



Press Release

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Island park's green team scoops top eco award

David Bellamy declared a Cowes holiday and conference resort to be "a green flag waver" for businesses on the Isle of Wight - and presented it with a prestigious environmental accolade.

The world-famous botanist said that Gurnard Pines Resort, Conference and Leisure Club had made "amazing achievements" to help protect the natural world.

It was, he said, a thoroughly deserving winner of the David Bellamy Conservation Award at its top gold level when he made his announcement this week.

Set in 55 acres of wooded countryside, Gurnard Pines has 60-plus luxury holiday lodges and bungalows for hire, and an additional 40 dormitory-style lodges used by school and youth groups as well as businesses for team-building events.

According to David Bellamy, Gurnard Pines' commitment to environmental care is evident across a wide range of initiatives taken by the park over the past two years.

He praised the steps taken to help protect the rich diversity of wildlife in the grounds which includes red squirrels, owls and badgers - plus many species of indigenous trees and shrubs which provide valuable food and breeding resources for birds and animals.

The park has taken its own steps to increase the number of wildlife habitats, and to protect the wide range of wild flowers which attract many common and less familiar butterfly species.

Professor Bellamy said he was also delighted at the steps taken to encourage visitors to make their own natural discoveries through wildlife trails, interpretation boards and children's activities.

Park visitors are also actively made aware of public transport options on the island, and many park staff - most of who live locally - participate in car-sharing schemes.

more...

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The park has a "buy local" policy which extends from employing nearby contractors and service suppliers to stocking the park shop with locally produced foods and other products.

Gurnard Pines has also achieved a substantial reduction in its own carbon footprint through increased recycling and energy savings, plus the use of environmentally-friendly cleaning and other materials.

David Bellamy commended too the park's close links with the local community and the support and sponsorship it provides for a variety of charities based on the Isle of Wight

In addition, Gurnard Pines has a fully-equipped leisure club of which many local people are members, and provides high quality surroundings for functions such as weddings, conferences and parties.

Gurnard Pines' award was made following an independent audit of the park's environmental policies, and has prompted a big celebration at the park, says sales and marketing manager Kevin Darvill:

"Everyone on the team plays a part in putting our various green initiatives into action - and it's fantastic to know that we are receiving the support of Britain's best known conservationist," he said.

"But we've still plenty of other plans to implement, and we hope before long to become much more reliant on solar energy and to introduce new methods of recycling water," added Kevin.

David Bellamy said that the park was making a major contribution to the Isle of Wight's ambition to become recognised having the lowest carbon footprint in England by 2020.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

More than 550 holiday parks have earned gold, silver or bronze accolades in this year's David Bellamy Conservation Awards.

"Britain's parks are bursting with bio-diversity!" says Professor Bellamy. "They are the nation's favourite get-away-from-it-all locations, and also a major point of contact between people and the countryside. They are therefore very important centres of education, and a wonderful place to go and experience wrap-around nature. That's why these awards play an important role in helping parks to keep the green flag flying!" he added.

Parks wishing to enter for a Bellamy award must first complete a detailed questionnaire covering different aspects of their environmental policies, and describing what positive conservation steps they have taken. Next, the park must receive an independent endorsement from a local wildlife or conservation body which is familiar with the area.

The conservation audit of parks covers many environmental issues – range from aspects such as the care of hedgerows and wild flowers, to the siting of bird-boxes and the development and protection of reed beds and wildlife ponds. Professor Bellamy has also looked at the aspects of park management which do not directly effect the immediate environment, but which are important in overall conservation terms – such as the use of unbleached paper for holiday brochures, installing long-life bulbs and recycling waste.

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