



Press release: 24 February 2020

## The South Devon Businesses Delivering in Sustainability

- River Dart Country Park secures a double win for Sustainability at Tourism Awards
  - Ladram Bay Holiday Park goes electric with eco fleet
  - Long term 'Rewilding' is a budding success at Dittiscombe Hills Estate
  - Tips on how to be an 'Awesome Eco-Tourist' from Blue River Cottages



*River Dart Country Park is leading the way in championing good sustainable tourism practices across the region.  
Photo Credit River Dart Country Park*

Visit South Devon members are delivering in sustainability practices that are being recognised by both tourist awards and by attracting new visitors to the region.

Jo Butler, Visit South Devon says 'When we're on holiday we all want to do our best to keep up our eco efforts from home, and the great news is if you're visiting South Devon help is at hand. There are many tourism businesses in South Devon which have outstanding eco and sustainable credentials and are leading the way when it comes to helping you look after the environment when you're on your holiday'

The South Devon attraction [River Dart Country Park](#) saw recent success as sustainable business after being awarded with a double win at the Visit Devon Tourism Awards. The Park who is dedicated to eco practices secured

the Special Award for Energy Efficiency and Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Award and has recently been awarded the Silver Ethical, Responsible and Sustainable Tourism Award at the South West Tourism Awards.

River Dart Country Park was recognised for its heating system, which is generated from a 133kWh woodchip biomass boiler and for 8 months of the year the park is completely self-sufficient when it comes to electricity thanks to its hydro-electric generator. A unique hydro-dynamic screw has also reduced the sites consumption in the busy summer months. The park also has recycling points throughout to help with the 'Zero waste to Landfill' policy and all their cleaning products are environmentally friendly and bio-degradable. Last year they joined the [Clean Conscience](#) recycling scheme that repurposes and reuses hospitality products such as part used body wash and conditioning shampoo. The park's vegetable soaps are also sent abroad to allow people overseas to help generate an income.

Fellow Visit South Devon member [Ladram Bay](#) (a family owned holiday park on the [Jurassic Coast](#)) is similarly committed to reducing the harmful effects of engine noise and air pollution. Last month Ladram Bay, a previous winner of the David Bellamy Conservation Award, swapped two more of its fossil fuel vehicles in favour of the latest green technology. It brings the number of electric on site vehicles to five and the fleet supports the business on a daily basis. Ladram Bay has recently announced plans for electric charging points to be installed so that customers with electric vehicles can ensure they are supported during their stays. In addition the business also plans to spend £300,000 on a state-of-the-art solar energy system across various buildings in its grounds. Experts have forecast that this investment at Ladram Bay will prevent a massive 171 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually from entering the atmosphere.

Another South Devon business entrenched in its nature conservation work is [Dittiscombe Hills Estate and Cottages](#). Over 21 years of stewardship the team has supported an active rewilding of selected areas of the estate. The non-management, hands-off approach which involved no cutting or bashing; no strimming or mowing has seen sterile areas of residual farmland transformed. The park has progressively become a budding haven for flora and fauna and is now a diverse landscape with many wildlife habitats: cottage gardens, ponds, silt traps, streams, woodland, hedgerows and meadows. This is all managed by the Dittiscombe team solely for the preservation of local species and migrating birds and insects and for the enjoyment of cottage guests who can undertake a nature trail.

[Blue River Cottages](#) have produced their new South Devon Guide on Carbon Balanced, responsibly sourced eco paper. The holiday cottage company can trace the guide's paper 'chain of custody' right back to the source. The South West-based printer used by Blue River Cottages holds an ISO 14001 certification, the international standard for environmental management. The printing companies 14000 sq. ft. solar panelled roof generates a large proportion of their electricity usage and saves over 52,000kg of carbon dioxide each year. Keen to further encourage their customers to be 'Awesome eco-tourists' Blue River Cottages have produced tips on the best ways to go green on holiday as part of their visitors guide.

## Be an *awesome* eco-tourist

Sustainable tourism: travelling and exploring a destination while respecting its culture, environment, and people. Support local economies, and protect wildlife.



### How to go green

#### CONSERVE ENERGY

At your cottage, reduce energy by switching off lights and closing windows if heating is on. Please visit [energysavingtrust.org.uk](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk) for more information on what you can do to save energy at home and when on holiday.

#### SUPPORT THE REAL LOCAL ECONOMY

Locally made crafts and souvenirs are not always cheaper, but purchasing them ensures your contribution to the economy will have a more direct and positive impact.

#### CLEANER JOURNEYS

Some destinations are just harder to reach, so consider renting a hybrid or hybrid vehicle. Walk, bike, or use public transportation to get around whenever possible.

#### SAY NO TO PLASTIC

Take a BPA-free water bottle you can refill over and over again at many eateries. Refuse plastic straws.

#### BEACH CLEANS

There are monthly beach cleans to take part in but you don't have to wait for those - spend 10 minutes before you leave the beach to do your bit.

#### EAT LOCALLY SOURCED FOOD

Support the region's farmers, get a more authentic taste of the cuisine and cut your carbon footprint even more.

#### TAKE AN EDUCATIONAL WALK

Totnes is the world's first Transition Town. Take part in one of their walks to find more out about the pioneering projects.

#### RESPECT NATURE

Help us to look after the beautiful landscape and wildlife of our county by not littering, guarding against fire and using footpaths and cycle-ways responsibly. Ensure you follow the Countryside Code.

Visit South Devon's Jo Butler says "We are really encouraged that so many of our members are committed to sustainability across their business practices and offerings. It is impressive that this is not solely being recognised by industry awards but also by visitors and buyers who are making environmental credentials an essential part of their buying decision"

Jo continues "As outlined in Visit Devon's Sustainability Pledge we are delighted to continue supporting tourism businesses in South Devon who are making changes to reduce climate change. Having recently been awarded a Bronze Green Tourism Award, launched new areas of the Visit South Devon website, including a series of sustainability blog posts and printed the 2020 South Devon guide on 100% recycled paper as well as encouraging visitors to view the online guide, the company is leading the way among Devon's DMO's."

To read about South Devon's Sustainable Businesses please visit the Visit South Devon Blog:  
<https://www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk/blog/read/2019/11/sustainable-south-devon-businesses-b398>

To read more about Visit South Devon's Sustainability Pledge please visit:  
<https://www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk/sustainability/sustainability-pledge>

Ends.

Visit South Devon, the Community Interest Company which is dedicated to championing good sustainable tourism practices across the region, has highlighted that the environmental impact of travel is a now a contributory factor in how and where people are choosing to spend their leisure and holiday time.

About Visit South Devon:

About Visit South Devon: Visit South Devon is a Community Interest Company that exists solely for the benefit of the local tourism community, helping raise the profile of the area as a destination for both national and international visitors. Covering the whole southern half of Devon, including, the South Hams, Teignbridge, East Devon and Mid Devon, our main aim is to increase the number of day visits, short breaks, longer holidays and business trips to South Devon for the benefit of the local tourism economy.

For lots of useful information on great places to stay, eat and visit in South Devon please visit  
[www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk](http://www.visitsouthdevon.co.uk)

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