

# **Holiday suggestions – Cairngorm open new eco self-catering bothies**

## **A year after a devastating storm, Cairngorm Bothies open six more self catering properties.**

An investment of three quarters of a million pounds will generate new jobs & new energy into the area as award winning green tourism business regenerates after major setback last winter

Green Royal Deeside tourism brand, Cairngorm Bothies, with a range of innovative eco bothies set deep into the Blelack Woods, is gearing up to offer an even wider choice of holiday properties in early 2023.

Having set up an “off grid” holiday scheme, with the launch of its first six bothies in 2020, the business, which is owned and operated by Dr Gordon Drummond, is launching six more of its Bothies. These offer holidaymakers the opportunity to holiday in the stunning Cairngorms National Park with a lower carbon footprint.

The new Bothies, named after Scottish trees, will be ready for occupancy next month with forward bookings already being taken. Three new jobs are being created, with a positive spin off for the many local suppliers who are already involved with the business which has a “keep it local” ethos.

Dr Drummond originally launched sister business Cairngorm Lodges, a collection of five individual, architecturally

designed timber lodges, in 2013. Featuring organic fair-trade bed linen & towels, low energy lightbulbs, green household products, and with heating achieved through radiators powered by wood burning stoves, these lodges were marketed to those that seek the most luxurious stay in the forest, whilst having sustainability at their heart.

He then took the concept to a new level with the launch of the first six Bothies, situated in even deeper seclusion in the woods, and with solar panels generating power. The stored energy drives a water pump to purify water, whilst 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.

The Bothies were deliberately sited far from any connection points to existing infrastructure, such as phone, water and electric.

“At launch in 2020 our Cairngorm Bothies were a novel and extra-ordinary new proposition for the market, giving the customer a flavour of the considerations of sustainable living, integrated into nature, in the spectacular setting of an ancient woodland,” said Dr Drummond. “All properties are dog friendly too, as bringing along your four legged friend is really important to our customer base.”

The storm on the 30 January 2022 put paid to Dr Drummond’s plans to have the next six Bothies ready for occupation in April 2022.

“We were left with thousands of pounds worth of damage following this storm. The whole business was threatened and we had to re-group,” he said. “It was a major setback to our plans, at what was already a difficult time, having survived the various lockdowns and uncertainty over the Covid19 pandemic.”

Continued Dr Drummond: "But we have fought on over the last six months or so and are delighted that we are now in a position to launch these next six Bothies which are marketed at couples looking for a relaxing break. I'd like to thank my amazing team of people who have helped me get to this point, including my builder, my architect and other suppliers such as Accommodation Services who run all our reservations and help us market and promote both businesses. The fact that bookings remained vibrant for our existing lodges and bothies was down to their hard work. This meant that income was still coming in so we could carry out our repairs and bring the next stage of the bothies to fruition."

Although Dr Drummond admits that he is still "licking his wounds financially," he still plans to launch another six bothies at a later date to provide eighteen bothies in total at what is one of Scotland's most unique eco-friendly holiday developments.

During the stress and upset of the last year, several major boosts came in the form of prestigious industry awards for the businesses: a Scottish Enterprise Unlocking Ambition entrepreneurial award, a Green Gold Tourism Award and a Scottish Thistle Regional Tourism Award for Working Together, which certainly demonstrates the collaborative approach Drummond has taken in rebuilding and regenerating the business.

"We're through to the National Final for the Thistle Awards as the winning business for the North East of Scotland, so to add a national award would be absolutely fantastic. It's an honour to represent the North East. We'll have to wait until next year to find out, but we are keeping everything crossed. Along with seeing the new bothies open their doors to our guests, this would be the best possible start to the new year," finished Gordon Drummond.

The Cairngorm team have made a video of the business' journey

from the storm in January 2022 which can be viewed [here](#).

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





