

# ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES & ACHIEVEMENTS

## **Green Tourism Award**

We are delighted to have achieved gold status from Green Tourism, recognising our steadfast commitment to sustainable business practices. Our devoted team work hard to ensure we do our part in making the travel and tourism industry more sustainable; from energy efficiency and waste reduction to supporting local and preserving our natural landscapes.

Attaining the highest possible status in the Green Tourism scheme is a remarkable achievement, and one that we are incredibly proud of. The award reflects our ongoing commitment towards our community, the town of St Andrews, and our planet.

## **Single Use Plastic**

We achieved a momentous milestone in 2023 by successfully eliminating single-use plastic beverage bottles from our premises. This commendable achievement was accomplished 74 days ahead of target and reflects our commitment to making a tangible impact on safeguarding our beloved Scottish environment. Additionally, we have recently transitioned from traditional plastic bin bags to paper bin liners in public areas and guest rooms, minimising our plastic waste and embracing a more sustainable approach to waste management. We aim to completely eliminate single-use plastic by 2030.

## **Combined Heat & Power**

Here at the Old Course Hotel, we are pioneering sustainable energy solutions with our new combined heat and power (CHP) system. The CHP unit harnesses natural gas to generate electricity and useful heat for our property and meets the full electricity needs of the hotel, only requiring supplemental power from the grid during low demand times, and producing up to 100% of our electricity needs and 60% of our thermal needs at peak times.

Since the implementation of this technology, we have already seen a significant positive impact on our carbon footprint. We anticipate the CHP unit installation will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by around 100 tonnes per year compared to purchasing electricity and heat from the grid. Within 10 months we have successfully reduced our energy use from the grid by an impressive 73%.

## **Electric Vehicles & Charging**

We have embarked on a continuous project to promote the use of electric vehicles by installing charging points throughout our premises. At present, we have six charging points that can accommodate up to 12 vehicles at a time. We have also transitioned to fully electric golf buggies at The Duke's, and have started introducing electric vehicles within our fleet.

## **Water Usage**

As part of our sustainability efforts, we make it a priority to minimise and reduce water usage across the resort. Since the installation of water-saving dual flush toilets in public areas and guest rooms, as well as auto shut-off taps we have seen a significant reduction in our water consumption across the resort.

## **Biodiversity**

Our setting along the Fife coastline means we boast an abundance of biodiversity. Our location is home to a remarkable variety of wildlife, both within the hotel grounds and the surrounding area. In fact, the West Sands beach, stretching as far as the eye can see, is recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Furthermore, just steps away from our staff accommodation lies the Eden Estuary, which is not only recognised as an SSSI, but also holds the distinguished titles of Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and a RAMSAR site – a wetland site of international importance.

At the Old Course Hotel, our landscaping is an integral part of the guest experience. We have recently expanded our landscaping team with the aim of increasing biodiversity across our grounds. This benefits not only wildlife, but also enhances the beauty of the hotel for our guests to enjoy.

We are undertaking several projects to support a wider variety of plant life. Sections of our lawns are being transformed into more biodiverse spaces, moving away from monoculture grass. Our team are mindfully selecting plant species, and prioritising drought tolerance, diverse flowering periods to support pollinators year-round, and providing essential habitats and sustenance for wildlife during winter months. We are also choosing to embrace a shift towards perennials, known for their extended flowering periods and contribution to overwintering invertebrates.

2024 brought a notable focus on tree planting, with a preference for native species, where appropriate, such as *pinus sylvestris* (Scots pine), *acer campestre* (field maple), *betula pendula* (weeping birch), *corylus avellana* (hazel), *sorbus aucuparia* (rowan), *sorbus aria* (whitebeam) and *crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn). Other tree selections will be varieties of native species. 2024 also saw us move away from using short-lived annuals for our seasonal displays and instead introducing perennials, mature shrubs, and architectural evergreens to add height and structure to our surroundings. By relying less on annuals, we reduce maintenance demands, conserve water, produce less green waste, and cut down on regular fertilising. Our forthcoming polytunnel at Winthank Farm will enable self-sufficiency in plant cultivation for seasonal displays, minimise carbon emissions associated with transport, and potentially yield produce for use in the hotel's kitchens. We are also constructing a new composting area which will allow us to transform our green waste into fertile mulch for the grounds.

Adjacent to the famous Old Course, our large pond supports dragonflies, damselflies, and other aquatic life. We are working to expand the range of native water plants to further improve this vital habitat. With a commitment to minimal herbicide use, we employ sustainable practices like manual weed control and bark mulch application to help retain moisture and preserve soil health. Across the resort, we have transitioned much of our equipment from petrol to lithium battery powered alternatives, decreasing emissions, noise, and pollution.

## **Farm to Fork**

Fearann, Mar, Talamh – the Earth, the Sea, the Land in Scots Gaelic, is the foundation of the food ethos at the Old Course Hotel. We represent the best that Scotland's abundant natural larder has to offer and put it at the centre of everything we do. Not only are we situated in one of the best and well-known locations in the world, Fife is in one of Scotland's most abundant

food areas. We have some of the best produce available, found anywhere across the globe, right on our doorstep.

A short distance from the hotel is Winthank Farm, owned and operated by the Old Course Hotel. In 2023 we dedicated just under 100 acres of land to the cultivation of peas for human consumption UK wide and for the past eight years we have partnered with Kingsbarns Distillery, dedicating a substantial area of 80 – 120 acres each year to the growth of spring barley. This premium grain finds its way into the production of Kingsbarns' whisky. Winthank Farm also cultivates winter wheat and winter barley, spanning an impressive 100 – 180 acres annually. These crops, grown for the past eight years, serve as invaluable sources of animal feed.

In addition to our agricultural pursuits, the farm plays a vital role in carbon offsetting through considerable crop production.

## **Roof Tiles**

The roof tiles used on the hotel are made from recycled rubber. By opting for recycled rubber tiles, we address the unique challenge of golf balls from the Old Course damaging traditional roof tiles. With this change we successfully mitigated the impact of errant shots, ensuring a longer lifespan for our roofing.

## **Bamboo Key Cards**

By replacing our previous plastic key cards with this eco-friendly bamboo alternative, we utilise materials that biodegrade easily in their natural environment and reduce our carbon footprint as part of our shared responsibility to protect the environment.



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