

# **Off-grid holiday business celebrates awards**

## **Scottish Thistle Awards Regional Final success.**

A year after it suffered severe storm damage, eco self-catering business, Cairngorm Bothies, situated in the Cairngorm National Park, is celebrating being chosen as a national finalist in the Scottish Thistle Tourism Awards.

The business, which is fast becoming a byword for green tourism, won the “Working Together for Tourism” Award for the Aberdeen City and Shire region. This award “celebrates partnerships, collaborations and team working, whether that be with local businesses, communities or a group of individuals”.



Dr Drummond with the award  
Cairngorm Bothies, owned and run by Dr Gordon Drummond, who is already the winner of an Unlocking Ambition Entrepreneurial Award from Scottish Enterprise, started off with six "off road

and off grid” woodland bothies in summer 2020. The innovative “off grid” holiday development may well have been the very first of its kind in Scotland. Solar panels are used to generate power, with the stored energy driving a water pump to purify water. Wood-burning stoves, supplied with logs from the estate, perform a multitude of tasks, 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.

Had it not been for the storm damage another six Bothies would have been added to the portfolio.

Dr Drummond said: “We are delighted to have collected this prestigious award which is in recognition of our team efforts and performance in keeping the business going during the Covid pandemic, and also our efforts in coming out of that quite dreadful period. These were very difficult and challenging times for myself and my team. I very much remember just how supportive my staff were, my contractors, and of course, the guests that turned up when they could and obliged us by adhering to the rules.

“This award is in recognition of their efforts. I am extremely proud to be part of this team.

“This has given us a huge boost after setbacks earlier this year which left us with hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of damage after the storms. We picked ourselves up and continued pressing ahead with our plans to increase the size and scope of this innovative off grid holiday development. We now look forward to being a part of the National Awards, representing the North East of Scotland.

“Those who have stayed in the Bothies over the past two seasons have said what a special experience it was, giving them a flavour of the considerations of sustainable living, integrated into nature, whilst in the spectacular setting of

an ancient woodland.

“They are for those who want to enjoy and experience a remote setting. We deliberately site them as far from tie in points to existing infrastructure, such as phone, water and electricity.”

Having been selected as one of a number of innovative “green” businesses from all over Scotland to win the Unlocking Ambition prize last year, Gordon received a cash grant, and is benefiting from specialist mentoring to help him grow the business.

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

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