STAYING SUSTAINABLE

We live in a transformative yet divisive time, but more than any other movement in recent times, it’s sustainability that is driving the politics of change, inspiring new generations whilst uniting communities and businesses around the globe.

I have seen the optics of sustainability change immensely over the course of my twenty-five years in hospitality, both in the consumer appetite for personal responsibility and in the level of optimism surrounding the positive impact we can make as an industry.

At De Vere I’m proud to see the fruits of our immediate-term initiatives taking effect and I’m greatly encouraged by our longer-term plans. Our vision is to make every moment memorable and this same attention to detail applies to sustainability. By making small everyday changes, the bigger initiatives become a step closer.

Thank you for all your support in this important work. I invite you to join our journey towards a sustainable future.

Tony Troy
Chief Executive Officer

Making every stay more sustainable.

Sustainability is a big word. For us, it’s an even bigger responsibility.

The climate change movement has never been more important, within the hospitality industry and beyond. The United Nations have called for action to be taken, and at De Vere, we couldn’t be more passionate about the part we can play. That’s why we’re making changes today to reduce our environmental footprint tomorrow.

But our sustainability programme isn’t just a long-term vision. It’s a set of initiatives, some already in action, some big, some small, but all helping us to create a brighter future. The Events Industry Council has laid out three key areas for us to focus our efforts, and these align with our own vision and values.

Area 1. Operations.

At De Vere two of our core values are to deliver an ‘intuitive approach’ with ‘every detail considered’ for our customers. Today we’re applying these same principles to our sustainability programme. From the chemicals we use in our cleaning products, to providing
electric car charging points in our car parks, we’re ensuring that the day-to-day running of our hotels is aligned with our environmental responsibilities.

Area 2. Community.

Community links to our core value: ‘heart and soul’. People are at the heart of everything we do, whether that be our guests, colleagues or those in our local communities. So going forward, we’ll continue to reduce the environmental impact our hotels can have on their surrounding areas. We’ll take care of the beautiful grounds that our guests and communities enjoy. And we’ll continue to work hard to support our local charities.

Area 3. Supply chain

This final area relates to our core value: ‘valued relationships’. We inspire our colleagues to build genuine relationships with our suppliers and partners, and we believe that it is our duty to ensure that they’re also doing everything they can to look after the environment. Whether it’s trying to reduce the number of deliveries that are made, or ensuring we only ever use seasonal produce, we all have a part to play.

Becoming more sustainable is a journey, and we can’t do it alone. It’s only through joined-up green thinking that we can make a real difference. So we need everyone - guests, colleagues and partners to support us and make changes of their own. After all, when we do good, we feel good too. Together, we can ensure that a stay with De Vere is as sustainable as it is memorable.
**Operations**

**Electric car charging points**

- **How we help** – We support our guests in reducing their carbon impact by providing free charging points across many of our country estate properties. This encourages both the use of and visibility of electric vehicles, which can have up to four times less carbon impact than traditional fossil fuel powered vehicles.
- **Stat**: Each year the total free charges we provide is enough to power an electric vehicle 2.5 times around the circumference of the globe
- **What’s next?** – We currently have electric charging points at half of our residential properties at key locations around the M25, M4 and M1 corridors and plan to continue the roll out across the group where possible

**Resource saving initiatives**

- **How we help** – We’re committed to investing £800K in replacing the majority of legacy lighting systems across the group, such as fluorescent and halogen, with energy-saving LED lighting that are up to 80% more efficient and last up to six times longer. This has the added benefit of removing the impact of noxious chemicals used in legacy lighting such as mercury which can contaminate the environment in landfill. To further reduce energy wastage, we’re installing presence sensors in public areas and conference spaces. We’re also conserving water by sourcing water efficient toilets in our multi-million pound property renovations.
- **Stat**: We’re saving over 850 tonnes of CO2 each year, which is more than the average emissions of four fully-loaded jumbo jets flying from Paris to New York.
- **What’s next?** – We’re investing a further £1m in 2020 to drive carbon reduction, completing our energy efficient lighting project, recycling older florescent lighting, installing more sensors and even replacing tea lights with LEDs. We’ll continue the rollout of water efficiency systems such as installing Hippo bags in toilet cisterns and censored taps to reduce wastage in our guest and colleague facilities. Looking longer term we’re also investigating a range of more radical ideas to reduce our environmental impact, from innovative shower heads that use less water whilst maintaining pressure to bringing our laundry service in-house where possible, through to controlling the environmental credentials of our supply-chain and reducing the impact of transportation.

**Cleaning chemicals**

- **How we help** – We have reduced the impact of our waste cleaning chemicals, by partnering with ChemEco across the group for housekeeping, kitchen, bar and leisure club use, only using products that are:
  - Naturally sourced and produced from plant, microbial and enzymes
  - UK manufactured, greatly reducing associated carbon miles
  - 100% biodegradable and phosphate free
  - Packaged in 100% recycled plastic, an industry first, giving a second life to single-use plastic such as milk containers
- **Stat**: Over the course of a year we’ll use 66,278 litres of biodegradable cleaning products opposed to their more hazardous alternatives - enough to fill 368 baths.
DE VERE SUSTAINABILITY STATEMENT 2019

- What’s next? – We’ve achieved 100% usage across the group and continue to be an advocate of this innovative approach.

Waste

- How we help – We partner with Olleco, who collect all our waste frying oil across the group to be cleaned and converted into renewable biofuel
- Stat: We make 84,728Kg of CO2 savings across a year, which is the equivalent of removing 680 family cars from the road every year
- What’s next? – We’re committed to continue playing our part in this virtuous circle and reduce our carbon impact. We’ll also be looking at other initiatives to avoid waste going to landfill, such as partially used soap and toiletries being diverted to community based projects for those most in need of hygiene products

Plastics

- How we help – we’ve moved from single use 40ml toiletries in our guest rooms to 250ml refillable bottles, saving on unnecessary plastic waste. And to ensure we take an ethical stance in the sourcing of our toiletries, we only work with vegan-accredited and Fairtrade suppliers. We only provide paper straws, when requested, saving over 350,000 plastic straws from going to landfill each year. We have also introduced filtered water machines for our events guests, removing the use of single use plastic water bottles
- Stat: We’ve already saved 626Kg of plastic in 2019, the equivalent of a fully grown male Polar Bear
- What’s next? – We’re determined to continue our plastic reduction. We’ll be continuing the full roll out of filtered water machines, followed by a trial to access the impact of glassware and mugs vs multi-use water bottles, keep-cups and biodegradable water cups; completely eliminating the non-recyclable cup and helping our events guests to reduce their personal impact on plastic use outside of our venues.

Recycling

- How we help – We’re making it easier for our guests to recycle whilst visiting us with the introduction of waste stations near our coffee areas. This promotes segregation at point of disposal which in turn makes it easier for transfer. We then work with sustainable recycling partners to ensure more of our waste is diverted away from landfill, with battery bins available to avoid contamination of our waterways. We also ensure we have a culture of daily recycling so any in-house printing is dual-sided using paper sourced under the forest certification scheme. Plus the 400 printer toners we use each year are collected and recycled with zero waste to landfill, using an innovative process that breaks down all the components for use in the manufacturing of other goods. We only print internally when necessary and have even installed QR systems and paperless audits to avoid having to store printed records for things like daily fire safety checks. Any confidential paper waste is shredded offsite and recycled back into paper, closing a virtuous circle. When it comes to stationery in our meeting rooms, we’re encouraging less wastage by limiting the volume available and trialling electronic flipcharts. We’re also engaging in an innovative recycling scheme that converts used plastic bottles into carpet backing. We’ve already installed this product at two of our properties which equates to over 13,000 recycled bottles.
• Stat: We recycle over 100 tonnes of waste each month across the group, the equivalent of over 11 blue whales every year.
• What’s next? – We’re committed to adding recycling points at all of our coffee points across the group and investigating how technology and advanced materials can help create more sustainable touchpoints within our hotels, such as door hangers and guest directories that are frequently replaced through wear and tear. We’ll continue to roll-out the recycled plastic materials based carpet and, because every initiative counts, we’ll look at small changes like emailing guest receipts, napkin use and replacing individually wrapped food items like butter.

Community

Charity

• How we help – We encourage our colleagues at properties and head office to actively participate in fundraising for local charities, with committees in each location nominating a charity of the year. Each year we donate breaks away to seriously ill young adults through the Willow Foundation and provide access to available bedrooms for ‘Room To Reward’ to thank charity volunteers who give up their time for those who need it most. We also help our customers donate via charitable contributions on our bedroom bookings and via our loyalty schemes. And because our approach to sustainability means we look at all opportunities to make a difference, we donate all our old uniform stock to ‘The Clink Charity’. This initiative provides prisoners with an opportunity to gain new skills, qualifications and chance of employment at De Vere through their restaurant programme, changing attitudes and creating second chances.
• Stat: Each year we donate over 100 hotel breaks to members of the community that are most in need.
• What’s next? We believe education and qualifications are key to empowering change. That’s why we are committing to help fund apprenticeships for vulnerable people through ‘Only a Pavement Away’, a charity founded by representatives from the hospitality industry who believe that everyone deserves the chance to find and forge a career. We’ll also continue our commitment with The Clink and provide a pathway to employment with De Vere.

Environment

• How we help – Our local environments are as important to us as our own green spaces, so each property has a ‘heart of the community’ team to engage in local outreach projects, be they protecting the local environment or addressing social causes. We ensure each property has responsibility for their local initiatives so we can make a positive impact on our local communities and encourage colleague engagement. And when it comes to our own great outdoors, we have over 1,000 acres surrounding our country estate hotels which includes managed woodlands, lakes and wild meadow habitats. Our Estate Management team champion biodiversity and conservation, led by Justin Turner and his experience from previous roles at the RHS and Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew. We have tree and invasive species management, carbon offsetting tree planting programmes and industry awards recognising our conservation efforts. And with properties featuring kitchen and herb gardens, bug hotels, bee keeping and even an arboretum, it’s a responsibility that’s close to our hearts and an opportunity to engage local schools to
learn about biodiversity. All of our hotels are part of the Green Business Tourism Scheme.

- Stat: We have created 3,800 square meters of wildflower habitat to support biodiversity, pollinating insects and bees
- What’s next? Our heart of the community teams focus on projects that can make a real collective difference, however we also want to allow our colleagues to take personal responsibility for the causes that matter to them. So we’re looking to set-up the ‘De Vere Volunteer’ scheme where we can facilitate colleagues committing time to local causes and charitable organisations.

Wellbeing

- How we help – We know the health and wellbeing of our colleagues has a direct reflection on our customer satisfaction levels, so unsurprisingly it’s a real focus area for the business. We have certified mental health first aiders, discounted gym memberships and have even created 8 modules within our online training platform to provide guidance on everything from managing stress to the dangers of sitting. We also work with Hospitality Action to provide our colleagues with 24/7 access to counselling and support on a range of issues from parenting to financial management, health & wellbeing and legal advice. We also take our business ethics seriously, whether it’s protecting against modern day slavery, the ethical sourcing of uniforms or monitoring gender pay gaps. We encapsulate this in our code of conduct which is also part of our Inspire Online training platform.
- Stat: Over 175 colleagues have completed our health & wellbeing courses within the first 6 months of launching
- What’s next? We also want to encourage our colleagues to consider the benefits of daily exercise, where possible, such as cycle to work schemes, so we will be looking to invest in staff bike racks and cycling facilities. We’ll also be ensuring our suppliers have the same approach to modern day slavery by auditing our supply chain for compliance.

Supply chain

Partners

- How we help – We recognise that sustainability is not an internal issue; to make a difference we have to work together with our entire supply chain. We have already made procurement a priority, choosing only to work with new suppliers with strong sustainability credentials. And when it comes to long-standing partners we have completed an audit of all CSR policies and accreditations to ensure we have common ethics and sustainability goals. Furthermore we are actively consolidating our suppliers across the group in a concerted effort to reduce the amount of unnecessary light duty vehicle transportation miles from multiple deliveries.
- Stat: By halving our nominated suppliers, the resulting reduction in deliveries to our properties and associated haulage miles is estimated to save 1,923,700 miles over the course of a year, based on the UK average. That’s enough for 8 trips to the moon.
- What’s next? This is a long-term goal that will shape our procurement moving forward, whether it’s mandating seasonal produce to avoid air freight, avoidance of Palm Oil or removing wasteful newspaper stocks.
Food & beverage

- How we help – We champion health and wellbeing, providing our customers with balanced dietary options in partnership with our Group Nutritionist, Wendy Martinson OBE. We’ve adapted our core restaurant and conference menus in line with the rise of veganism, acknowledging the positive environmental impact this lifestyle affords our guests. We also provide market leading open communication on allergens and the dietary requirements of our guests. It’s the start of the journey but we’re actively reducing our food miles by stocking more British products, particularly beverages, and encourage our chefs to use locally sourced ingredients to reinvest in their local businesses and communities. We have introduced three kitchen gardens at our properties with more in development, working towards a ‘seed to plate’ ethos where we can grow core menu items within a stone’s throw of the kitchen. Where we can’t source or produce locally, we adopt a ‘just in time’ ordering process through our procurement partner to address one of the key areas of sustainability in F&B, food waste. We have further managed unnecessary wastage by optimising our operational hours to the specific demands of the day. When food wastage is unavoidable, we ensure it is collected and taken to anaerobic digesters to create biogas and compost. Our bars and restaurants play a key role in our move away from single use plastics, such as removing plastic straws, and we work with our key suppliers to reduce unnecessary packaging, such as moving our vegetable supplier on to reusable containers rather than cardboard.

- Stat: We save up to 390,000 single-use plastic straws a year which, if placed end-to-end, would be as tall as nine Mount Everest’s

- What’s next? We have big plans to make lots of small changes to provide our guests with a more sustainable experience. We’re trailing a fruit wall that provides our guests with a curated selection of heritage varieties to sample. We’re starting to measure our production and plate wastage to help quantify where we can make the biggest interventions to avoid landfill.

Food for thought

CO2 levels have risen alarmingly since the industrial revolution and, in more recent times, have continued to increase at an unprecedented rate. This goes hand-in-hand with increased life-expectancies, population growth and the increased consumerism of a more affluent population. And as we start to see the impact of resulting climate change, we find ourselves hurtling towards a tipping point where we need to act now just to stand still. This means a coordinated approach to sustainability is not just the responsible thing to do, but something we can’t afford to delay. We look forward to working together to act now.

Tony Troy
Chief Executive Officer
Further reading

- **The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report** – This UN report asks the question of whether our actions today are laying the right foundation to achieve the agreed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- **Gender pay gap report**
- **Modern day slavery**
- **Starwood Capital Group** – Our majority shareholders have a commitment to eco-conscious investment. The Firm continues to set a new standard for the private equity industry in environmentally responsible investment and development, across all real estate asset classes. Nowhere is this commitment more apparent than 1 Hotels. Operated by Starwood Capital affiliate SH Group, this luxury lifestyle brand represents hospitality with a purpose: To celebrate nature while encouraging sophisticated travellers to live well, do better and connect with the world around them.
- **Willow Foundation** – Each year we donate 100 free stays in partnership with the Willow Foundation, providing seriously ill young adults aged 16 to 40 with uplifting and unforgettable special days.
- **Room To Reward** – Room To Reward is a volunteer-recognition charity created to thank volunteers who give up their time to make a difference to those who need it most. We donate under-utilised bedroom stock to provide them with a well-earned break away.
- **The Clink Charity** – The Clink helps reduce reoffending through the training and rehabilitation of prisoners, helping them to make a fresh start by gaining qualifications in catering or horticulture within the hospitality sector.
- **Only a Pavement Away** - Creates an effective conduit between employers in the hospitality industry and those charities/associations whose main aim is to support the homeless, ex-offenders and veterans to reintegrate back into society.