



Visit
Wales

Tourism Case Study – Industry

Hafod Elwy Hall

“Green Accommodation” Collection

Major Themes – Energy, Nature



Achievements

- Green Dragon Environmental Standard® Level 2
- Winner of the Wales Business & Sustainability Awards, Energy Category, 2007
- Winner of the Green Snowdonia Best Sustainable Tourism Business, 2007
- Cost savings of £4,000 per year in oil consumption (7000 litres) and £1,300 in electricity
- CO₂ emissions reduced by 50%
- 100% increase in bookings and a high proportion from those wishing to stay somewhere “green”

Accommodation information

- Visit Wales 5 star
- Farmhouse
- Location – Bylchau, Betws y coed, Snowdonia

Owner details

Wendy Charles Warner
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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

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Background

Hafod Elwy Hall is a remote 14th century house in 60 acres of mountain moorland in Denbigh at the head of the Alwen reservoir. It is situated in the Hiraethog, amidst hills and lakes with the spectacular backdrop of the Snowdonia mountains.

This is an excellent example of luxurious but sustainable tourism. Guests can stay in superbly comfortable and welcoming 5 star accommodation whilst at the same time knowing that their stay is having a low impact on the environment.

“It makes sound economic sense to minimise your environmental impact when the result is greater guest satisfaction, increased turnover and increased profit margins. A ‘win, win’ situation all round.”

Wendy Charles Warner, Owner

Sustainable Tourism Accreditation

Operating in a sustainable manner makes good business sense in addition to protecting Wales’ greatest asset – its spectacular landscapes – and making best use of resources to ensure they will remain for the benefit of future generations.

“Green” tourism is growing fast and is increasingly important to visitors to Wales.

Green Dragon Environmental Standard®

The owners of Hafod Elwy Hall have implemented an environmental management system to help them manage their business in an environmentally sound way and to enable them to monitor and measure their achievements. In addition to attracting visitors, the environmental programme has identified cost savings.

Success Stories

Nature

Considerable improvements are being made to the land at Hafod Elwy Hall to help the hall become more sustainable, and to encourage wildlife and visitors! Many of the measures can be implemented by any business that owns land around their buildings. Bird boxes have been placed around the grounds and logs and branches have been piled to encourage insects and to provide cover for birds and animals. Many butterfly attracting species have been planted.

Ground nesting birds are protected by declaring the areas as out of bounds and ditches have been reduced to encourage natural marsh species.

A visiting expert found 56 different bird species (some rare) on or near the property. Lists are provided for guests and feedback shows that the possibility of sighting some of these is very attractive to guests and is a useful marketing message.

Otters have been spotted in the pond, along with the more common inhabitants – frogs and newts. Polecats breed in the grounds and their young can be seen most years.

The owners have cleared rhododendron from the grounds, as this is a non-native and invasive species that excludes native species and has no value as a wildlife habitat. Sitka spruce has been cleared for the same reason and 4,500 native hardwood trees have been planted for future coppicing. The coppice area will improve the environment for several native species that are in decline, such as the Black Grouse and will also encourage wild flowers.

Part of the grounds are being returned to peat moorland as this is more advantageous to the local ecology than forest heath land.

Energy

The owners have implemented both simple energy efficiency measures and more large scale installations in order to reduce energy use and ensure a truly warm welcome. The driver for this is financial as well as environmental.



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The simpler measures, applicable to all, include:

- Fitting deep insulation in the loft and insulating water tank and pipes
- Fitting insulated panels (from a Welsh manufacturer) under floorboards
- Replacing light bulbs, as they fail, with energy saving bulbs and replacing light fittings in bathrooms and bedrooms with those that take only low energy bulbs
- Replacing external floodlights with low energy fluorescent fittings
- Replacing all appliances, when required, with 'A' rated energy efficient models
- Using washing lines whenever there is breeze or sun and an indoor ailer in preference to tumble drying
- Fitting thermostats to radiators
- Fitting double glazing
- Changing guests' towels and bed linen only when requested

The more large-scale measures have included:

- Installing a 5kW wind turbine and selling surplus energy back to the National Grid
- Installing three wood burning stoves, and using wood from fallen trees and waste wood (from FSC sources) from a local timber yard, which was previously disposed of to landfill. A newly planted coppice will supply a long-term fuel source.

These measures have reduced energy costs by 50%, including £1,300 year in electricity costs and saving 7000 litres of oil – a further £4,000 per year. They have also reduced CO₂ emissions by 50%.

Waste

To cut down on food waste, home cooking is done to order, with a single main course chosen, by midday, by the first guest to request dinner. A small stock of home cooked dishes is kept in the freezer for those who turn up without having read the booking letter!

Soaps are handmade, as small bars enough for a short stay, providing a luxury and economical solution. Most guests respond well to being asked to leave the small bottles of toiletries for refilling.

Much of the furniture is reclaimed, although all is excellent quality and fits in with the "country house" environment of the hall.

Transport

The owners will meet guests from the railway station or bus stop if requested, and will provide transport during their stay, to encourage people to leave their cars at home. Often guests will bring their bicycles and there is secure storage available.

Culture

Welsh produced food is used wherever possible by the owners when catering for guests. The produce their own Welsh Black Mountain lamb and Welsh Black beef. They also have outdoor reared Saddleback pigs from which they produce pork, bacon and sausages. Also on the farm are ducks, geese, free range chickens and they grow their own seasonal fruit and vegetables. Fish is rod-caught locally. Other produce is sourced locally wherever possible.

The Welsh language is promoted and guests are given lists of useful Welsh phrases to try out locally. There are books on Welsh place names, dictionaries and information on local history and events.

Local tradespeople are used wherever possible and a local blacksmith made the curtain poles and fire irons. Guests are encouraged to buy locally produced products.



Hafod Elwy Hall

Further Information

Energy Saving Advice

fs4b.wales.gov.uk

Welsh Assembly Government, Flexible Support for Business has information and environmental advice. Alternatively call 03000 6 03000

www.energysavingwales.org.uk

For useful tips on how to save energy.

www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/business

Useful information and case studies to help your business to be more energy efficient.

www.carbontrust.co.uk

Advice on energy efficiency and CO₂ emissions. Also has information on how to get loans to change to energy efficient appliances and equipment.

Food & Buying Locally

www.foodwales.com

Quality local food and drink suppliers.

www.farmersmarketsinwales.co.uk

For details on farmers markets and local producers.

www.organic.ac.uk

Downloadable copies of Where to Buy Local Organic Food, free of charge from Organic Centre Wales.

www.fairtradewales.com/

Information on the Fair Trade campaign in Wales.

www.walescoop.com/what-we-do/fair-trade/

Information on how Fair Trade can help your business.

Green Cleaning Products

www.greenchoices.org

Background information about producers of environmentally friendly cleaning products in the UK.

www.greenbuying.co.uk

Tools such as green services directory and eco shop.

www.wwf.org.uk

World Wildlife Fund's shop sells environmentally friendly cleaning products.

www.ecover.com

Environmentally friendly household and cleaning products.

www.greenconsumerguide.com

Web based resource for environmental, ethical and sustainable products, services and news.

Green Tourism

www.industry.visitwales.co.uk/

Information on Visit Wales star grading scheme, marketing opportunities for your business as well as advice on how to make your business more sustainable.

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism/development/sustainable/?lang=en>

On the Visit Wales website, you can find a number of case studies showing best practice in the tourism industry.

www.green-snowdonia.co.uk

Advice and tips on sustainable tourism from the Green Snowdonia Project.

www.greendragonwales.com

How to make your business more sustainable with the help of the Green Dragon Environmental Standard.

www.green-business.co.uk

How to make your business more sustainable with the help of the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS).

Recycling & Waste

www.wasteawarenesswales.org.uk

Information about managing materials and resources more sustainably, and reducing waste.

www.compost.org.uk

The Composting Association researches and promotes the benefits of composting and other biological treatment techniques.

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www.ciwm.org.uk

Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM)

Professional body for waste and resource management including factsheets on energy and waste, training and careers, along with tenders.

www.cylch.org.uk

Cylch aims to promote sustainable resource management in Wales through education and practical action.

www.wrap.org.uk

WRAP works in partnership to encourage and enable businesses and consumers to be more efficient in their use of materials and recycle more things more often.

Water Management

www.dwrcymru.com

Water and sewerage services to people living and working in Wales.

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/savewater

The Environment Agency deals with issues relating to national and international water resources, demand management and water conservation.

www.wras.co.uk

Advice to help you to meet national requirements for the design, installation and maintenance of plumbing systems, water fittings and water-using appliances.

Transport

www.sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans – the sustainable transport charity – works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport in order to reduce motor traffic and its adverse effects.

www.traveline-cymru.info

All the information you need to plan a journey in Wales.

www.industry.visitwales.co.uk

Information on sustainable transport including best practice case studies.

Welsh Language

www.byig-wlb.org.uk

Welsh Language Board

www.wales.gov.uk/topics/tourism

Look out for information on the 'Croeso Cynnes Cymreig – A Warm Welsh Welcome' programme on the Visit Wales website.

General information

www.netregs.gov.uk

Government help for small businesses guiding them through environmental regulations.

www.envirowise.gov.uk

Free advice and support for businesses on ways to increase profit, minimise waste and reduce environmental impact. Cleaner design, water, waste and legislation.



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