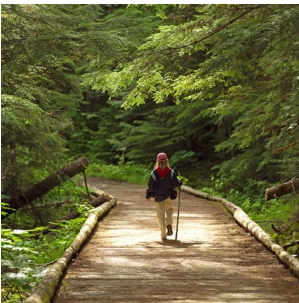


Perthshire Tourist Board: Make Perthshire a Green Destination

Perthshire Tourist Board (PTB) is one of the 14 Area Tourist Boards in Scotland and is a partnership between Perth & Kinross Council, VisitScotland and over 1,000 local tourism businesses that join the board through its membership structure.

The primary function of PTB is to work with local businesses to market Perthshire as an attractive destination in ways that generate additional spend in the area. PTB employs 60 staff and runs a Head Office and eight Tourist Information Centres (TICs), all of which are open throughout the year and collectively welcome in the region of 415,000 visitors.



Environmental strategy is coordinated by a cross-sectoral staff 'Green Team'. In February 2003, Perthshire became the first Area Tourist Board to attain a Gold Award (Head Office only) in the Green Tourism Business Scheme. The eight TICs underwent assessment in May 2004 – the first Scottish TICs to attempt accreditation – and each achieved Gold for "excellence in environmental management".

Environmental training focuses on two main groups: PTB staff and member establishments. An initial 'green' staff evening in late 2002 featured speakers on both waste minimization and environmental thinking in hotels. The evening culminated in the 'Green Brain Challenge' – a team based fun quiz, which helped to set the scene for the development of a greener culture amongst staff. More formal staff training has included sessions on Energy Efficiency (delivered free of charge by the Scottish Energy Efficiency Office); the Scottish Outdoor Access Code and Wildlife Tourism in Scotland. Familiarization visits to countryside sites are also an important training tool and a series of these informal evenings are arranged in the late spring of each year, to encourage optimum attendance by seasonal staff. Local experts accompany the groups to provide relevant commentary.

In March 2004, a business networking event with a wildlife theme received rave reviews from over 70 Perthshire Tourist Board members. Familiarization coach tours have become an early season fixture for many members. These tours are arranged by PTB to showcase the natural and built heritage of the area and, over the last 3 years, 420 members have enthusiastically supported 12 tours.

In working towards becoming a green destination, PTB communicates with staff, business members and visitors to raise awareness and understanding on a variety of environmental issues.

At the induction stage, all new staff is provided with clear information on why PTB is committed to minimizing its own environmental footprint and how this is being done. Staff is encouraged to input with ideas and there have been many inspired suggestions. The staff newsletter and internal Intranet are also used to good effect. PTB produces a business newsletter (Tourism Matters) 3 times per year and this is circulated to 1000+ contacts in the area. Environment related articles are a regular feature and have included topics such as Hospitable Climates, Wasted Resources, Wild Scotland and reports on local Green Tourism Business Scheme award winners. All businesses that join PTB are required to sign a Members' Code of Conduct which includes an undertaking to "pursue sound environmental working practices".



Perthshire Tourist Board has its own Environment Policy and this is displayed in each TIC and on the website. A short environmental commitment statement is also included on all print. Visitors are encouraged to provide feedback on the quality of Perthshire's environment, with painless survey forms distributed via TICs.

PTB recognizes the importance of energy efficiency. Consumption is closely monitored and targets set for future performance. A 'Not needed – switch off policy' is in place for all lighting and electrical appliances. All offices have carried out an energy audit and made subsequent improvements eg. installation of low-energy light bulbs and timers, draught exclusion, sensible use of thermostats on radiators and fridges etc.

At PTB Head Office, the water meter is read monthly and there are ongoing efforts to reduce consumption through awareness raising. Although on unmetered supplies, several of the TICs have installed water displacement devices within their toilet cisterns in the interests of good environmental practice.

Local PTB Area Managers are active in encouraging accommodation establishments to use 'Towel Agreement Cards' – to minimize energy, water and detergent use. Cards are printed in three languages and available free of charge to members.

All offices operate on the 3 R's principle 'Reduce, Re-use, Recycle'. Intelligent use of email filing has helped to reduce paper consumption and staff make every effort to re-use scrap paper for notepads and

internal documents. Systems are in place for the recycling of paper, coloured print, cardboard, glass, aluminum cans, milk bottles, toner cartridges, uniforms, mobile phones, light bulbs, IT equipment and used postage stamps. The cost of waste disposal is measured and savings have been achieved in a number of offices through a reduction in the frequency of wheelie bin collections.

Wherever possible PTB uses local suppliers and seeks to use goods and services which do not have a negative environmental impact, measuring the environmental awareness of all suppliers. Office paper is from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) approved stocks. For print, chlorine free or low chlorine FSC paper is mostly used. Cleaning materials are from the Ecover range (supplied by Green City Wholefoods) and the use of bleach has virtually been eradicated in all offices. Fairtrade tea and coffee are provided for staff use. To support employment and minimize transportation – TICs try to focus on retail items that have been manufactured in Scotland.

Farmer's Markets, farm shops and catering establishments featuring local produce are all promoted to visitors.



To help visitors experience the countryside in a quality way Perthshire Tourist Board actively promotes a wide range of walking and cycling opportunities. Establishments participating in the VisitScotland Walkers Welcome and Cyclists Welcome Schemes are highlighted in print and TIC staff is trained in the accommodation requirements necessary for participation. Public transport day trip options are clearly promoted through a family of Great Days Out leaflets, featuring a number of special money saving offers at visitor attractions and hotels.

A number of TICs also act as booking agents for commercial coach tours e.g. Stagecoach and Ochils Tours.

To minimize PTB staff car use, a strict car sharing policy is in place for travel to meetings and training events.

Perthshire's flora, fauna and natural features are highlighted in publications, in the website and through the TICs. The area has some of the most remarkable trees and woodlands of anywhere in Europe and PTB is a key partner in the Perthshire Forest Heritage and Access project, which promotes the unique wooded countryside as Perthshire – Big Tree Country. The Board also makes a contribution to actions within the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan. Through the use of charity collection tins (converted nest boxes!) in all Tourist Information Centres, PTB supports four environmental charities active in Perthshire:

RSPB, SWT, Woodland Trust and John Muir Trust.

"As an Area Tourist Board one of our key objectives is to position Perthshire as one of the most highly regarded green destinations in Europe. To encourage participation in the Green Tourism Business Scheme by the other businesses we felt we should take part and put our own house in order. It has been a thoroughly worthwhile exercise resulting in operational improvements, cost savings and staff development. All tourism businesses should be concerned with conserving the wonderful environment that supports us – the integration of sustainable practices into successful business is the only way forward" Douglas Ritchie, Chief Executive (PTB)

<http://www.perthshire.co.uk>

<http://www.greentourism.org.uk>

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