

# Environmental Plan 2008 Rev 3

## Highland Holiday Cottages

[www.HighlandHolidayCottages.com](http://www.HighlandHolidayCottages.com)



REVISION & AMENDMENT HISTORY				
Revision	Description	Date	Prepared by	Approved by
1	First Draft	16/11/2006	C Bain	HHC Management
2	2007 Plan Final	11/01/2007	C Bain	HHC Management
3	2008 Draft Objectives / Targets	13/10/2007	C Bain & S McCann	"
4	Review and update policy to Audit (removal of policy to stand alone) Setting of new objectives	22-01-2008	C Bain & McCann	"

## Introduction

Crubenbeg was taken over by Highland Holiday Cottages (HHC) on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2006.

Along with plans to upgrade the existing facilities, the Management all agree that in today's current climate, "*improved environmental performance*" equates to "*enhanced business development*".

HHC Management is therefore committed to the implementation of proactive measures to help protect and sustain the local environment. Highland Holiday Cottages aims to achieve the objective of improved environmental performance through pollution prevention, energy management, increased customer / staff awareness and continuous improvement.

To do this Highland Holiday Cottages made an early decision to develop an Environmental Management Plan which provides us with an integrated approach to identifying, managing and improving environmental performance, in conjunction with the overall business development and facilities up-grade plan.

Our overall company aim is:

***“To be in the top quartile in the Cairngorms National Park, with regard to Environmental Performance for self catering, without affecting Quality”.***

Highland Holiday Cottages see Ecotourism as a growing and essential market, and has made a conscious effort to be promoted as an ecotourism operation. Ecotourism is about connecting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel. This means that we implement and participate in responsible tourism activities, following the 5 ecotourism principles:

- Minimise environmental impact
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect
- Provide positive experiences for visitors & clients
- Work towards local conservation
- Continually strive for Eco improvement

## Basic Overview of Highland Holiday Cottages

The company comprises a purpose built complex of eight 4 Star Luxury Holiday Cottages set out in a U-Shaped Courtyard design and having a separate detached Main House which provides the Owners' accommodation. The steading consist of eight cottages (5 one-bed, 2 two-bed and 1 three-bed). The conversion of the original steading to form the Cottages was started in 1989 and completed in 1991. The design was done in keeping with historic architecture, to reduce aesthetic impacts and appropriate to the local landscape and environment.

The pictures below show the derelict Farm Steading prior to the up-grade and post renovation.



**Before Renovation 1989**



**Post Renovation 1991**

The Main House was built in 2003. Utilities for both facilities are as follows:

- Mains electricity is installed. The main house and the Cottages all have their own individual meters.
- The water supply is from a private spring source shared between Highland Holiday Cottages and the neighbouring Crubenbeg Guest House.
- Hot water in the Cottages is provided by an electric immersion heater, whilst the hot water in the main house is provided by the oil fired boiler (Rotex is one of the most efficient oil burning boilers available on the market, with a 90% efficiency rating).
- Drainage is to a private septic tank located in the grounds

## **What we do as owners to be Green -**

Below is a list of some general day to day activities and actions we do as owners, to be Green-

As this is a new house we endeavored to fit energy efficient appliances and plumbing in order to keep water and electricity consumption to a minimum, whilst at the same time maintaining a level of comfort. We have one of the most energy efficient boilers installed called "Rotex" which is made in Germany with a 90% heat transfer efficiency .

White goods: These are all Miele or Neff (both also German made) and include a fully integrated Dishwasher with energy & wash grading and a heat recycling system. The fridge is A rated and the freezer is B rated. Both are CFC & HFC free of course.

*Washer / Dryer machine.*

This appliance is A wash /water rated and B for energy.

### *Lighting.*

Unfortunately our lighting is recessed spot lights throughout (legacy of the previous owners), however we are phasing these out in the kitchen and hall and we are planning the installation of Eco spot lights to reduce energy consumption. The bedrooms, lounge and bathrooms have low energy light bulbs in the lamps to keep the power consumption down.

### *Central Heating.*

Our house has oil fired under floor heating and all areas of the house have individual temperature and timer controls. As mentioned we have one of the most energy efficient boilers available on the market. The Germans know how to make green appliances.

### *Green Products*

As indicated earlier we are trying to use recycled products, bin bags, toilet rolls and where possible recycled paper in the office in the main house.

Where possible any timber products bought have the FSC "Forestry Stewardship Council" stamp, showing that the wood is from a sustainable source. This includes the up-grade of the cottages and wooden flooring. If possible when purchasing cleaning products we buy non-aerosol sprays to avoid pressurized containers, which are harmful to the environment and problematic when recycling. Although some products we must purchase to ensure we keep our cottages clean and to a 4 star quality rating.

### *Other Information*

We have tried where possible to plant trees which are habitat friendly including Birch, Scot Pine and wild cherry (Gean), which has berries for the birds in the winter months. On the banks to the front and side of the house there is a wild flower bank with foxgloves, bluebells and poppies. We have also built a feeding station for the birds and local red squirrels.

There is a small Lochin in the main the garden, where animals, including our dog, likes to drink. We also stock it with local wild brown trout sourced from Alvie Estate. The area behind has been left for two years now to encourage wildlife, and often we see wild water fowl such as duck and wood cock along with a family of stoats. If you're lucky you may also see the local River Truim king fisher.

## **What "Highland Holiday Cottages" does to be Green -**

In line with standard Environmental Management Principles and the Green Tourism business scheme, we have split out management into 9 Sections for easy management. These are:

1. Compulsory
2. Management
3. Communications
4. Energy
5. Water
6. Purchasing
7. Waste and Chemical Management
8. Transport
9. Biodiversity

The following Bench Marking & Tracking Table details where we were at the start in 2006, and what we have done and will do with respect to these individual subjects over the years. This is a live document and continues to be updated in line with continual improvement.

# Environmental Bench Marking and Performance Tracking

## 2006/2007/2008

### Objectives and Targets:

#### Status Key:

	Complete		On going
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### 1.0 – Compulsory Measures

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
We must meet minimum standard for waste and litter	See section 7	Day one		
Sanity waste dealt with appropriated (no chemical toilets on its)	See section 7	Day one		
Car park run off dealt with appropriately (only parking for 8 cars no a significant E risk)	N/A	Day one		

### 2.0 Environmental Management – Baseline / Bench Marking Info Gathering

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Bench Mark Utilities :				
Water (so we can see reduction in water consumption prior / post new initiatives)	Purchase Water Meter and install at main Tank	Dec 2008		(Problem due to Neighbour use of Water) Plan to identify location of divert and set as 2008. (may get funding through water grant scheme)
Electrical Energy (excluding Fuel Oil & Gas)	Change from estimates to actual readings and set up spread sheet	Jan 2007	Done	Done but consider “green tariff” post contract end.
Waste Disposal (solid)	Calculate volumes of disposed waste using average weight per wheelie bin pick up (set up spread sheet)	Nov 2006	Done	Done volumes available for each moth for first 5 months then clear demonstration on volume reduction (possible savings due to bin size reduction in 2008)
To be bench marked against other similar organisations (how are we doing)	Become member of Green Tourism with the aim of achieving GOLD	March 2007 (2008?)		Awaiting audit
Staff and Client Environmental Awareness	Develop Environmental Policy and ensure availability in all cottages and any future staff are made aware and read/sign	April 2007	Done	See policy documents in cottages

In addition to above, communicate to clients through website	Make Key E PDF document available for download	Jan 2008	Done	Include this document – But ensure all confidential data is removed
Specialist / Advice Environmental Training for Management	Done through Cameron's Work and discussion with Green Tourism Team "Catherine Dolliver"	16/08/06	On Going	
Feed back from Clients on Quality and Environmental Issues	Develop feed back Form Design Environmental Poll on Web Site	08/9/07	Done Yippee	See feedback forms and web bog for E polls
Get a Green Supplier(s) for energy "energy"	Ensure a percentage of electricity from supplier is from sustainable sources (currently tied into a 3 year contract)	02/09/07	Done Yippee	Currently 7% (10% by 2010) comes from Green sources (wind, hydro/wave) - Consider a full green electrical package (or consider solar power see energy section)
As Above but improve	Look into other green companies that are more E than "eon"	Oct 2008		Cam to investigate when time allows
Green Suppliers " materials"	Purchase recycled products and eco friendly products depending on availability	05/05/07	On going where possible	Using recycles stationary, toilet tissue and Tesco Brand eco cleaning products where practical
Communicate our key green credentials	Dedicated section on the Web Page for Environment	July 2007	Done Yippee	Also see blog
Improve Biodiversity of garden grounds	Plant Native Species (wild rose, birch, pine, gean)  Allow natural wild planting around 50% of Pond  Develop Organic Food Garden  Also installed 4 Bird Boxes of different styles to encourage bird life and set up feeding Station for birds and red squirrel	On going – Garden is now producing a number of organic fruit and vegetables that are occasionally available to clients	Done Yippee	
Identify and participate in Environmental Forums or action groups in the areas	Join Chambers of Commerce where Environmental issues are always on the agenda	20-07-07	Done	See Scottish Waste Awareness Group (SWAG) and other E issues

### 3.0 – Communications

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Communicate our key green credentials	Dedicated section on the Web Page for Environment	July 2007	Done	Also see blog
Communicate key E issues to clients	Switch off, Save Water, Don't Flush signs and Environmental Policy to be displayed in cottages	May 2007	Done	
Build Relations with a local community project	Supply donation for Wild Cat Trails Newtonmore	Jan 2007	Done Yippee	£50.00 Donation for up keep of woodland walks and trails and repair of woodland gardens (22-01-07 this is now set up as an annual donation and we promote the trails to our guests)
Built Heritage	Contact McPherson Clan with regards to up grade of grave and fencing	2008 end		Discussed matter at local museum meeting (awaiting response 17-12-07)
Improve E education to clients (also promote Highland Museum in Newtonmore)	Purchase E posters and new Flora and Fauna Posters and post in Games room	Jan 2007	On going	Also order Fungi Posters. Still to be posted.
Contact other GTBS members for advice  Also see back link on E page for listings of GTBS members in the area.	Contact XXXXX Lodge (sliver level) - for e advice also visited site to see what was actually in place	01-10-07	Done	Verification from Rebecca and Andy (owners of mountain innovations)
No Smoking (we do not want to be no smoking but we want to encourage guests to smoke out side) This is also a business and quality issue.	Install signs requesting that clients smoke out side. Also supply suitable but disposal pot at each cottage location	May 2007	Done	
The Eco Tourist and Business Traveler	Advertise on eco travel web site such as <a href="http://www.responsibletravel.com/">http://www.responsibletravel.com/</a>	July	Done Closed	Not going to do it due to cost but looking into other options – <b>Note</b> - they have now come back with no charges - so now advertising with them.
Glass notice board for outside to supply info on weather, local events and other environmental information	Buy glass notice board	Done Nov 2007	Done	Purchased

#### 4.0 – Energy

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Reduce energy consumption by using eco bulbs where possible	Purchase and roll our “eco for old” over a period of time	80% by end 2007	Done	Only dimmers, cooker lights and strip lights not changed... Massive investment but have seem reduction in electrical bills
All new white goods to be energy efficient	All new white goods to be eco rated at A or B	New for old on going	On Going	No new white good purchase since taking over business
Reduce energy on outside lighting	Replace all out door lighting with timers and use low energy or CFL bulbs	October 2007	Closed	Did replace outside light but was effecting quality and safety reverted back to traditional until brighter options available on market.
Obtain max efficiency from fridges	Undertake regular inspections of seals and freeze compartments	Ongoing	On Going	
Reduce energy on water heating	Turn down thermostats by a few degrees	May 2007	Done	Must not effect quality so monitor feed back regarding to water temps
Dimmer switches	Dimmer switches to be installed in all main rooms where stand bulbs are used (see upgrade plans)	Ongoing	Done	
Reduce energy loss from radiators	Remove external timers as it is noted that if not monitored they switch on when cottages are not occupied	April 2007	Closed	This contravenes the STB Quality system
Reduce energy loss from radiators	Install reflective back panels on walls	During up grade (?)		Still to be implemented (consider for 2008 plan) – discuss this with Audit Team
Consider Green Energy Sources	Obtain / Investigate use of solar panel and grants	End 2007	On going	Meeting set for early November _cost is very high and considering for 2009
Improve heating by removing need of gas (with knock effect of reduced use of electric heaters)	Install wood burning stoves and supply fuel from suitable wood sources	See up-grade plan for upgrade timetable	On Going	Ash, Birch, Larch, Cedar done and ongoing for all cottages except Pine due to Disability category
Save energy through reduction in Standby	Switch off at wall policy when cleaning cottages-also make up poster	Switch off during cleaning. Done as of Jan 2008		Still to do poster notes in discussion with Team as there is a feeling of over

	notes			posting the cottages?
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## 5.0 – Water & Chemical Management

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Reduce water flush	Install plastic bottles into all cisterns	Oct 2007	Done	Done
Ensure all dripping taps and leaks are identified and fixed	Maintenance regularly carried out	On-going	On Going	
Ensure water quality  We currently have filter and UV treatment system	Contact Council department and undertake risk assessment and monitoring	End 2007  Given all clear see water file Jan 2008	Done	Letter of risk assessment carried out awaiting reply (see file)  All previous tests have been good and no lead pipes are used in the system.
Catch rain water for use in garden	Install water butts	June 2007	Done	
Investigate pond water use for vegetable garden	Installation of pump and storage tank	Summer 2008		ISO Tank purchased
Water Management in Hot Summer Periods	Letter to guests	On-going	On Going	Letter issued when water level become low in Tank (not required in 2007)
Ensure all chemicals are stored with locked doors to prevent access from unauthorized persons	All chemicals (excluding cleaning product to be stored in the two main sheds and kept locked at all times)	Jan 2008	Done	Done
Oil Storage to best practice	Tank supplied is double lined. Purchase lock for tank	Jan 2008		Still need to purchase lock

## 6.0 – Purchasing

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Shopping baskets provided for each cottage	Bought and hung in hallways	Jan 2008	Done	
Reduce food/ produce miles	Encouraging guests to buy locally by providing information in 'Welcome Packs' with regard to food and local crafts. We ourselves buy local produce	2007	Done	
Recycled paper use	Business stationery, kitchen towels & toilet		Done	

	paper all used in both the cottages and in the main house			
Recycled goods	Use of recycled plastics, glass and ink cartridges all where possible		Done	
Wood use in upgrade	Where possible during the upgrade we will use sustainable sourced furniture and timber products		Done	
Green energy	Will investigate using a greener provider, or remaining with current provider for greener energy			See previous notes on this issue
Greener suppliers	We endeavor to use green suppliers			

## 7.0 – Solid Waste Management

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Improve waste segregation and recycling	Purchase wheelie bins and mark accordingly – Glass (Green, white brown), Paper, Cans	Jan 2007	Done	No plastic waste recycling offered by Highland Council. Consider food waste disposal in 2007/2008
Reduce waste from main house (food waste)	Set up food waste composting system (now all cottages can participate)	Oct 2006	Done	Investigate offering service to Cottages -
Offer food waste composting for all cottages	Purchase additional compost bins and supply caddie buckets	End 2007	Done	Now in place and monitoring
Reuse ash from stoves - use as Wood Ash from the cottages wood burning stove is used on the garden as a potassium fertilizer	Purchase metal ash bin for compound	April 2007	Done	On going
Reduce dog waste	Install doggy toilets	Jan 2007	Done	
Obtain permit to recycle all waste at Local Council. Facility	Enquire to local authority to get permit	2007	Done	Permit issued to recycle all wastes - ongoing

## 8.0 – Transport

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Encourage use of other means of travel apart from vehicular	Providing guests with timetables and information regarding buses & trains. Also encourage walking, cycling with routes in the information packs	Jan 2008	Done	Posted timetable in web page.
Provide bikes for guests to shop locally	Purchasing bikes	2008		Looking to by Bikes for green recycling bike company based in Edinburgh at Waverly Station. (also looking at electric bikes)
Encourage local shopping	Providing information in our welcome packs about local produce and we ourselves shop locally	Day we moved in	Done	
Pick up service	We provide service for guests from local train stations or pick up points etc.	Oct 2006	Done	
Cycle hire	Work closely with Laggan cycles to provide guests with accessible cycle hire		Done	
Covered/ secure cycle store	We provide both covered and/ or secure cycle storage for guests	Aug 2007	Done	
Electric Bikes	Considering purchasing electric bikes for guests' use to go shopping with	Not set		Are electric bikes green?
Carbon footprint notices	We encourage guests to consider their carbon footprint and how they can offset it		Done	Also encourage guest to leave the car

## 9.0 – Biodiversity (Wildlife and Landscape)

Objective	How	Target	Status	Comment
Support and Membership - Rather than green we have offer our facility to human needs which are just as important as E needs.	Have offered free weekends to charity helping special needs kids and mums – still in planning stage	2008	On going	See email
Nature Information - information on nature reserves and wildlife parks.	Link Insh Marshes RSBB on web site	2007	Done	
Nature information / Interpretation – Flora and Fauna	Supply poster info in games room and on web	Jan 2008	Done	
Nature Tours	Plan walk and forage weeks end of Summer	End 2008	On going	
Native Trees	Planting of Native trees such as Birch and Scots Pine	On going also inconjunction with local land owners	On going	
Put aside a Wildlife area	Area around pond now lets to grow and now grass cutting.	June 2007	Done	Also plant some wild flowers
Bird and Bat Boxes	Purchase and install bird boxes (up to £100 investment)	August 2007	Done	Installed 4 types of bird boxes.
Reduce Building Impact / Visual Screening / Natural Colours	Plant additional foliage plants in and around courtyard and trees in road facing area. Commitment to leave buildings in contemporary colours and designs.	On going	On going	Consider some fast growing ivy.
Access for all	Make one cottage full disability access.	2007 Done now highest category	Done	