

Sustainability Champions



Chris Burton



Composting



Recycling

Eco Chic Cottages

Chris Burton, Owner

Since opening in 2005, Eco Chic's aim has been to provide self-catering cottages that bring luxury and sustainability together. Now a multi award-winning business, including many for their ethical, sustainable and responsible efforts, owner Chris Burton shares her 'small steps approach' and passion for sustainability.

What is Eco Chic's 'small steps approach'?

"We do as much as we can without having any large eco infrastructure, such as solar panels or heat pumps," explains Chris. Some of the small steps Eco Chic have taken include:

- All products used for cleaning, as well as those provided for guest use, are eco-friendly, and buying in bulk and refilling cuts down on plastic use
- Buying products made from recycled materials, where possible - currently trialling duvets with PET filling
- All household appliances are as eco-friendly as possible; washing machines and dishwashers are A rated & have eco cycles
- All taps and shower heads are water saving designs
- LED lighting is used throughout both cottages
- Only 100% green electricity is purchased
- EV charging points are available for guests to use free of charge

- Selecting suppliers who have a similar ethos, a sustainability policy and who are as local as possible.

Both cottages have been extended in recent years, what sustainability measures were incorporated?

"Both extensions used recycled glass foundations, as much insulation as possible and the extension at Culls Cottage has a green roof. This property is a Grade II listed so we are especially proud of this.

"In the two recent builds we have integrated bird and bat boxes into the fabric of the buildings. We also have underfloor heating which is more efficient."

Tell us about your nature-related activities

"We garden as organically as we can, we plant with insects in mind and we have bird boxes (including a tawny owl box), bat boxes, bird feeders and bird baths, insect hotels and hedgehog houses. When we built a new

section of Cotswold drystone wall we deliberately left a hedgehog highway hole in it. Contained gardens are one of the reasons hedgehogs have declined. They like to roam and we have now have hedgehogs at both properties, of which we are very proud.

"We compost and we also leave areas of native plants, such as nettles, which we call our Nettle nursery, somewhere for insects to lay their eggs.

"We harvest rainwater from the house and our sheds for use in the gardens.

"At The Chestnuts we are developing a meadow. 97% of meadows have disappeared and so we are re-establishing a meadow area, it is in its third season. At Culls Cottage we have developed a mini meadow under the large willow tree. No garden is too small not to have just a small patch!"

Sustainability Champions



Encouraging wildlife



Refills



Walking & cycling guides



Eco-gift



Outside space

Eco Chic Cottages

continued

As a sustainably focused business, how do you try to influence your guests' behaviour?

"We recycle and encourage guests to do this too by making it easy for them with compartmentalised bins in the kitchen and outside.

"We supply guests with compostable bags, clingfilm, foil and baking parchment, to reduce their landfill waste.

"Every guest leaves us with a small eco-gift of a sheep-decorated dish-cloth. It is designed and printed in the Cotswolds and can be washed and reused, then either used as hanging basket liners or composted. It's a little fun gift that might make our guests think!

"We also put sustainability posts onto our social media and website to try and spread the word, always in an encouraging way of course.

"At both cottages we provide guides about walks and cycle routes, encouraging guests to get into the countryside and not necessarily take the car. We also encourage them to eat local and eat fresh, so we have details of farmers' shops and markets on our website, as well as in our digital TouchStay house guides."

ecochiccottages.com

"If we all do a little, it adds up to a lot. Just start with what you can do and with every purchase or practice you make think 'is there a more sustainable way to do this?' Don't get hung up on perfect!"