

Green Action Plan 2016

Here at EcoVentures we are committed to working in a sustainable way and will seek to improve our environmental and social policies. We are undertaking the following actions to achieve this.

We will meet the requirements of environmental legislation and approved codes of practice.

We are an accredited operator with the Dolphin Space Programme, a voluntary initiative set up to safeguard the welfare of the cetaceans in the Moray Firth. We are also WiSe (Master) accredited, a Seawatch Recommended Operator and are rated as a 4 star Visit Scotland Wildlife Experience. We have recently joined the Green Tourism Business Scheme and have been awarded a Silver grade.

Further action – We are working to achieve 5 star Visit Scotland grading and to achieve GTBS Gold.

Research and Education.

On the boat trips we provide binoculars and identification sheets for passengers. All sightings are recorded on our sightings board in the shop and we have a library of information and guides both books and on a tablet computer. We share sightings data with research organisations and charities and support the WDC Adopt a Dolphin Scheme.

Becoming more energy efficient.

Our boat is serviced and maintained on a regular basis to run at optimum efficiency with fuel management systems installed. In the office appliances are switched off when not in use and heating is used on a timer. Focus on passenger % capacity to run at optimum efficiency.

Further action - to change all lighting to low energy bulbs and use rechargeable batteries.

Using local and fair trade suppliers

We use local suppliers where possible in Cromarty and Inverness for office and boat supplies. We have a fair trade supplier for shop stock.

Further action – to source more fair trade suppliers for stocking the shop and use fair trade hot chocolate for passengers. We will use eco friendly cleaning products such as Ecover and Bio D.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

We follow the Highland Council guidelines for recycling but prefer to reuse where we can. We cut down on packaging (and mileage) by ordering in bulk from our suppliers. We recycle

our ink cartridges, batteries and light bulbs. We use paper cups for drinks on the boat and paper bags in the shop.

Further action - to use recycled paper for all our leaflets, printer paper and envelopes. We will source recycled toilet paper and biodegradable bin bags. We will change from small cartons of juice for boat passengers to litre size to reduce packaging.

Encourage use of local transport and amenities

We encourage our customers and staff to use local transport. We are part of VisitScotland Cyclists Welcome Scheme and support Black Isle Bicycles hire service. They have also provided us with a cycle rack for visitors. We can provide information on local buses, accommodation, shopping and attractions in the area.

Responsible Visitor Charter – How You Can Help

We are working to make our destination more eco-friendly, but we need your help. We can all reduce our impact on the environment by making choices. As a visitor you have a very important role to play in helping us to conserve our natural assets and become a more sustainable destination. Here are our recommended tips on how you can help:

Conserve Energy

Reduce energy by switching off lights and closing windows if heating is on. The Energy Saving Trust provides information on what you can do at home.

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk>

Give the Car a Rest

Leave the car behind, if only for a day. Walk, cycle or use public transport. We will happily provide you with details of local transport/walks/cycle routes.

<http://www.stagecoachbus.com>; <http://www.transitionblackisle.com>;

<http://www.walkinghighlands.co.uk>

Shop Local

Use local products, they give you a flavour of the area and help support local communities. In Cromarty we are fortunate to have some fantastic shops with food, drink and arts and crafts. Ask us about The Cheese House, Cromarty Bakery, Cromarty Pottery and Gallery, Ingrid's House Gift Shop, The Emporium Book Shop and others.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Try to avoid overly packaged goods. Say no to that extra carrier bag by reusing bags or carry a bag for life. You can also support us in our efforts to recycle and use the recycling banks located by The Links.

Be Water Wise

The UK has rising costs for water treatment and flood defence so please use water wisely. Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth and adhere to towel policies or other water saving initiatives

<http://www.water-guide.org.uk/>

Respect Nature

Help us to look after the landscape and wildlife by not littering, guarding against fire and using footpaths and cycle-ways responsibly. Ensure you follow the Countryside Code

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/enjoying/countrysidecode/default.aspx>,

<http://www.outdooraccess-scotland.com/>

Support Green Businesses

There are thousands of businesses in the British Isles working to reduce their carbon footprint through the Green Tourism Business Scheme. Businesses are awarded Bronze, Silver and Gold for their efforts to be more sustainable. www.green-tourism.com