

Sustainability Statement

Sustainability was at the forefront of the design and development of the Lighthouse. A poorly insulated, draughty and damp 1970s house stood on the site when we acquired it. Rather than start again, we believed that a more sustainable response was to retain the original structure and the carbon captured within it, and work around it to provide a modern and energy-efficient building. Whilst the new house is unrecognisable, it hides within its skin the majority of its original concrete skeleton and foundations. As the building was remodelled, thick insulation panels were fixed to the original structure, before they were covered in waterproof membranes and Scottish larch and Douglas fir cladding. Throughout the build process we sought to use natural products wherever possible, both in fitting and furnishing the house. We have tried to find a balance between making the house as sustainable as possible, while not compromising the quality of the accommodation for guests so that they enjoy their stay.

The interiors are decorated using Farrow & Ball paints, which are water based, use natural pigments and are low in VOCs. The lighting is all LED. Curtains are made of Scottish linen or wool tweed and furniture is all upholstered in wool or linen. We turned to Tom Raffield for some furniture and lighting as his products are designed sustainably. Carpets are made of wool and the oak floor, staircase and panelling have the highest environmental accreditation. All the main household appliances are made by Miele and have ratings of A or above. While the house is currently heated using an oil-fired boiler, the high levels of insulation in the walls and roof, double glazed windows and the underfloor heating mean that it is energy efficient. While we would have liked to be able to instal a heat pump, the patterns of occupation of the building and local weather conditions meant it was simply not practicable to do so. Ultimately we hope to instal solar panels on the roof of the Lighthouse. The water is provided by a mains supply that is drawn from Loch Maree. Whilst water is generally not a problem on the North West coast, we do ask all guests to do what they can to conserve it, particularly in periods of dry weather.

The garden is designed to require minimal input, and is entirely based around native species, emphasising the natural contours and landscape. Invasive non-native species were eradicated and the garden has become a haven for wildlife (bird feeders are provided, as is a telescope so that guests can view the stars or local wildlife). Both red and roe deer are regular visitors to the garden throughout the year. We have worked to improve access to local paths so that our guests can walk easily to the harbour, the golf course and the beach. We employ local tradespeople to service and maintain the property and where this is not possible we have grouped together with other properties to employ contractors from Inverness who attend to several houses on each visit.

Our housekeeper is local and we employ a local lady to do all the laundry. The bedlinen and towels are all high quality and made of pure cotton, bought from a Scottish company. Bedding too is made from natural materials, either goose down or silk and the throws on the beds are pure wool and were made by a small producer in Fife. Mattresses were made by a small firm in Wales to Crib 5 standards. In equipping the kitchen and producing the welcome packs we have tried to offer organic products and where this is not possible, ensured that supplies are Scottish or locally sourced. Basic kitchen ingredients supplied for guests are also organic where possible, are bought in bulk and are presented in attractive containers that minimise use of packaging. Bathroom products are from a Scottish company that uses natural ingredients and bottles are refilled rather than replaced between rentals. The remote location of the Lighthouse makes delivery of supplies more difficult. We do all we can to limit the number of deliveries to the property and buy in bulk or group items together for a single delivery.

We encourage guests to visit local restaurants and cafes during their stay, to use local food shops (cook books by Highland chefs are provided to help guests make the most of local produce) and to try activities available locally. Public transport links to the area are poor and unfortunately guests do need a car for the duration of their stay. We have investigated the possibility of installing an EV charging point at the Lighthouse, but have not as yet done so. The Lighthouse is clad in wood and current EV charging comes with a fire risk, so we feel that until the technology improves it is safer for guests to use the community chargers a short walk down the hill in the harbour car park. We welcome suggestions from guests as to steps we could take to improve sustainability. In February 2024 we were awarded a prestigious Green Tourism Bronze Award.