

VISITLANARKSHIRE BUSINESS SUPPORT
SUSTAINABILITY RESOURCE GUIDES

Communication

Top tips for communicating
your sustainability
commitment



[VisitLanarkshire.com](https://www.visitlanarkshire.com)

Green
Tourism



About this guide

Perhaps you've just started your sustainability journey. You should be communicating that commitment because being sustainable is marketable.

It gives you a competitive advantage. There's a huge, ever-growing market of visitors that consider sustainability as a factor when choosing where to visit and where to stay. According to a 2022 Expedia study, 90% of travellers look for sustainable options, up 9% on 2021.¹ What's more, according to Booking.com, 43% of visitors would be willing to pay more for sustainable choices.²

The potential value of communicating your sustainability credentials is clear. In this guide, we give you some pointers

- 1 Expedia 2022 Sustainability Travel Study
- 2 Booking.com 2023 Sustainable Travel Report
- 3 Tourism Declares A Climate Emergency
- 4 Booking.com 2023 Sustainable Travel Report

Five ways to communicate your commitment

1. Make it policy

Publicly declare your commitment with a formal Sustainability Policy. We've got a policy guide to get you started and a template you can adapt for your business. Publish it on your website (if you have one) and/or your social media pages and put up a copy on your premises.

You could also signal your commitment by signing for an initiative like **Tourism Declares**, a global community dedicated to climate action.³

2. Get recognition

Get official recognition of your commitment by applying for an industry-renowned and globally recognised sustainability certification such as **Green Tourism**. This is a badge of honour that instantly signals that your business has been robustly assessed against universal sustainability criteria covering everything from waste management to accessibility. Accommodation providers will be interested to know that 65% of tourists would feel better about staying in a particular accommodation if they knew it had a sustainable certification.⁴

You could also enter the sustainability-related categories in industry awards such as the **Scottish Thistle Awards**.

3. Get social

Put sustainability centre stage when you're promoting your business. Use all available communications channels: from bulletin boards in public areas on your premises (see printing, below) to social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and TikTok. Share updates, success stories, and educational content to engage and inform potential customers about your company's sustainable practices. Use social too to connect and engage with the online community of like-minded businesses (e.g. local Facebook groups) - in our region, nationally, and internationally.

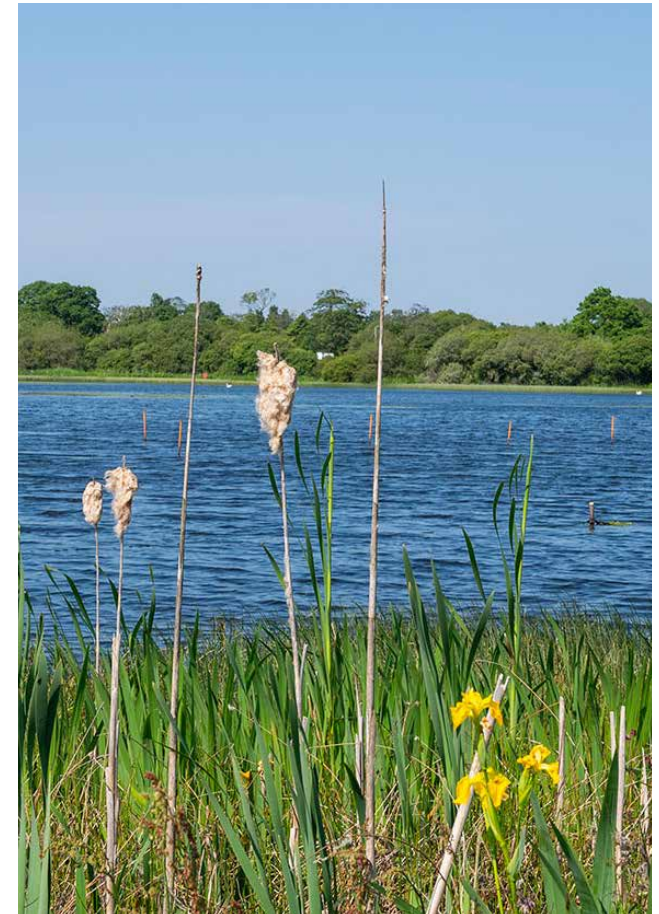
4. Tell your green story

Storytelling is one of the most powerful, persuasive marketing methods. Your audience will be more likely to engage with - and buy from - you if they know something about you. Share the story of your business: whether you're an old hand continuing a family tradition, or if you're just taking the first steps on a journey to make a long-cherished dream of running a sustainable tourism or hospitality

business come to life. Use your social media pages to share your hopes and hurdles and celebrate your successes as you progress. For lots more tips, see our guide on How to Tell your Green Story.

5. Print green

While most business communication is done digitally, there may still be the need to print (for example, brochures, leaflets, and menus) and printing is incredibly energy intensive. Using recycled paper is preferable as it saves energy and reduces landfill waste but take your green commitment the extra mile by using chemical-free, biodegradable soy or vegetable-based printing ink. If outsourcing, check your printer's procurement policy and sustainability practices, e.g. do they measure and manage their carbon footprint?



Five tips for more effective communication

1. Show – don't just tell

There are many ways to communicate your commitment such as publishing a sustainability policy and getting certified, as we explain above. But a great way to convince customers that you 'walk the walk' is to show your commitment in action. Post photos or videos on social media to show the bird boxes you've put up in your B&B garden or the new seasonal dishes you're creating with ingredients sourced from local suppliers.

2. Get engaged

When you promote your sustainability credentials by posting policies and sharing updates, be sure to invite comments and be ready and open to respond – whether that's on social media or in person. Are you on the right track? What more could you do? Your peers and your customers are your most useful sounding board, your most valuable critics – and supporters. Constructive feedback gives you the chance to learn, and improve and exceed their expectations in the future.

3. Keep it simple

Write your social media posts as if you were speaking to a valued friend, not selling to a customer. You're promoting your sustainability measures but there's no need to go into technical details. Get your message across in a way that customers will understand.

4. Be honest

When you're communicating your commitment efforts, don't be afraid of showing the bumps in the road. They make your story real and relatable. That bird box that fell apart, that baking that didn't turn out quite right. Transparency and honesty build trust and credibility among environmentally conscious customers. Show the sustainability steps you're taking, the challenges you're facing, and the goals you're aiming for. And of course, be sure to show the positives.

5. Celebrate your success

Be proud of what you've achieved. Celebrate your milestones and the people who supported you along the way. Such as finally being able to install those solar panels that will help reduce your carbon footprint and drive down your energy bills or getting electric vehicle charging points installed after successfully applying for a grant. Be proud to blow your own trumpet: by making even small changes to operate more sustainably, you're supporting a more sustainable, more successful future for tourism in Lanarkshire.

