

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:

- signing up to the Green Tourism 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)
- instructing comprehensive site surveys to identify energy savings
- installing as many solar panels as local infrastructure currently allows
- upgrading the site to a 3-phase supply to increase PV, install a home battery, and begin the further investment necessary to switch the entire site away from oil and onto heat pumps
- buying our electricity from one of the few suppliers that actively invests in expanding renewables, rather than merely trading what's already coming onto the grid
- installing Electric Vehicle charge points and offering charging at a fair rate
- providing bicycle storage, workshop and route maps to encourage local cycling
- providing guests with washing/drying facilities and local maps to encourage walking
- providing guests with full details of local public transport options
- 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
- using sheep's wool insulation rather than fossil fuel-based alternatives
- developing mixed hedges around the site to provide wildlife habitats
- planting trees and repotting Christmas trees for re-use
- providing Tupperware to reduce the use of clingfilm
- favouring lime mortar over cement in repairs and building works
- developing an environmental blog at <https://positivelygreen.blog> to 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.

April 2024