

Project Title: Sustourex (Sustainable Tourism Excellence)
Funding Body: European Regional Development Fund
Company Assisted: Easter Cottage
Date: 2005

Background:

Based in Wennington, a rural village in northern Lancashire, Easter Cottage is run by Tom and Jenny Herd as a business offering self catering holiday accommodation for up to four people. Awarded four stars by the English Tourist Council, it has been running successfully since 2001.

The Support Programme:

Sustourex project staff approached the owners in 2005, explaining the purpose of the programme and the benefits of improving the sustainability of its operations. Mr and Mrs Herd readily agreed and Alex Southall, an environmental advisor from Lancaster University duly carried out a thorough investigation into all aspects of the business.

The report found that many actions that would normally be recommended had already been acted upon and that during the refurbishment work in 2000 to 2001, the owners had found inventive and sensitive solutions to the problems and restrictions associated with the restoration of historic buildings. Nevertheless, while much had obviously been achieved, many additional recommendations were presented to the proprietors and these were quickly acted upon.

The project provided support with the development of a comprehensive environmental policy statement and suggestions for ways of minimising the cost of resources and utilities.

Results:

In recognition of the company's efforts, the owners of Easter Cottage were presented with a Green Tourism Awards plaque and certificate. A press release was issued to the national trade press dealing with the hospitality and environmental industries, and to the local media. This produced valuable publicity, while the adoption of the report's recommendations enabled the business to make substantial cost savings.

Advisor's Evaluation:

"When working on an historic building, there were obviously certain things that simply couldn't be done. It would have been totally inappropriate to use modern window designs, for example, but, like so many other issues, Tom and Jenny have dealt with this very effectively. They have installed unobtrusive secondary glazing inside, which helps to conserve heat without spoiling the original character of the building. Elsewhere, they have installed plenty of insulation, low energy lighting and a log fire that makes it possible to heat the living area using locally sourced wood, which is obviously a completely sustainable fuel source. They also encourage sustainable practices inside the cottage – providing segregated recycling and composting bins, so even the guests can make a positive contribution."

Alex Southall, Lancaster Environment Centre.

