

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONCEPT

Our aim was to restore our redundant 18th century stable block to give it new life. We wanted to retain its character in a simple traditional way and restore it using natural earth-friendly materials that would allow the building to 'breathe'. We chose natural materials because they are good for old buildings, the environment and for the health of people. This holistic concept has been the basis for the decisions we have made from the beginning of the restoration and is now shaping all aspects of running the business – from the products we offer to the services we provide. We are committed to providing a good quality service whilst minimising the environmental impact of our activities in order to preserve the environment around us for future generations.

We want our visitors to relax and unwind and enjoy the peaceful surroundings within this traditional rural setting. We hope that as they view the surrounding countryside, taste the fresh local food, smell the natural oils in the plant products we provide, breathe the fresh air (inside the building as well as outside), wake to the sound of bird song, and touch the wood, the wool and all the other natural fibres, their enthusiasm for living in harmony with nature, their appreciation for the environment and their understanding of the reasons for preserving it will all be enhanced.

We also view communication as an important part the service we provide and we are more than happy to provide information about, and answer questions on, a large number of topics including eco-friendly building materials, wood pellet heating, local produce, chemical-free bath and beauty products, organic gardening, local events, where to go locally to experience nature (e.g. nature reserves, where to go walking and cycling) and any other information they require – these and others are activities are those that encourage a greater awareness of environmental issues.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Our environmental policy is all about choosing the types of sustainable products which are kinder to the environment and to people; communicating, encouraging and providing information about these products and services to our guests; and providing inspiration by example.

These are the 3 parts to our Environmental Policy

- We have our own principles/set of standards which determine which products we use and what type of services we provide
- We enjoy communicating with our guests. We provide information on many environmental topics and welcome suggestions that will increase the enjoyment of their stay.
- We provide many examples in our accommodation of ways to live in a more sustainable way (*i.e. '...living life naturally...'*)

Products and Services used during restoration

- Only natural sustainable materials/products were used throughout the restoration and the sustainable principals of SPAB (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings) were adhered to as closely as possible.
- Original features were retained and repaired rather than replaced,

- Solar Panels and a Wood Pellet boiler were installed - these work together to supply the underfloor heating, cast iron radiators and hot water. Cast-iron wood-burning stoves were installed in both accommodations and a low energy storage heater/cooker was installed in one of the units.
- Natural insulation was used throughout and included battens of cotton/ hemp and wood-fibre boards in the walls & ceilings and layers of re-cycled glass/limecrete (known as 'glaster') below the floors. The quantity of insulation used ensured that u-values were well above that specified in the Building Regulations were achieved.
- Natural environmentally-friendly paints and wood stains were used on the woodwork both inside and out, and lime plaster, distemper and lime-wash were used in all the interior decoration.
- Borax salts were used instead of the normal toxic wood-preserving treatment,
- Local builders were employed for the restoration of the building, local kitchen craftsmen were used to build the kitchens, and where possible, local products were purchased and local services were sought.
- A Rainwater harvesting system was installed - the water collected is currently used to partially satisfy the requirements of our organic vegetable garden and raised beds.
- A purpose-built bat roosting box was incorporated into the roof void of the Stables,
- The brand new dishwashers are triple A rated for efficiency and the washing machines are A++ rated (recommended by the Energy Savings Trust).
- Green Electricity - All our electricity is from 100% renewable sources, i.e. from free-falling water, wind, biomass, solar and tides. Low energy light bulbs are used where possible, there are several 'lighting zones' in each room and the outside lights are on timer switches so they are only used when required

Products and services provided for guests

- Welcome Hampers - these include local (organic where possible) Lincolnshire produce as well as other organic products from further afield (mostly British). The vegetables and fruit are either produced in our own garden or purchased through a local box scheme. Eggs, cheese, butter and Lincolnshire sausages are all produced locally, the bread we make is made from flour from local windmills. The beer is from a brewery near the coast and the fruit presses is made at a fruit farm nearby. Our wine is made by a local company from apples and quinces collected from our own orchard. The coffee we provide is purchased directly from communities in Indonesia and Honduras as part of an ethical trading scheme to stop the destruction of tropical rainforests.
- Toiletries and household cleaners are provided for the guests – these include chemical-free plant-based soaps, shampoo & conditioners, face cleansers, bath products and low-impact cleaning products, dishwashing products and laundry liquid.

- Nature appreciation - Each accommodation has its own small garden fenced off with hazel hurdles which include bird-feeding tables and pots and troughs planted with vegetable/herbs available for use during guests' stay. Binoculars and bird books are provided in the accommodations. We are also continually working on our own garden which extends to one acre around the Stables and which includes a lavender field, wildlife pond, organic vegetable garden, apple orchard and a small native woodland - we are happy to show guests around and talk about what we've done and other nature conservation issues.
- We provide composting buckets indoors and wooden compost bins outside in the gardens of both accommodations (our own re-cycling bins are also available for guests to use). Oak water butts collect water from the roofs which guests can use to water their own gardens.
- Natural materials/fibres have been used everywhere, including wood floors, wool or cotton rugs, cotton sheets and towels (mostly organic), organic wool mattresses, silk, cotton or linen curtains and much more,
- Collection and drop-off services to the nearest railway are offered and information on local transport is provided.
- We provide photo albums about the restoration and are also in the process of developing information packs which will contain much more detailed information on where to obtain various materials and products and advice about other eco-living topics.

Plans for the Future

- From September courses will run on topics ranging from wildlife gardening to basket-making which guests can attend during their stay.
- Eventually, we will also have a small gift shop which will include gifts inspired by nature as well as products made by local craftspeople.