

The ROSS

SUSTAINABILITY AT THE ROSS

**“WE ARE THE FIRST GENERATION TO FEEL THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE
AND WE ARE THE LAST GENERATION WHO CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT” –
BARACK OBAMA**

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

The Ross is located in one of the most beautiful areas in the world. Protecting this amazing landscape and environment is extremely important to us at both The Killarney Park and The Ross Hotel.

Together our team created a mission statement that we all agreed to work towards:

*“We will offer an enhanced lifestyle experience to our guests that delivers positive environmental, social, and economic impacts to our local communities.
We will prioritise protecting the planet for the next generation.”*

At The Ross, we believe that sustainable tourism is tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social, and environmental impacts while addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities (UNWTO, n.d.). We, therefore, aim to reduce our negative effects and increase our positive impacts.

In line with this we continually strive to improve our environment practices in a range of areas including energy, single use plastic, social impact and water usage. Sustainability is a journey of continuous improvement, and we aim to highlight our areas that require development through regular measurement and assessment.

We commit to measuring our water, energy and waste usage on a monthly basis and then to reduce consumption where possible. It is our aim to make the following reductions in 2022:

- Electricity & LPG by 5%
 - Water by 10%
- General waste by 20%
 - Food waste by 5%

Energy

- We use Green Energy – 100% Green Electricity
- We have completed a recent energy audit and currently upgrading equipment to reduce our energy consumption.
- We have a daily energy walk along with real-time monitoring of usage through widescale metering.
- All of the hotel operate on LED lighting which saves many tonnes of CO2 energy
 - We have two Porsche-designed electric car charging points for our guest use
 - We promote sustainable travel with our guests through incentives. Promote longer stays and special offers for repeat stays to the domestic market. We also offer free use of bicycles for visiting the local area.

Water

We obtain our water exclusively through legal and sustainable water sources. We ensure that our water source from Uisce Eireann has not previously affected, and is unlikely in future to affect, environmental flows.

We assure that our wastewater is always treated according to international standards. We further assure that neither nature nor the local population is exposed to negative influences resulting from our wastewater

Since we are an accommodation provider within the EU, our Wastewater, including grey water, is effectively treated, and is only reused or released safely, with no adverse effects to the local population or the environment. Wastewater is disposed of to an officially approved treatment system.

We ensure that no water courses, water catchments or wetlands are being altered for the operation of our business. We work on reducing run-off and where possible capture or channel and filter any residue water. We do so by:

- The use of grease traps in kitchens which capture and filter residue water. This prevents grease and other solids from entering the plumbing system, thus reducing water pollution.
- Our cleaning products are plant-based, and 100% biodegradable. They are [Cradle to Cradle Certified®](#)

We have installed many water-saving measures including low-flow taps, toilet cistern bags, and upgraded circulation pumps.

Staff are encouraged to reduce water consumption when cleaning and cooking by not leaving taps running.

We have completed the Uisce Eireann Water Stewardship

Waste

We ensure that we only dispose of waste legally and send our waste only to official/approved facilities, such as KWD.

We commit to sorting and disposing of any waste, including construction waste, produced now or in the future in an environmentally sound manner, according to applicable rules and laws.

We aim to support National & EU Policies and targets by aligning with the goals of The Circular Economy to primarily design out waste and then look circular opportunities for our waste streams.

Single use plastic is a disaster for our environment, and we are actively eliminating it from our hotel. We have found replacements for the following items of single-use plastic:

- Miniature toiletry bottles have been replaced with larger luxury refillable dispensers. This action alone reduced our single use plastic by a whopping 100,000 bottles per annum.
- We no longer use single use coffee cups as founding members of the [Killarney Coffee Cup Project](#).
- Plastic drinking straws and cocktail stirrers are now made of metal and reusable
- Plastic water bottles are now glass and we have a chilled, filtered water station at our front door for our guests use
 - Coasters are now leather and reusable

- Guest amenities such as toothbrushes, earbuds, shower hats, vanity kits are now either made with bamboo or a biodegradable material
- Bedroom plastic – linen/laundry bags, newspaper bags and guest carrier bags are no longer plastic and have been replaced by a natural material such as linen or paper
- We no longer use plastic pedal bin liners and have introduced a recycling bin to all guest rooms.

We are partnered with [Clean The World](#) which assist us in recycling any toiletry waste and used bars of soap

We have partnered with [Positive Carbon](#) to keep food waste to a minimum through the use of AI cameras.

Cardboard packaging, glass, cans, used light bulbs and batteries are all returned to suppliers or collected for recycling. We are committed to further reducing waste to landfill

Paper usage within the hotel is continually monitored in our efforts to reduce and reuse. We have paperless check-in & out.

We are proud members of [Repak](#) which is a not-for-profit packaging recycling scheme funded by contributors from over 3,000 member companies nationwide.

We were the overall winners in the 2023 [Pakman Awards](#)

Purchasing Policy

At The Ross we regularly update our purchasing policy - As much as possible our culinary team sources our food from local producers thereby reducing food miles (the distance that food must travel to get from farm to fork). Products such as meat, fresh fish, smoked fish, salads, eggs and cheeses are mostly from the locality. We also endeavour to purchase and support small artisan producers.

We aim to choose locality, seasonality, avoid packaging and use certified products as much as possible and will not be motivated by price alone.

Marketing

We know that it is important to communicate our efforts in an honest way, therefore our marketing department have committed to transparency and honesty when sharing our sustainability journey and future goals.

We are aware that pictures and photos can speak a thousand words. Using realistic images that reflect current conditions in our marketing materials is important to us. Using misleading images can be part of greenwashing which we work hard to avoid at all levels.

As part of our commitment to responsible sustainability marketing, we ensure that our promotional materials are accurate and complete and that these do not promise more than can be delivered by us.

Guest Impact & Cultural Interactions

We also continue to develop several ecotourism experiences for our customers to enjoy and aim to promote tourism that's has a positive impact on our local community.

We acknowledge the importance of following international and national good practices and locally agreed guidance for the management and promotion of visits to indigenous communities and culturally or historically sensitive sites to minimise adverse impacts and maximise local benefits and visitor fulfilment. As part of our commitment, we educate and inform our guests on best practice conduct before recommending visits to such sites or communities.

Biodiversity

Living and operating a business within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, we are aware of the importance of preserving the integrity and connectivity of natural sites and protected areas. We confirm that our business operation does not negatively impact such areas as Killarney National Park in our vicinity.

We ensure that we have minimal impact on wildlife habitats and that our operation does not contribute to the displacement of any threatened or protected species in our area. Although we do not have protected species on site such as:

Qualifying Interests of Killarney National Park, Macgillicuddy's Reeks and Caragh River Catchment SAC
Species
Kerry Slug
Freshwater Pearl Mussel
Marsh Fritillary
Sea Lamprey
Brook Lamprey
River Lamprey
Atlantic Salmon
Lesser Horseshoe Bat
Otter
Killarney Fern
Slender Naiad
Killarney Shad
Special Conservation Interests for the Killarney National Parks SPA
Merlin
Greenland White-fronted Goose

We do ensure their protection by adhering to guidelines of the NPWS and by educating our guests. We also held an immersive educational programme for local primary and secondary level students with MTU & NPWS to educate locals on native species and how to protect them.

We support our local biodiversity by ensuring that we do not spread or introduce any invasive species on our property. As proud members of the All Ireland Pollinators Plan we focus on establishing and carrying native pollinator friendly flora on our grounds instead.

We are aware of activities that potentially such as lawn mowing and visitors walking off path on the property grounds can disturb wildlife and habitats. We aim to mitigate the risk through visitor education, and reduced lawn mowing & no mowing.

We follow the guiding principles of 'Leave No Trace', the 'All Ireland Pollinators Plan' and the 'National Parks & Wildlife Services' to minimize any adverse impacts and to maximise visitor fulfilment when accessing the natural environment on our property and guidance when visiting the Killarney National park.

As part of our commitment to supporting local conservation, we regularly meet with local conservation bodies NPWS to identify any issues that might arise from our guests and tourists in general visiting particular sites The Killarney National Park.

We are aware of and comply with local, national and international regulations and guidelines concerning wildlife interactions, including wildlife viewing of the Red Deer during rutting season. As part of our commitment, we educate our guests on appropriate behaviour before recommending activities that could entail wildlife interactions.

We do not engage in any harvesting, consumption, display, selling or trading of wildlife species except as part of regulated activities that ensures that their utilization is sustainable, and in compliance with local and international laws.

We do not engage in hunting but if we are ever to be asked by a guest that wishes to, we solely engage in hunting activities that are carried out by the Irish laws and regulations and follow a scientifically based, properly managed, and strictly enforced approach to conservation.

To protect local wildlife from harm we prohibit any wild animal feeding on our property.

We commit to not acquiring, breeding, or keeping captive any species of wild animals as part of our operation. We are aware of relevant laws and regulations concerning captive wildlife and animal welfare in general.

We support and conserve Irish biodiversity by donating to local and national biodiversity organisations as well as volunteering with our local Mountain Meitheal to help with reducing invasive species in Killarney National Park.

Our cleaning products are plant-based, and 100% biodegradable. They are [Cradle to Cradle Certified®](#) to ensure if any waste water unintentionally makes its way into the natural environment it will not have any adverse effects on the local ecosystem.

Community

We actively participate in the sustainable planning and management of our destination. We are involved with the Chamber of Tourism & Commerce, Kerry Convention Bureau, the DEDP and Kerry Tourism Industry Federation to help offer a unified voice for tourism, community, and sustainability.

We are founding members of **The Killarney Hotels Sustainability Group** which is a group of hotels totalling more than 3,000 bedrooms that take protecting our landscape and environment at the forefront of what we do.

Our team are active members of Killarney Tidy Towns, a voluntary community based group that works to keep our town clean, tidy and sustainable.

To support local artists we ensure that all copyright and intellectual property rights are observed, and necessary permissions have been obtained.

As part of supporting our local community, we would not impede local residents' access to natural amenities or historical, archaeological, culturally and spiritually important sites that maybe located on our grounds or can be accessed through our property. At this time we are not currently aware of any on our grounds.

We are committed to providing local employment opportunities for local residents in particular. We advertise roles locally first before widening the search nationally.

We support local entrepreneurs in the development and sale of sustainable products and services that are based on the area's nature, history and culture. These include organic and regenerative food producers, tourism guides that educate guests on local environment, history, culture and conservation.

Accessibility

The ethos that encapsulates The Ross is we are more than just a hotel we are a family run hotel that strives to provide access to all of our guests. We have worked closely with the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) and have been awarded the Accreditation Seal of the ENAT World Tourism for All Quality Programme.

The Ross has a range of facilities to cater for guests of all abilities and we want to make each stay as comfortable as possible. Whilst we offer ongoing training to ensure our team have a good deal of understanding, when it comes to fully inclusive hospitality, we are always learning and would be delighted to receive any advice or support from those who have preferences which we may not have met.

The hotel can provide a wheel chair should it be requested in advance of arrival. We welcome Assistance and Guide dogs to the hotel and hope your four legged companions enjoy their stay too.

We are part of the steering committee that is aiming to make Killarney autism friendly and as such The Killarney Park & The Ross are champion businesses. We strive to make our organisations inclusive for all.

The Green Sustainability Team at our hotel are always looking for ways to help reduce our carbon footprint and welcome any questions or suggestions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact info@theross.ie

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