Green Policy

At Wallops Wood, we are proud to be part of Visit Britain's Green Tourism Business Scheme. It provides recognition of our commitment to green issues and sustainability. As an accommodation provider in a National Park, these are two things we feel are very important. We have taken a number of steps that we hope will help to make a difference. However, the quality of our accommodation and service is always priority and will never be compromised. Each action we take may be a small step, but we feel that by addressing a number of small environmental matters, the wider benefits can be considerable.

Perched on a ridge of the South Downs National Park, we are fortunate to be surrounded by some spectacular countryside, so we actively encourage our guests to explore and enjoy it as much as we do. We have provided some recommended walking and cycle routes in the information packs in the cottages as well as several books and useful links on our website, including local contacts for bike repairs. There is secure bike storage for our guests use, and we can hire bicycles for guests upon request. All of the cottages are pet friendly, and there are plenty of routes for dog walks direct from the cottages, so guests will not need to jump in their cars to exercise their dogs. The National Park designation in 2010 emphasises the importance to safeguard this landscape. It is home to a vast array of particularly rare plant and wildlife species and in each cottage there is a reference copy of the Field Study Council's guide to the flora and fauna of the South Downs. We have installed several owl boxes, two of which are for Barn Owls which are frequently sighted by guests.

Whilst the cottages are rurally located, there are a lot of attractions within easy travelling distance. On the website, we have provided links to many activities and destinations in the area to suit all interests, so guests can walk or don't have to travel far in the car to find something to do. We are conscious that our rural location does generally necessitate travel by car but we are always looking at ways to help reduce this and in turn to reduce emissions.

For example, shopping can be done in one big shop instead of many journeys throughout the week and all major supermarkets deliver to the cottages, so this helps reduce the number of shopping trips guests will need to make. However, buying local seasonal produce is also important to reduce food miles.

A schedule of the regular farmers markets take place throughout Hampshire is available in each cottage so guests can purchase seasonal, locally sourced produce which in turns supports the local agricultural industry that makes this rural location so special. There are several farm shops nearby and we are also members of Hampshire Fare, a not-for-profit network supporting and promoting the food, drink and craft producers and distributors in Hampshire. We frequently promote fellow members through special offers and event like chocolates for Mother's Day. At Christmas, we invite our guests to pre-order a local turkey, ham, sparkling wine, Christmas cake and pudding for delivery

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direct to their cottage. These are all ways to help reduce food miles and support local businesses while providing a valuable service to our guests.

We have recently had our own borehole dug, so that guests can enjoy pure, fresh water from the chalk aquifer sourced only a few metres from the front door of your cottage. We encourage our guests to avoid purchasing bottled water as the waste plastic that this creates is significant and unnecessary when such fresh water can be accessed from the tap on site. We have also made a conscious decision to UV treat the water instead of chlorinate it, meaning it is better for you and the environment. Ecover Products and vinegar are used to clean the cottages.

We are several miles from main sewers so we installed a sewerage treatment plant in which bacteria digest and treat waste produced on site. The system, which is approved by the Environment Agency, returns almost pure water to the chalk aquifer. It is important to use detergents that are kind to the bacteria and no chlorine products as these would hamper the efficacy of the treatment system. To this end, the welcome hamper provided in each cottage, includes appropriate washing up liquid, washing powder, dishwasher tablets and hand soap that are kind to our system as well as the wider environment.

Each cottage has its own wood burner and a basket of logs from our own woodland as part of our sustainable woodland management. We also installed a wood chip boiler which provides energy efficient under floor heating which releases the same amount of CO_2 as would be released by the trees dying and decomposing naturally. The use of locally sourced wood facilitates a degree of self-sufficiency, while also looking after and managing the woodland, which provides important habitats for a range of flora and fauna.

A lot of insulation material was put into the walls, floors and roofs of the cottages when they were built to minimise heat loss. Most lights are fitted with low energy light bulbs and all domestic appliances are either A, or A+ rated for energy efficiency, to minimise the electricity usage. We also have solar panels installed on some of our buildings. The amount of electricity these produce is monitored and recorded, meaning we can keep track and compare our typical energy usage. Recycling of glass, plastic and paper waste is also encouraged and disposal facilities and collections are provided.

With the various provisions we have shown that these environmentally friendly actions can be implemented without compromising on the quality and luxury finish of our cottages. There is a comprehensive folder concerning our 'green' actions in each cottage for guests to digest at leisure, and we hope this will help guide and provide our guests with some ideas that can be implemented both during their stay and on their return home. We welcome all suggestions, comments and feedback regarding any of our green initiatives.

Andrew and Katherine Graham