

**Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) and Lancashire Green  
Tourism Project Evaluation**

**SEPTEMBER 2010**





The Lancashire Green Tourism project is building on best practice developed by the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) sustainable tourism project (2006-2008) and is funded and supported by Lancashire County Developments Ltd (LCDL) and Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board (LBTB). The project is running from 2008 to 2011 and during the 3 years the aims of the project are to develop the sustainable tourism offer and profile of Lancashire and the Forest of Bowland AONB.





During 2006-2008 18 businesses in the Forest of Bowland AONB were accredited with GTBS and of those 2 have not renewed their membership. Since then a further 34 have been accredited through the Lancashire Green Tourism project. We are coming toward the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of the 3 year project and felt it was an appropriate time to gain a snapshot of businesses' views about GTBS and the project. The aim is to carry out the evaluation at the same time next year when it is envisaged a further 17 businesses will be accredited.

**Section 1: BACKGROUND**

**Response: 26/50 = 52%**

The Lancashire Green Tourism project has been able to offer businesses the following support: grant to pay for a GTBS advisory visit, introductory seminar, marketing training, green ideas training, opportunities for involvement in cluster developments, one to one advice, website support to market green credentials, wildlife blog websites, resources, case studies, pr opportunities and promotion via [www.lancashiregreentourism.com](http://www.lancashiregreentourism.com) Not all of this support was available for businesses in 2007 which may be reflected in some of the responses.

<b>1. When were you first graded by GTBS?</b>			
2007:		28.0%	7
2009:		44.0%	11
2010:		24.0%	6
Awaiting grading:		4.0%	1












<b>2. What GTBS award do you have?</b>			
Gold:		36.0%	9
Silver:		48.0%	12
Bronze:		8.0%	2
Awaiting grading:		8.0%	2




















## Section 2: IMPACT

Businesses were asked to state their agreement with a series of statements. A clear pattern emerged which confirmed what was apparent whilst working with the businesses - 88% agreed/strongly agreed that before undertaking GTBS their business was already operating in a sustainable way. However, undertaking GTBS assisted businesses by providing new ideas, a framework for delivering sustainable tourism, increasing awareness of green products and services, increasing motivation and satisfaction of staff and assisting businesses in marketing their green credentials to visitors.

Significantly 100% of businesses stated that they agreed/strongly agreed that they now market their green commitment to visitors. The support from the project has assisted businesses in marketing their green credentials predominantly on their websites; this will all support one of the key objectives of the project to demonstrate and promote to visitors Lancashire as a green tourism destination.

There was a mixed response with regard to GTBS attracting new visitors and improving satisfaction of existing visitors. 30% agreed/strongly agreed that it has attracted new visitors and 36% agreed/strongly agreed that it has improved satisfaction of existing visitors. However, this demonstrates that there is certainly potential for businesses to attract new types of visitors specifically because of their green commitment.

<b>3. Please state your agreement with the following:</b>			
<b>3.a. Prior to undertaking GTBS my business was already operating in a sustainable way</b>			
Strongly agree:		32.0%	8
Agree:		56.0%	14
Disagree:		8.0%	2
Strongly disagree:		0.0%	0
Don't know:		4.0%	1
<b>3.b. GTBS has given me new ideas for operating in a sustainable way</b>			
Strongly agree:		40.0%	10
Agree:		52.0%	13
Disagree:		8.0%	2
Strongly disagree:		0.0%	0
Don't know:		0.0%	0
<b>3.c. GTBS has provided me with a framework for delivering sustainable tourism</b>			
Strongly agree:		32.0%	8
Agree:		56.0%	14
Disagree:		8.0%	2
Strongly disagree:		0.0%	0
Don't know:		4.0%	1
<b>3.d. By undergoing GTBS I now have a greater awareness of green products and services</b>			

available			
Strongly agree:		44.0%	11
Agree:		52.0%	13
Disagree:		4.0%	1
Strongly disagree:		0.0%	0
Don't know:		0.0%	0
3.e. I now market my green commitment to visitors			
Strongly agree:		48.0%	12
Agree:		52.0%	13
Disagree:		0.0%	0
Strongly disagree:		0.0%	0
Don't know:		0.0%	0
3.f. GTBS has attracted new visitors to my business			
Strongly agree:		8.0%	2
Agree:		28.0%	7
Disagree:		20.0%	5
Strongly disagree:		12.0%	3
Don't know:		32.0%	8
3.g. GTBS has improved the satisfaction of existing customers			
Strongly agree:		4.0%	1
Agree:		32.0%	8
Disagree:		24.0%	6
Strongly disagree:		8.0%	2
Don't know:		32.0%	8
3.h. GTBS has improved satisfaction/motivation for staff/owners			
Strongly agree:		12.0%	3
Agree:		72.0%	18
Disagree:		12.0%	3
Strongly disagree:		4.0%	1
Don't know:		0.0%	0

Businesses were asked to state if they had made any cost savings, this is based on the fact that only a small number made any significant investment, many of the changes that businesses implemented for GTBS involved small costs or no costs at all. 46% had made some savings and 8% significant savings. 17% acknowledged that although they had not made any savings yet they hope to make them in the future. Further analysis shows that the businesses who have made no savings are also those that stated that they were already operating in a sustainable way prior to undertaking GTBS, it may be that they made cost savings when changes were implemented in the years before undertaking the accreditation, but no definite conclusions can be made from this. Question 4a lists the detail of cost savings.

4. Has your business made any cost savings?			
Significant savings:		8.3%	2
Some savings:		45.8%	11
No savings:		29.2%	7
No savings yet, but will hopefully benefit from savings in the future:		16.7%	4
4.a. Please provide any details of cost savings:			
Aga now on 'lean burn' AIMS system.			
Installed shredder for cardboard			
reduced electricity and fuel costs			
Savings on electricity			
The main cost savings were to do with modifications to heating and water systems that were already in place and works for insulation already planned as a matter of course but the going green in other respects has cost us nothing and the products we use from northern environmental are of a better quality and slightly cheaper over all.			
This year, we have had double glazing installed throughout, a new oil water/heating boiler, larger immersion heater and loft insulation - all to latest standards. A significant percentage of the costs has been funded by bed and breakfast income. Membership of GTBS has increased our exposure on the internet, and the so increased numbers of visitors - therefore helping to increase our income to enable sustainable improvements.			
Though not directly as a result of GTBS			
Though we may be making some savings on running costs it will take a long time to offset the initial investment.			
Use of water displacement items in loos and loft insulation therefore cutting costs.			
With our improvement in energy efficiency we have made quite a large saving, we will shortly be beginning a leak detection programme for water which should result in further savings			
Reduced cost for cleaning products. reduced energy consumption			

58% of businesses felt that high/medium numbers of visitors were aware of their GTBS award but 8% felt that no visitors were aware. There is further scope to work with these businesses to convey their green commitment. Question 6 also revealed that 25% of businesses felt that visitors had specifically sought out their business because of their accreditation. Although seemingly a small percentage this is certainly a positive response, in the past green credentials may have been the deciding factor for visitors comparing two like-for-like businesses, but this a clear step towards visitors making a specific choice for businesses operating in a sustainable way.

5. How many visitors do you think are aware of your GTBS award?			
High number:		8.3%	2
Medium number:		50.0%	12
Low number:		33.3%	8
None:		8.3%	2
5.a. Please provide any examples of feedback you have received from your visitors relating to your green commitment:			

"A very 'joined up' operation with integrated energy-saving and eco-friendly systems. We are keen conservationists and were most impressed" (Smith, Woodcutter's Cottage, May 2010)
Blog comments and comment cards
environment agency said we were just what they were looking for and booked meetings with us as a result. Various other enquiries due to the award.
Most guests have said that they will look for GTBS businesses in the future
Most people are interested even if they were not aware of the scheme prior to staying with us. Several have said that it has given them food for thought.
My green tourism booklet is put in a place they cannot miss to see but never received any comments.
Only just achieved Silver award so will be marketing the scheme to our visitors to raise feedback.
our visitors are increasingly aware of green issues and by proudly displaying our achievements guests are confident that we are making a difference to the way we work.
People have commented that they like the green info on the website and like what we are trying to aim for. Great interest in our ex-battery hens
pleased to see Malkin Tower is doing its bit for the environment
They like our locally sourced bacon and sausage, provided by a local butcher. Some visitors love talking about the birds that visit our feeders, about the trees we've had planted, about the local footpaths. We have a lot of local maps and walk books that they borrow. One couple used buses to travel round after they'd driven here.
Very interested especially when we are presenting talks to clubs, societies etc.
Very small percentage fill in form asking how important commitment to green tourism is.
We generally mention it at breakfast, you get sort of dazed smiles as if to say "Oh right.....that's nice" We never expected our guests to be particularly interested - esp when on hols think they get enough indoctrination at home so we do not bang on about it too much - could have the opposite effect.
We get favorable comments in the visitor books and personally regarding our care for the environment also availability of local produce. Good walks from the door are appreciated.
Some visitors were unaware of GTBS before they came here and some have said they will look out for it in the future.

**6. Have any visitors sought out your business specifically because of your GTBS award?**

Yes:		25.0%	6
No:		75.0%	18

**6.a. If yes, please state the approximate number of visitors who have sought you specifically since acquiring your GTBS accreditation?**

40 -50
as above
not known
not that we are aware of
Not that we know of. Our GTBS award is within our website, which generally people really like. So, I think, GTBS is very much a part of the Cobden Farm B&B package, rather than an independent factor.
Very few guests are aware before they come even with lots of evidence on the website.

### Section 3: GTBS ACCREDITATION

79% of businesses stated that they will be renewing their GTBS membership; no businesses said that they would not be, but 21% are unsure. There is scope to work with businesses to find out the reasons why they are unsure and provide appropriate support and encouragement. Momentum for GTBS is still high and 60% of those who are currently accredited with a Silver or Bronze award are keen to improve this when they are next accredited. Next year it would be useful to ascertain the reasons why a business does not want to improve on their award.

7.			
7.a. Will you be continuing with your GTBS membership?			
Yes:		79.2%	19
No:		0.0%	0
Unsure:		20.8%	5
7.b. If you have Silver or Bronze accreditation, are you planning on trying to improve on this award?			
Yes:		60.0%	9
No:		13.3%	2
Unsure:		26.7%	4

A high percentage of businesses felt that the GTBS advisory visit and report were either useful/very useful. The main changes that businesses have implemented as a result of GTBS are conveying their messages to visitors, introducing energy saving light bulbs, changing to environmentally friendly cleaning products, monitoring of energy consumption, getting staff onboard, and screening suppliers.

8.			
8.a. How useful was the GTBS advisory visit (if you had one)?			
Very useful:		54.2%	13
Useful:		33.3%	8
Not very useful:		12.5%	3
Not useful at all:		0.0%	0
8.b. How useful was the GTBS advisory/grading report?			
Very useful:		58.3%	14
Useful:		25.0%	6
Not very useful:		16.7%	4
Not useful at all:		0.0%	0

### 9. What have been the main changes you have implemented as a result of undergoing GTBS accreditation?

Being more aware of the impact we are having on the environment and trying to improve it in a sustainable way. Also trying to get the message over to our guests to make them more aware.

Changing appliances to A rated. Hippo bags in cisterns. Energy saving light bulbs. Harvesting rain water.
cleaning products - signage free-range eggs locally sourced sausages.
Consistent monitoring of electricity usage; low energy lighting throughout; new double glazing, new central heating system, upgraded loft insulation; use of eco friendly washing and cleaning products;
Energy saving controls and appliances, replaced boilers, local purchasing, improved recycling. Encouragement of public transport use. Look at suppliers.
energy and waste monitoring - developing a green business meetings package - making visitors aware
Energy saving New and Alternative products. Incorporating scheme into annual management plan. Reviewed/created action plan Raised staff awareness
I have spent quite a bit of money changing wall lights to accommodate larger bulbs
Kept records for their future visits
Lighting and energy
Lots of small changes
Low energy light bulbs, recycle cardboard, batteries, papers etc. Reduced water consumption.
Planted more trees, changed light bulbs and changed boiler
Purchasing cleaning materials that are more green and/or recyclable packaging for products.
Staff understanding and knowledge - disseminating information and making them proud to work at the centre
Using green products where possible
We have increased the amount of information we share with staff and visitors and we have improved the organisation of our green efforts coordinating them into a true strategy.
We were committed to green sustainability when planning our business before GTBS arrived in the area
Working with other nearby businesses. Wildlife blog on website. Recycling even more.
Make our own cleaning products, only wash dirty laundry. Reduced water consumption

#### Section 4: SUPPORT

Many businesses reported that they had received support through the Lancashire Green Tourism project and all businesses found the support either useful or very useful, they also went on to state their appreciation for the support of the AONB team. A high percentage also stated that they had benefited from the marketing initiatives for the project especially through the Forest of Bowland website. However, many expressed that they were unsure of the impact of the marketing but felt that it assisted in raising the profile of the area as a green destination.

10. Have you received any of the following support/training through the Lancashire Green Tourism project or from the Forest of Bowland team?			
Introductory GTBS seminar:		65.4%	17
One-to-one		69.2%	18

advice/support:			
One-to-one web support (Barrie Tyrer):		73.1%	19
Marketing training:		57.7%	15
Green ideas training:		57.7%	15
<b>10.a. How useful was this support/training?</b>			
Very useful:		61.5%	16
Useful:		26.9%	7
Not very useful:		0.0%	0
Not useful at all:		0.0%	0
<b>10.b. Any other comments?</b>			
Barrie Tyrer is excellent and very patient.			
Couldn't and wouldn't have done it without Forest of Bowland support and advice.			
Everyone concerned has been very helpful and enthusiastic and their enthusiasm is very motivating			
Great support from Bowland AONB staff.			
Keep up the good work. It is a great source of cohesion and encouragement within businesses in the AONB.			
My web site was not designed by Barrie so he doesn't help as much as if he had designed it, and I'm not able to be part of all the sites he does.			
The Bowland gang has made it an enjoyable experience!			
The Forest of Bowland team have been very supportive and have put on many training courses with have been extremely helpful			
<b>11. Has your business benefited from any of the following marketing initiatives:</b>			
www.lancashiregreentourism.com website:		38.5%	10
www.forestofbowland.com website:		53.8%	14
www.bowlandwildlife.org.uk website:		30.8%	8
www.lancashirewildlife.org.uk website:		34.6%	9
www.bowlandexperience.com website:		30.8%	8
Gisburn Forest Mountain Bike Leaflet:		11.5%	3
Press coverage:		34.6%	9
<b>11.a. How useful have these initiatives been to your business?</b>			
All press and web coverage are very useful by raising the profile of the area as a destination.			
Currently working with these websites			
General awareness to potential visitors			
more awareness			



Not sure
Not sure about what impact
Not yet but we will see!
Probably limited in the whole scale of things but developing and a growth area.
Raised our profile
Really useful and strong links with Hetty and Mike invaluable
several of our guests have stayed with us because of the above
The television programme Country Tracks brought in some business
They have all helped raise the profile of our business through greater public exposure and presence on the internet.
Very useful
Very useful in sending out information to potential visitors
very, in terms of giving us ideas on how to better promote the green and natural side of the business
They have put us on the map - hoping to get more bookings from mountain bikers.

#### 12. Any other comments/suggestions:

From early 2011 we will be hosting two domains aimed at Bowland Gardens and Ribble Valley Gardens which we hope will show keen gardeners that Bowland is worth visiting to see plants and gardens.
Great grant advise
I found Green Tourism Inspectors to be OTT which would deter rather than enhance my commitment to Green Tourism
If the proposed photo competition is successful maybe we could look to a competition in a national magazine or paper that would reach a wider public.
none - people have to catch up we are ready when they do!
Not at the moment
Really helpful and supportive staff. Feel proud to be a part of the scheme.
Thank you.
The Forest of Bowland do more to help tourism businesses than other organisations which we will not mention.
We are still awaiting GTBS reaccreditation with some trepidation.

### Section 5: KEY FINDINGS

It is evident that the businesses are positive about the process of undergoing GTBS accreditation, and while many had already adopted green practices prior to the accreditation, GTBS has assisted businesses at several levels:

- Providing a framework for delivering sustainable tourism
- Providing new ideas about products and services
- Motivating staff
- Marketing green commitment
- Cost savings

- Attracted a new market of visitors seeking businesses with green credentials
- Be part of an initiative aiming to put Lancashire on the map as a green tourism destination.

All businesses have benefited from the support and marketing initiatives through the Lancashire Green Tourism project, in particular businesses found the support and training most useful. Many businesses stated the importance of the county being promoted as a green destination and how their businesses were benefiting from the raised profile.

The same evaluation will be repeated in September 2011 to gain the views of newly accredited businesses to make comparisons with this evaluation.