work from experienced and well-respected contractors has been our greatest investment for the future of the property, knowing that we are making decisions for the next generation, not just for a few years. The volunteer team, who are so dedicated to Rookhow were amazing as always!

Rookhow is a registered charity No 1188409