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VIBES Award Category:



Management Award SME Category (Sponsored by Business Stream)

Winner:



Jessie Mac's

Case Study

Jessie Mac's

Jessie Mac's is a refurbished Victorian manse, in the village of Birnam, Perthshire, offering a mix of self-catering hostel and bed & breakfast accommodation. The aim is to provide a high standard of budget accommodation. The target market of the business is 'green' minded guests and active travellers interested in the outdoors.

VIBES Management Award recognises businesses whose management systems deliver continuous improvement environmental performance. The category is aimed at businesses that are taking a holistic approach to environmental improvement and can demonstrate the associated economic and social benefits that have been achieved. Jessie Mac's was the winner of the SMF category for the Management Award and the VIBES Judges were very impressed by the environmental approaches and achievements of this small business.

From application to site visit the VIBES Judges (representatives from Zero Waste Scotland, SEPA and Scottish Enterprise) felt that Jessie Mac's have demonstrated excellent commitment to their environmental approaches and successfully integrate these into their business objectives. Jessie Mac's thoroughly impressed the judges with their passion for being small, having a low environmental impact and a strong community involvement.

Highlights

- Strong commitment to sustainability demonstrated with a gold award from the Green Tourism Business Scheme.
- Jessie Mac's play a key role in promoting sustainability to their guests, supply chain and other similar businesses.
- The company website has a clear sustainability theme, promoting green travel and a greening section with details on how the business minimises the impact on the environment and supports the local economy.
- Initiatives to reduce resource use have realised significant savings to the business particularly when considered against the increase in occupancy levels.
- Recycling rates have increased from 20% to 83%.
- Laundry bill has been cut by a third due to new in-house low energy equipment.
- Energy cost per bed night was cut by 42% by the end of year 2 and by 67% in year 3.





The company was accredited with a gold award from the Green Tourism Business Scheme in January 2014. This involved developing an environmental management system which monitors progress and sets targets for on-going An Energy Saving Trust survey improvements. was undertaken and this highlighted a number of initiatives that could be instigated to reduce energy and water use and minimise waste produced.

Some of the initiatives identified by the Energy Saving Trust (EST) include:

- Installed low cost measures to reduce energy usage including; heat reflectors behind radiators; thick curtains, blinds and reinstatement of shutters for windows; secondary glazing, lagging on pipes and water tank, water saving device (bag of sand) in toilets, bags in chimneys to reduce draughts.
- Selected new equipment and appliances based on energy and water efficiency e.g. new boiler based on EST survey, temperature and thermostat controls, washing machine (selected for water and energy use), tumble drier (selected for use of gas).
- Excess packaging returned to supplier for reuse and recycling.
- Pre-order of breakfast to minimise food waste.
- Any leftover bread is donated to local wildlife reserve.

The company use their environmental credentials as a marketing tool and Jessie Mac's approach to sustainability is appreciated by their customers. Guests are encouraged to be part of the development of the business through comments/ suggestion box and the occupancy rate for the hostel has increased by 130% over the past three years.

Jessie Mac's are active in the community and bed nights are donated to environmental charities in lieu of carbon off-setting. The local economy benefits as the majority of the food for the hostel is sourced locally using organic and fairtrade products where possible. In addition furniture is donated to, and some is bought from, the local Salvation Army Shop. A use is even found for redundant towels which are donated to the local dog shelter.

The team are to be commended for their enthusiasm and motivation and their approach to environmental improvement. The judges were particularly impressed with the drive and commitment to put sustainability at the heart of the operations and the practical measures they have taken to ensure this.

The business are involved with the Scottish Independent Hostel association whereby ideas are exchanged with other hostels to share best practice, they have hosted a best practice visit through the Hostel Hub and have also presented at an event on the benefits of using an environmental management system.

The company has future plans for improvement including reducing energy use further, reducing waste and increasing recycling. The ethos identified demonstrates that embedding sustainability into every day operations leads to a positive knock-on effect for the local economy.

Brenda Roddy, owner of
Jessie Mac's, said: "Looking
after our environment is hugely
important to us and as such, we
have put sustainable practices
in place at Jessie Mac's,
encouraging our staff and
customers to be as
environmentally friendly as
possible. It is fantastic to have
our efforts recognised by the
VIBES Awards, as for us, this is
the environmental award that
really counts."





