



How to start / respond to Sustainability Conversation about Whatley

1st December 2022

As Sue mentioned at the last HOD meeting, 'sustainability' has become a cliché in the media and in the public's eyes, with some businesses using green washing messages to confuse consumers in the market. Instead of saying sustainability in general, here is a few ways to describe what we are doing at Whatley putting things into perspective. Also providing is a list of common terms we refer to when talking about this subject.

Feel free to adapt it to your own style and communicate our journey with our guests, suppliers, your friends and even family members. Please don't feel obligated to tell all the points as showed in the answers.

Q1: Whatley has got the EarthCheck Silver award. What does it mean?

A1: EarthCheck is the world's leading certification, consulting and advisory group for sustainable destinations and tourism organisations. We are excited that we have achieved a Silver accreditation from them after a robust and scientific-based review of reviewing, measuring and auditing our work for the past year.

We are on our journey transitioning to net zero carbon emission, i.e. to take out at least as many emissions from the atmosphere that you are producing. Calculated on the entire operation including the supply chain.

Whatley has set its goals achieve net zero carbon emission for our energy use by 2028 and for our supply chain by 2035.

Q2. What does the hotel try to do when it refers to sustainability?

A2: Our greatest focus is to decarbonize the business. With such high levels of Carbon in the atmosphere, Climate Change has been triggered. These high volumes of greenhouse gas are now higher that the natural sinks of the world can safely process.

As a socially responsible business, we see ourselves accountable to minimise the negative impact on the environment. Hence, we are transitioning to net zero carbon emissions, reducing our total carbon emission as much as we can. We have set our goals to achieve net zero carbon emission for our energy use by 2028 and for our supply chain by 2035.

If the guest is interested in knowing more, can quote some of the following.

- We have just removed Natural Gas and now use Biogas. This will help reduce 46% of carbon emission per year. (REGO Certified Green Gas & Electricity)
- By moving to LED lighting over a 3-year period, the hotel now uses 75% less energy to light the hotel
- By moving to ceramic refillable Molton Brown amenity bottles, 26,000 50ml single use plastic bottles removed from our waste

Q3: Isn't it just a cost-cutting exercise for you to reduce services to guests?

A3: This is a tale of two halves, without question we have leaned the business by going on this journey but similarly we invested £112k installing new boilers for the greater efficiency opportunity. Some saving and some heavy capital expenditure.

Q4: What kind of changes can a guest expect to experience?

A4: Our guests experience will continue to be luxurious and with the very best service. Most of the environmental changes will not be visible to our guests, these are mostly behind the scenes around Energy, waste, water & our supply chain. All the small changes around the hotel will hopefully only enhance the guests stay.

A few examples would be:

At our guest rooms

- A guest can now access to a variety of digital newspaper and magazines via a QR code instead of physical copies.
- Our guest can continue to enjoy our complimentary coffee / tea, biscuits and chips in the room. Yet all packaging of these refreshment are compostable and then be turned into nutrients for our garden.
- The towels and robes provided in the guest room or at the spa are from Eco Knit. They are comfortable and luxurious. Yet the energy consumption during laundering is reduced by 40% and less water and detergent are used to process the towels.

At Aquarias Spa

- Our spa product brands - Sothys and GAIA - both are very committed to sustainability. We are also the first luxury UK country house hotel to deliver the Sothys experience to our guests
- Recycled glass is used as a sustainable pool filter sand replacement
- Our spa has repeatedly attained the Gold status from the Sustainable Spa Association (we are the only spa in the UK garnered this accreditation this year)

At our restaurants

- 10% of the sale of our sparkling water goes to a charitable organisation called charity:water which gives 100% of the donation received to fund projects which support people lacking clean water

- The beef on plate is raised from next door – lowering the carbon footprint

In the garden

- No pesticide is used

- Kitchen garden provides organic vegetables and herbs to the kitchen

Terminology

Carbon Footprint: The amount of carbon that an organization or person produces in any given time.

Net zero: Taking out at least as many emissions from the atmosphere that you are producing. Calculated on the entire operation including the supply chain.

Carbon neutral: Where you reduce your Carbon as much as is possible and then buy offset credits to go towards Carbon mitigating projects, such as reforestation.

Carbon positive: An activity goes beyond achieving net zero carbon emissions to create an environmental benefit by removing additional carbon dioxide from the atmosphere than your business generated.

Carbon negative: We offset or remove more carbon from the atmosphere than we emit.

CO2 emission: Carbon dioxide emissions are those stemming from the burning of fossil fuels and the manufacture of cement. They include carbon dioxide produced during consumption of solid, liquid, and gas fuels and gas flaring.

CO2e emission: Carbon dioxide equivalent or CO2e means the number of metric tons of CO2 emissions with the same global warming potential as one metric ton of another greenhouse gas.

Greenhouse gases (GHG): Greenhouse gases are gases which absorb heat. They also increase the rate at which the atmosphere can absorb short-wave radiation from the Sun, but this has a much weaker effect on global temperatures. The gases include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and water vapor (which all occur naturally).