

# Sustainable Business of the Year

The Boghill Centre, Kilfenora

Geopark Sustainable Code of Practice Award Winner



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**Who they are:** The Boghill Centre is a residential venue Situated in 50 acres of natural bogland in the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark. Boghill is a small innovative company on the cutting edge of Ecotourism in Ireland who offer a residential venue for learning, training events, retreats and functions. They are committed to running a low cost and low impact ecological activity venue. Making the most of their natural resources their mantra is reduce, reuse, recycle. They are committed to a process of monitoring and measuring their environmental impacts with a view to continual improvement. Members of the Burren Ecotourism Network since 2009, The Boghill Centre participated in ecotourism training provided as part of network membership including the Geopark code of practice for sustainable tourism in 2012.

**What they did:** The Boghill Centre have incorporated sustainable practices and actions throughout their operations

**Staff and visitor awareness** - Eco-management is built into their staff training and all visitors are made aware of The Boghill Centre eco-practices and encouraged to play a part in their minimum impact approach. A Guest Code of Practice has been developed and is displayed throughout the venue.

**Waste** - operating a "reduce, reuse and recycle" policy, food waste is either composted or fed to their chickens Harvest overproduction is managed by food preserving and freezing and their rubbish disposal is measured and monitored with the aim of reducing weight year on year

**Energy** - Boghill is heated by a wood gasification boiler system thus eliminating over dependence on fossil fuels. All lighting is provided by low energy bulbs and they have a policy of stringent management of timers and thermostats. Cavity wall insulation has been installed in our 1960s hostel building and energy consumption is a factor in the purchase of all new equipment. The Boghill Centre purchase electricity from Airtricity who capture 79% of their power from sustainable energy sources. They monitor their power and strive to make consumption economies where practical

**Top Tip:** Introducing a Carbon offsetting programme for visitors by enabling them to sponsor tree planting on the estate is a great way of involving them and making them feel part of the movement.

"The code of practice training gave us an overview of the range of ecological options available to us and stimulating examples of good practice as well as updating us on the aims and activities of the Geopark and the part we can play in helping to achieve these."  
**Cari Ryan, the Boghill Centre**

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**Water** - Rain water is harvested for garden use while waste water and sewage are treated in a bio-digester tank.

**Food** - Food is sourced from the organic vegetable garden, fruit beds and orchard with all these areas being fertilised with their own compost and horse manure and managed without the use of pesticides or other chemicals.

**Contribution to conservation** – Cari and Sonja have recently created a 10 Point Eco-diversification plan which involves the development of the Boghill land in an innovative and environmentally friendly manner using sustainable building techniques, creating a nature reserve, planting indigenous trees and developing a series of educative and experiential activities which can be accessed by visitors and locals

**Green purchasing and support of local businesses** – the Boghill Centre aim is to integrate and work with the local community as much as possible and support the local hostelrys, restaurants, food producers, activity providers and attractions. The Boghill Centre cooperates closely with the Burren Ecotourism Network to develop sustainability efforts in the region. While much of their vegetables, bread and preserves are home grown and made, additional supplies are sourced from local market gardens and producers where possible. They are continually researching economic ways to source more food and cleaning products from local suppliers.

**Outcome:** The Boghill Centre have received many awards including The responsible Travel & Tourism Awards 2014 and the Green Hospitality Awards for Best Carbon Reduction Project and Best Customer Awareness Programme.