

## EAST LOTHIAN COTTAGES ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

We're very conscious that guests visit our properties to enjoy a peaceful break in the countryside, with all the natural beauty that should entail. We're also very conscious of the impact of our actions and those of our guests on the immediate environment and the wider world.

While we recognise that almost any activity has some form of impact, we see it as a duty to ensure that guests staying in our cottages can do so knowing that their footprint is kept to a minimum. This makes not just business sense, to allow guests to enjoy their stay, but personal sense, too: we live here!

We are therefore proud to have made the following commitments:

- **We will continually monitor the environmental impact of our business with the aim of reducing it wherever possible**
- **At every stage we will seek maximum environmental gain for minimum impact, putting people, biodiversity and the planet before profit**

Recent examples of our efforts to abide by these commitments include:

- achieving a Gold Award in Green Tourism's certification scheme, allowing us to continually monitor and improve our sustainability efforts against industry-leading criteria
- winning VisitScotland's regional Climate Action Thistle Award 2023 (you can read more about why we then returned our award and withdrew from the national finals [on our website](#))
- installing a 3-phase supply to the site to allow for further low-carbon measures
- upgrading our solar PV array, from 5.4kW to 11.56kW
- installing a 14.2kWh battery to store our self-generated electricity and relieve demand on the grid at peak times
- instructing comprehensive site surveys to identify further energy savings
- replacing the oil boiler in our home home with a heat pump as the first and most impactful step towards switching the entire site away from oil and onto low-carbon heating
- installing a smart meter to optimise our use of low-carbon energy
- sourcing our electricity from a supplier actively expanding renewables, rather than merely trading the renewable energy already coming onto the grid
- installing Electric Vehicle charge points in each cottage and offering charging at a fair rate
- providing secure bicycle storage, cleaning facilities and a workshop to encourage cycling
- providing guests with local walking and cycling route maps to promote active travel
- sponsoring the local community woodland and encouraging its use by guests
- providing guests with energy-free drying facilities
- providing guests with full details of local public transport options
- promoting local facilities, events and attractions to reduce guest mileage
- raising awareness of the need to reduce resource consumption wherever possible
- encouraging and pursuing behavioural change, both in guests and in ourselves
- employing alternatives to chemically-laden cleaning detergents and fabric conditioners
- supplying ethical and plastic-free alternatives to bottled shampoos and soaps
- supplying alternatives to plastic sponge cloths and scourers
- encouraging biodiversity through the use of organic weedkillers
- encouraging on-site composting wherever possible, and appropriate recycling
- hosting local beekeepers' hives
- coppicing hazel for firewood
- twinning our toilets with those in the developing world, and offering recycled toilet paper that also contributes to sanitation facilities in the developing world
- using sheep wool insulation rather than fossil fuel-based alternatives
- developing mixed hedges wherever possible around the site to encourage wildlife

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- planting trees wherever possible
- providing Tupperware to reduce the use of clingfilm
- joining the Energy Saving Trust's [Green Homes Network](#) to promote our range of environmental measures to other property owners
- favouring lime mortar over cement in repairs and building works
- installing a number of bat boxes around the site
- although not active, our environmental blog at [PositivelyGreen.blog](#) remains live, where we investigate the small steps we all can take to make a positive difference

We actively encourage suggestions and advice, so do please let us know if you have any thoughts on how we can do better.

October 2024