

Holiday in the bothies which have just won the highest green tourism award

ROYAL DEESIDE SELF CATERING BUSINESS WINS A GOLD GREEN TOURISM AWARD

Cairngorm Bothies, near Aboyne in Royal Deeside, an off grid holiday development set within some of the finest Scots Pine Forest in the country, has secured a Gold Green Tourism Award which recognises the business' commitment to becoming more sustainable.

Acknowledged worldwide as an indicator of best practice in sustainability, the Awards provides a practical way for a tourism business to progress on a "green journey". They also act as a hallmark of "green quality", attracting custom from increasing numbers of eco-minded visitors.

It's a huge boost for the business, which has offered six, off road and off grid woodland Bothies for let in the Blelack Woods since the summer of 2020. Six more were set to join the portfolio in the near future, but recent storm damage has now delayed the plans for this to happen.

Having started off in 2013 with five, individual, architecturally designed timber lodges marketed under the banner of Cairngorm Lodges, business owner, Dr Gordon Drummond, has taken the concept to a new level with Cairngorm Bothies.



Set even deeper into the forest than the lodges, to allow for maximum engagement with the flora and fauna, Cairngorm Bothies has proved very popular with those looking to holiday with a lower carbon footprint, in a very secluded environment.

All Bothies have generated power from a solar array, which in turn powers a water pump to purify water. Wood burning stoves, supplied with logs from the estate, perform a multitude of tasks in the Bothies, from heating the main living areas, to heating a water circuit for towel rails, providing hot water for washing, and powering a cooking range, complete with oven.

“We are delighted to have secured the Gold Award in the Green Tourism Scheme,” said Gordon, who was asked to speak at COP26 on environmental issues. “It’s fantastic news, especially as we did not have the best start to the year with extensive storm damage on two occasions which we are still dealing with.”

“Our philosophy at Cairngorm Bothies here is to promote renewable energy, together with the sustainable procurement of fabrics, furnishings, and consumables. This makes Cairngorm Bothies a novel and extra-ordinary proposition for the market. It gives the customer a flavour of the considerations of sustainable living, integrated into nature, in the spectacular setting of an ancient woodland.”

“We deliberately sited the Bothies as far from tie in points to existing infrastructure, such as phone, water and electric,” added Gordon.



The Green Tourism body provides advice on a range of topics, such as reducing energy use, saving water, efficient & eco-friendly waste disposal, ethical buying, staying local & seasonal and minimising food miles. It also promotes biodiversity and helps businesses to adopting a smart, sustainable outlook from top to bottom.

“We will continue with our plans and hope to launch more Bothies later this year to create a larger development with an event space,” said Gordon. “All of this advice helps the business, as does becoming a mentored green business with Scottish Enterprise last year. I’ve also benefitted greatly by

outsourcing my reservations to The Accommodation Services Trading Company – they handle all our bookings and enquiries, as well as market the business. It’s more efficient, I’m enjoying a higher rate of occupancy, and it’s freed up a lot of time for me to concentrate on other day to day issues, such as securing the planning for more Bothies, appointing the contractors – and latterly of course organising the storm clear up.”

Gordon also operates Cairngorm Lodges, launched in 2013, and marketed to those that seek the most luxurious stay in the forest, whilst having sustainability at their heart. Featuring organic fair-trade bed linen and towels, low energy lightbulbs, and green household products, heating in these properties, which includes Red Squirrel Lodge, Capercaillie Lodge, which overlooks a lochan, and Woodcutter Cabin, is achieved with radiators powered by wood burning stoves.

For further details on Cairngorm Lodges and Bothies, please check out www.cairngormlodges.com and www.cairngormbothies.com call 01339 289103, email bookings@cairngormlodges.com.

Details on The Accommodation Services Trading Company, check out www.astc.business

