

Updated June 2024

Killary Adventure Group Sustainability plan

The big change for the start of 2024 is that we are now a full B Corp certified company and the extra efforts this entails. It is hard to know which sustainability accreditation to strive for but we have chosen B Corp as on balance it seems to be the most far-reaching.

This plan is to put forward the aims of Killary Adventure Group (KAG) and how we hope to achieve our continued reduction in power usage and care of our natural environment. It is very fashionable nowadays to talk about net Zero and how long until you are Carbon neutral. We are not doing this to be trendy or to hit what I believe to be unrealistic goals. Can a company that uses fossil fuels, uses batteries ripped from the earth and all sorts of other 'materials' ever be truly Carbon neutral? We are not going to claim an unrealistic goal but simply do our absolute best to protect our small part of the world. What we want to achieve is fossil fuel free on our energy by 2026 as we feel this is more realistic. After that, we are trying to get to a stage where we minimize our impact on the Earth as much as possible

The sustainability plan is so that everybody can see what efforts we have taken so far and what we are hoping to do in the future. This plan will be updated every 6 months in December and June of each year and will inform the company's environmental policy. We have been working on sustainability from the very start, in 2000 we built with a grass roof, in 2002 we installed our first wind turbine and many other efforts in between.

This strategy will be split into 4 parts and will encompass all of the different parts of the business. Namely

- Killary Adventure Co. Accommodation & activities
- Connemara Adventure Tours cycling tours
- Gaelforce Events
- Killary Lodge accommodation

Part 1: Efforts so far

This is where we will take a holistic view of our entire business from the ground up to see what we can achieve within the constraints of running a successful business in an economically deprived area.

First up we have identified a number of areas where we can and have already made strides

Current efforts at sustainability

- 1 x 6kw Proven wind turbine installed which was first installed in 2002
- 32 kw of solar panels installed in August 2022
- Installed 200kw wood burner in December 2012
- Electric Golf Buggy brought in 2016
- On-site Composter installed in 201 (Ridan) takes all our food waste.
- Phosphate-free chemicals used in all our cleaning products since 2014
- Polytunnel built in 2017 to use compost and grow greens on-site
- 8kw solar panel with battery installed for workshops in 2019
- Ongoing tree planting program (500) every year since 2018.
- Program to deal with Rhododendron infestation and its destruction of biodiversity since 1990
- Removal of 'white plague' sheep that were destroying our biodiversity.
- Green roof put on the main centre building at the construction phase in 2000
- Using edible cups on GFE
- Using generators powered by vegetable oil where we can for events.
- All bins in bedrooms do not have plastic bags and youth groups must all separate their waste on departure into main recyclable and non-recyclable bins, educational part.
- First electric outboard bought for Yacht tender as a test.

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- 20kw of solar panels at the main accommodation base
- 3 x heat pumps to supply hot water and heating to the main building

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- We have installed 8kw of solar panels and a 10kw battery on our lodge building which is producing great results so far. Full measurement next April
- We have become a B corporation in March of 2024
- Harp renewable upgraded electric food composter installed in March 2024
- 500 trees planted by staff in late February 10 per person to offset carbon involved in arrival here.

Part 2: In the planning stage

- Electric boat engine – Ongoing study
- How do we reduce vehicle fleet emissions while at the same time needing to be able to tow trailers all over the country? Electric vans cant do this yet
- Biomass is good but after our experiment, we would not go back for a while yet.
- Research paper on Hydroelectric scheme and where to install and with what materials
- Reducing our single-use plastics – Suppliers and what we buy
- Building materials and reusing old ones. Also experimenting with new methods of building such as hemp blocks - Building in situ and holding up after 1 year in operation. The lime render took a while to get right. 2024 – Lime render is leaking so might have to cover will continue to monitor
- Reducing food waste by having staff meals made from leftover meals of groups the previous nights
- Installing water restrictors on all showers and taps. This reduces the usage of water and also the usage of electricity to pump and heat water.

- Installation of water to water heat pumps in winter 2022 to provide hot water & heating in main building – Installed 2023
- Have a person in charge of cultural change of the organization. We do lots of stuff on an ad hoc basis but we need to be reaching out to the individuals working and visiting to make sure they understand what we are trying to do and why.
- Green fund to experiment with new technologies each year. This will take the shape of an innovation prize for any employee who brings forward an idea that gets implemented and helps us be more sustainable
- Experiment with biochar to see if it creates a difference. Sourced from cut-down rodo plants. Experiments ongoing both on trees and in the Greenhouse
- Willow coppice to dry out the land and provide firewood – 1000 willow cuttings planted and little growth so far. Estimate 30% success rate. – Still unsure how this will grow. Very slow
- Install electricity measuring software in all locations. Currently one in Lodge but none in K2
- At the end of 2023 conduct a energy audit to figure out actual energy usage. Done but more data is needed so working on 2024 at the moment

Part 3: Ideas going forward

- Talking to staff and educating them about what we are trying to do here. How do we create a culture where everyone is part of the journey.
- Continual planting of trees to continue at a rate of 500 per year. – 500 so far planted in 2024
- Building our latest shed out of hemp blocks and thus helping to reduce our reliance on high-pollution building products. Potential to build further buildings out of this material – Continued looking at different building materials. Timber is being looked at for the next work shed.
- Install Hydropower system for Lodge, Green shed & private houses (expert appraisal to follow) – Study done but the prohibitive cost of €100k at the moment. No further movement yet
- Push taps in public toilets – reduce water usage. No change yet
- New buildings are one of the biggest users of materials and non recyclable goods so we will attempt to use new materials.

- [Composting toilets](#) installed on walking trail as per Sligo and other areas. – Two were installed in the Misunderstood Heron carpark this year. Removed as Galway County Council sent a legal letter requesting removal. Very disappointing but we will fight to get reinstalled.
- Set up a community fund to provide funding for local endeavours e.g playground and others. Still ad hoc as we donate to worthy causes. Looking at 1% for the planet but not sure we are there yet.
- Upgrade coastal walking path with tarmac to improve access. Also received a legal letter from Galway County Council on this public amenity and are working through this so all is delayed.
- Install more solar panels up to a max of 50kw – Priced for an upgrade to the main centre but unless we install a battery also then power will be wasted.
- Took 1000m of plastic pipe from a local fish farm rather than it goes to the dump. Currently used for drainage and building of greenhouses.
- Use an annual data sheet to further reduce consumption and / or creation of Co2

Part 4: Re-assessing and ongoing efforts

- Constantly monitoring new technologies
- Constantly trying to turn events into zero-waste events.
- Engage with all suppliers to figure out how to reduce waste streams
- Reuse rather than recycle if at all possible
- Standing environmental prize for staff who bring new ideas to the table that we implement.

Part 5: Community and giving back to it

- 2km Walking path built in 2018 for everyone to use
- Helping out with the Leenane community playground both with funding and work hours
- Sponsorship given to Local GAA clubs at different stages of the year.
- Support for the Leenane Mountain Walking Festival.
- Supporting of local Creche with monetary donations and running.

Commitments

- Maintain 25% of our land as biodiverse areas for bees and birds
- Reduce our food waste by 20% using 2023 as baseline

- Research move towards becoming energy neutral as a business i.e. all our power supplied on site.
- Plant a minimum of 500 trees per year
- To invest in innovative sustainable products.
- Keeping sustainability at the core of our business

Shane Young

June 2024

