Sustainability Action Plan

Net Zero | Biodiversity | Circular Economy | Climate Resilience

Dod Mill

Lauder, Scottish Borders

Version 1.0 | March 2026

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1. Introduction

About Dod Mill

Dod Mill is a small, independent rural tourism business located near Lauder in the Scottish Borders, approximately 40 minutes from Edinburgh. We offer four self-catering holiday accommodations: the Old Mill, The Bothy, the Stilt House and the Fishing Hut, set within five acres of private grounds on the banks of the Boondreigh Water. The site is home to a historic watermill, a mill pond and lade, ancient grassland meadow, orchard, woodland and a small flock of rare breed sheep. We also host group retreats, workshops and events through the Kiln House.

Dod Mill is owner-managed by Ruth and Jamie Knibbs, who live on site with their family. This is a home as well as a business, and that shapes everything about how we operate, from the way we source supplies to the way we care for the land.

Why We Are Taking Action

Our motivation for developing this Net Zero Action Plan is straightforward: we care about the environment, and we believe that responsible stewardship of the land and natural resources at Dod Mill is central to who we are as a business.

Dod Mill sits within a living landscape: a river system supporting otters, salmon and heron; ancient meadow grassland; mature woodland; and habitats for a wide range of wildlife. Protecting and enhancing this biodiversity is not a secondary ambition for us: it is at the heart of our net zero commitment. We recognise that carbon reduction and nature recovery are complementary goals, and this plan reflects both.

We are also motivated by the longer-term opportunity to make Dod Mill more energy-resilient and self-sufficient. The site has genuine potential for renewable energy generation, including solar, micro-hydro (using the existing weir, mill pond, lade and watermill infrastructure on the Brunta Burn), and possibly small-scale wind. We are passionate about the role that technology can play in accelerating the transition to net zero, and we intend this plan to provide the foundation for securing funding to invest in these improvements over time.

Being a good citizen to our guests, our community and the natural world around us is the simplest way we can describe why this matters to us.

About This Plan

This is Dod Mill's first written Net Zero Action Plan and is based on our first carbon footprint assessment. It has been developed in line with the principles of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol and covers Scope 1, Scope 2 and selected Scope 3 emissions considered reasonable and relevant to our operations.

Scotland has set a legislative target of net zero by 2045. Our plan aligns with this national ambition and sets out the practical steps we will take to reduce our emissions across our operations, working within the realistic constraints of a small, rural, owner-managed hospitality business.

This document will be reviewed and updated annually to reflect progress made and to incorporate new data as our carbon measurement matures.

Our Values

Everything at Dod Mill flows from a small number of deeply held values that shape how we run the business, how we spend money, and how we think about the future.

Supporting our local economy. We believe that a sustainable business is one that is rooted in its community. We source supplies locally wherever possible, favouring the independent shops and producers of Lauder and the wider Scottish Borders, and we work with local tradespeople for all maintenance and building work. Our cleaning team are local, our firewood comes from our own land and a neighbouring farm, and our guest welcome supplies are chosen to introduce guests to the best of what this area produces. This is not just a sustainability principle; it is a reflection of how much we value the place we live in and the people around us.

Protecting and enhancing biodiversity. Dod Mill's five acres are home to a remarkable range of habitats and wildlife: the Boondreigh Water and Brunta Burn, the mill pond, ancient grassland meadow, orchard, woodland and hedgerow. We are privileged to share this land with otters, salmon, heron, deer, owls, hedgehogs and many other species. Protecting and actively improving this biodiversity is one of our most important responsibilities as custodians of this land, and a core objective of this plan.

Connecting guests with nature. We believe that time spent in nature is genuinely restorative, and that giving guests the space and opportunity to experience the natural world around them is at the heart of what Dod Mill offers. From watching ducks on the mill pond to walking up into the Lammermuir Hills, from feeding the sheep to spotting an otter at dusk, we want every guest to leave with a deeper appreciation of the natural environment. This shapes how we manage the land, how we communicate with guests, and how we think about the long-term future of the site.

These three values run through everything in this plan and explain why net zero, biodiversity and circular economy sit together in a single document.

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2. Vision

Foreword

Dod Mill is our home. It is where we are raising our family, where we have invested years of work and care, and where we feel most connected to the natural world. Running a tourism business here has always felt like a privilege, sharing something we love with people who need a little more nature, quiet and space in their lives.

That sense of responsibility to this place is what drives this plan. We are not pursuing net zero because we have to. We are doing it because we believe it is the right thing to do, and because Dod Mill, with its river, its meadow, its woodland, its mill pond and its history, deserves to be protected. We want to hand this land on in better condition than we found it.

We also believe that sustainability and good business are not in tension. Investing in renewable energy will make us more resilient and less dependent on energy prices we cannot control. Improving the land will make the experience we offer more remarkable. Acting now, while the tools and funding to do so are available, is simply good sense.

This is our first written plan. It will not be our last.

Ruth and Jamie Knibbs, Dod Mill

Our Vision for 2040 and Beyond

By 2040, we want Dod Mill to be a genuinely sustainable eco-tourism destination, one where the land, the buildings and the business work together rather than against each other.

On energy, our ambition is for the majority of the site's needs to be met from resources available on the land itself. The mill lade, which draws water from the Brunta Burn via the existing weir and mill pond infrastructure, the south-facing roofs, the wind, the ground beneath us and the trees we manage, all represent energy potential that is currently untapped. We would like to see a micro-hydro scheme using the mill lade, designed to run reliably with minimal day-to-day input, including automated rather than manual sluice gate operation. We envisage solar across the site, possibly small-scale wind, and heat pump technology replacing fossil fuel heating (in our own house) where practical. Wood from our own land and neighbouring farms will continue to play a role, managed sustainably and treated as the biogenic resource it is.

On biodiversity, we want guests arriving in 2040 to find a site that is measurably richer in wildlife and habitat than it is today, a thriving ecosystem where the meadow, the orchard, the riverbanks and the woodland are actively managed for nature as well as for people. We want Dod Mill to be a genuine haven: somewhere that demonstrates that small landowners can make a real difference to the natural world around them.

On transport, we expect that guests and our own team will be travelling in electric vehicles, and we want Dod Mill to be ready for them, with charging infrastructure that makes arriving by EV straightforward and attractive.

Our carbon target is a 90% reduction in emissions from our baseline by 2040, with any remaining emissions offset through surplus renewable energy exported to the grid, power generated on the Dod Mill site from water, sun or wind that exceeds our own needs, and which displaces fossil fuel generation elsewhere. This is our preferred approach to offsetting: something we create ourselves, from this land, rather than purchasing credits elsewhere. This target is five years ahead of Scotland's national 2045 goal, and we believe it is achievable with the right investments made at the right time. This plan sets out the first steps on that journey.

3. Emissions Boundary

Approach

Our emissions boundary has been developed in line with the principles of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, using an operational control approach. We have included all emission sources over which we have direct operational control or which are directly relevant to the running of Dod Mill as a business.

This is our first carbon footprint, with a baseline year of 2024/25. The boundary will be reviewed annually and extended over time as our data collection matures.

Scope 1: Direct Emissions

Scope 1 covers emissions from sources that are owned or directly controlled by Dod Mill. We have three Scope 1 sources.

Petrol for garden machinery. Lawnmowers, strimmers and other petrol-powered garden equipment used in maintaining the five-acre site.

Propane (LPG) at the Fishing Hut. A single gas hob at the Fishing Hut is powered by propane canisters. This is a small but direct fossil fuel combustion source. Longer term, replacing it with an induction hob powered by the Fishing Hut's existing solar installation would eliminate this Scope 1 source entirely.

Dod Mill House is excluded from this footprint as a private residence. However, any future investment in a site-wide low-carbon heating system, such as a ground-source or water-source heat pump, would be designed to serve the house as well as the business premises. This joined-up opportunity will be considered as part of our longer-term energy planning.

Biogenic carbon from wood combustion. All four holiday properties have woodburning stoves. The wood used is sourced from trees on the Dod Mill site and from the nearby Hillhouse Farm. Under the GHG Protocol, CO_2 from the combustion of sustainably sourced biomass is classified as biogenic carbon and reported separately from Scope 1, rather than being included in the headline emissions total. The rationale is that the carbon released was absorbed from the atmosphere during the trees' growth and, provided the source is sustainably managed, there is no net addition to atmospheric carbon over time. We have included an indicative biogenic emissions figure for transparency, but it does not form part of our Scope 1 total.

Scope 2: Indirect Emissions from Purchased Energy

Scope 2 covers emissions associated with the electricity we purchase from the grid across our business premises.

- **Old Mill** is heated by an electric combi boiler system with central heating and hot water. Grid electricity also powers lighting and appliances.
- **The Bothy** uses a hot water tank and individual electric UltraRad heaters, remotely controllable via wifi. Grid electricity also powers lighting and appliances.
- **The Stilt House** uses grid electricity for lighting and appliances. It has no conventional heating system and relies solely on a woodburning stove.

- **The Kiln House** is a multi-use space rented by the hour or day. The heated room uses electric underfloor heating and electric heaters. At current usage levels this is a minor Scope 2 source, though it may grow as occupancy increases.
- **The Fishing Hut** operates entirely off-grid, powered by its own solar installation. It has no grid electricity connection and generates no Scope 2 emissions, making it our most energy-independent property and a practical demonstration of the renewable energy ambitions described in this plan.

We also note that Dod Mill House, whilst excluded from the formal emissions boundary as a private residence, has 12 solar panels and a battery installed on its roof. Towels for the holiday properties are washed and dried at the house, meaning this business activity is largely powered by renewable energy. This is acknowledged here for transparency and as further evidence that renewable generation on this site is already practical and productive.

Scope 3 covers indirect emissions that occur in our value chain. We have included the categories that are reasonable and relevant to our operations at this stage.

Category 1: Purchased goods and services. Cleaning products, toiletries, guest welcome supplies, bedding and linen, kitchenware and maintenance materials. We have used a spend-based methodology, applying government emission factors per pound of spend by category.

Category 5: Waste generated in operations. General waste, recycling and food waste generated across the four properties and the Kiln House. Emission factors vary by disposal route: landfill, recycling and, once established, on-site composting.

Category 6: Business travel and employee commuting. Ruth's personal diesel vehicle when used for business purposes; Jamie's EV when used for business purposes; the commute of our self-employed cleaning team from Lauder to Dod Mill by car; and estimated travel by our local trades. Jamie's EV commute to his separate full-time employment is explicitly excluded as it falls outside the boundary of this business.

Category 13: Visitor travel. Guest journeys to and from Dod Mill are reported separately within Category 13 and clearly distinguished from business travel. This is likely the largest single emissions source in our Scope 3 footprint. We have limited direct control over it; our primary lever is EV charging infrastructure to support guests who travel by electric vehicle.

Emissions Boundary Summary

Source	Included	Excluded	Not Relevant
Scope 1: Petrol and LPG	Petrol (garden machinery); propane/LPG (Fishing Hut hob)	Dod Mill House (private residence — district heating opportunity noted)	Mains gas (not connected); company-owned fleet (none)
Scope 1: Biogenic wood	All four properties — reported separately for transparency		
Scope 2: Electricity	Old Mill, The Bothy, Stilt House, Kiln House	Fishing Hut (off-grid solar)	Company-owned fleet (no company vehicles)

Source	Included	Excluded	Not Relevant
Scope 3 Cat. 1: Purchased goods and services	Included		
Scope 3 Cat. 5: Waste	Included		
Scope 3 Cat. 6: Business travel and commuting	Cleaning team commute; Ruth's vehicle (business use); Jamie's EV (business use); local trades	Jamie's EV commute to separate employment	
Scope 3 Cat. 13: Visitor travel	Included — reported separately		
Scope 3 other categories		Categories 2, 3, 4, 7–12, 14, 15	Not material at current scale

Boundary Review

We intend to review and extend our emissions boundary annually. As our data collection improves, we will incorporate additional Scope 3 categories where they prove material. Category 3 (fuel and energy-related activities, covering upstream emissions associated with the electricity and oil we purchase) is the most likely next addition. We will also reset our baseline in line with any significant change to the business.

4. Carbon Footprint

Approach and Methodology

This is Dod Mill's first carbon footprint. It covers the financial year 2024/25 (1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025), which serves as our baseline year. All figures are expressed in kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent ($kgCO_2e$), using global warming potentials over a 100-year timeframe (GWP100).

The footprint has been calculated using the SME Climate Hub Advanced Business Carbon Calculator, applying UK BEIS emission factors where available, and EXIOBASE spend-based factors for purchased goods and services. All calculations follow the principles of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

The emissions boundary and scope classifications are set out in full in Section 3. Briefly: Scope 1 covers direct emissions from fuel combustion; Scope 2 covers purchased electricity; and Scope 3 covers value chain emissions including purchased goods and services, waste, business travel, employee commuting and visitor travel.

Scope 2: A Note on Market-Based Accounting

Both ScottishPower electricity accounts at Dod Mill are **on 100% renewable green tariffs, backed by electricity generated by ScottishPower's own UK windfarms**. Under market-based accounting, which the GHG Protocol permits and which reflects the actual source of the electricity purchased, **this brings our Scope 2 market-based emissions to zero.**

We report both the location-based figure (which applies the UK grid average emission factor of 0.177 $kgCO_2e$ per kWh) and the market-based figure (zero, reflecting our renewable tariff) in order to be fully transparent. The location-based figure is included for comparability; the market-based figure reflects our verified purchasing decision. This is a significant and genuine sustainability credential, not an accounting convenience.

Biogenic Carbon from Wood Combustion

All four holiday properties have woodburning stoves. The wood used is windfallen hardwood sourced from the Dod Mill site and from Hillhouse Farm, a family farm approximately seven miles away. We estimate consumption at approximately 15 cubic metres per year, equivalent to around 9,000 kg of air-dried hardwood.

Under the GHG Protocol, CO_2 from sustainably sourced biomass is classified as biogenic carbon and reported separately outside the main scope totals. The rationale is that the carbon released was absorbed from the atmosphere during the trees' growth; provided the source is sustainably managed, there is no net addition to atmospheric carbon over time. Windfallen timber from managed land is among the most genuinely sustainable fuel sources available.

Using UK BEIS emission factors for wood combustion (approximately 1.8 $kgCO_2e$ per kg), the indicative biogenic figure is approximately 16,200 $kgCO_2e$ per year. This is disclosed here for transparency and to give a complete picture of the site's carbon flows, but it does not form part of our Scope 1 total.

Carbon Footprint Results

The table below sets out Dod Mill's full carbon footprint for 2024/25.

Scope / Category	Source	$kgCO_2e$
Scope 1 — Petrol (garden machinery)	80 litres petrol	166
Scope 1 — Propane (Fishing Hut hob)	10 kg propane	30
Scope 1 Total		196
Scope 2 — Electricity (location-based)	29,697 kWh × 0.177 $kgCO_2e$/kWh	5,256
Scope 2 — Electricity (market-based)	100% renewable green tariff — ScottishPower UK windfarms	0
Scope 3.1 — Purchased goods and services	Spend-based (EXIOBASE UK factors): food & hampers £4,003; toiletries	2,758

Scope / Category	Source	$kgCO_2e$
	£590; cleaning £448; textiles £134; other £176	
Scope 3.3 — Upstream fuel and energy	Well-to-tank emissions on Scope 1 fuel and Scope 2 electricity	1,413
Scope 3.5 — Waste to landfill	General waste: 2,600 kg × 0.656 $kgCO_2e/kg$	1,706
Scope 3.5 — Recycling	Recycling: 2,600 kg × 0.005 $kgCO_2e/kg$	12
Scope 3.6 — Business travel	Ruth's diesel car: 697 miles (1,122 km) × 0.213 $kgCO_2e/km$	239
Scope 3.7 — Employee commuting	Cleaning team: 123 visits × 7.8 miles (1,542 km) × 0.213 $kgCO_2e/km$	328
Scope 3.13 — Visitor travel	156 bookings × 578 km mean round trip × 0.213 $kgCO_2e/km$. See methodology note below.	19,185
Scope 3 Total		25,641
TOTAL (location-based)		31,093
TOTAL (market-based)		25,837
Biogenic — wood combustion (outside scopes)	~9,000 kg hardwood × 1.8 $kgCO_2e/kg$. Disclosed for transparency; not included in scope totals.	~16,200

Methodology Notes and Assumptions

- **Electricity consumption:** Derived from actual meter reads on both accounts covering 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025. Old Mill account: 15,623 kWh (Economy 2000 meter). Bothy, Stilt House and Kiln House account: 14,074 kWh (White Meter day and night rates). Total: 29,697 kWh.
- **Visitor travel:** Based on 54 of 156 bookings (35%) for which home location data was available. Straight-line distances were calculated from each guest's home postcode or town to Dod Mill and doubled for a round trip. The mean round trip across the sample was 578 km. This figure was applied to all 156 bookings. Guests were assumed to travel by medium-sized diesel car. Northern European international guests (Netherlands, Germany, France — six bookings) may have travelled by ferry rather than by air; ferry travel is lower carbon than flying for these routes, so the diesel car assumption may slightly overstate emissions for these guests. The visitor travel figure is the largest single source of uncertainty in this footprint and will be refined in future years as data collection improves.

- **Waste:** Estimated from bin collection data: two 240-litre general waste bins and two 240-litre recycling bins, each collected fortnightly throughout the year, assumed full at each collection. This gives an estimated 2,600 kg per stream. Additional tip runs are acknowledged but not separately quantified; the full-bin assumption is considered a reasonable approximation.
- **Purchased goods and services:** Based on actual purchases recorded in Dod Mill's 2024/25 accounts, categorised and assessed using EXIOBASE spend-based emission factors for the United Kingdom. Currency conversion from GBP to EUR applied at the prevailing rate used in the SME Climate Hub calculator (1 GBP = 1.144 EUR). Food, drink and welcome hamper supplies represent 83% of this category by spend.
- **Petrol and propane:** Petrol: estimated at 80 litres per year for lawnmowers and garden machinery. Propane: estimated at 10 kg per year for the Fishing Hut single hob. Both are estimates.

What the Footprint Tells Us

Visitor travel dominates the footprint at 62% of the location-based total and 74% of the market-based total. This is a Scope 3 Category 13 emission over which we have limited direct control, but the primary lever, EV charging infrastructure, is already being developed. As the proportion of guests arriving by electric vehicle increases, this figure will fall significantly.

Electricity is the second largest source at 17% on the location-based method, but zero on the market-based method. Our renewable tariff already eliminates this entire category in verified accounting terms. This is the most significant existing sustainability credential in the footprint.

Purchased goods and services (9%) is largely driven by food and hamper supplies, which are a structural part of the guest experience. Cleaning products, toiletries and maintenance materials account for the remainder.

Waste to landfill (5.5%) is the most immediately actionable category. Establishing the on-site composting system, diverting food and organic waste from landfill, will directly reduce this figure as soon as this is established.

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5. Net Zero Targets

Our Commitment

Dod Mill is committed to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2040, five years ahead of Scotland's national target of 2045. Our target is a 90% reduction in emissions from the 2024/25 baseline by 2040, with any remaining emissions addressed through surplus renewable electricity exported to the national grid. This is our preferred approach to offsetting: power generated from water, wind or sun on the Dod Mill site that exceeds our own needs, displacing fossil fuel generation elsewhere.

Baseline and Targets

Our 2024/25 baseline footprint is set out in Section 4. The targets below are expressed on a market-based basis, which we consider the more accurate reflection of our actual emissions given our 100% renewable electricity tariff.

Milestone	Year	Target (market-based)	Notes
Baseline year	2024/25	25,837 $kgCO_2e$ (25.8 tCO_2e)	First measured footprint
Near-term reduction	2027	Reduce by ≥20%	Composting, EV charging, efficiency measures
Mid-term reduction	2030	Reduce by ≥50%	Renewable energy investments, continued action
90% reduction target	2040	≤2,584 $kgCO_2e$ (2.6 tCO_2e)	Net zero threshold with grid export offset
Net zero	2040	≤0 net	Remaining emissions offset by grid export

The Path to 90% Reduction

The single largest lever available to us is visitor travel, which accounts for 74% of our market-based footprint. Reducing this category requires a combination of EV charging infrastructure (enabling guests who already own EVs to travel low-carbon) and, over time, the gradual shift in the wider UK population's vehicle fleet away from fossil fuels. We cannot control what vehicles our guests drive, but we can make the low-carbon option straightforward and attractive.

Our renewable electricity tariff has already brought Scope 2 market-based emissions to zero. Further renewable energy investment, e.g. solar PV expansion, a potential micro-hydro scheme on the mill lade, and the transition from fossil fuels for any remaining heating, will reduce our remaining scope emissions and generate the surplus that enables grid-export offsetting.

The composting system will be the most immediately impactful near-term action on the Scope 3 footprint, diverting organic waste from landfill and reducing our Category 3.5 emissions. Beyond that, gradual improvements to purchasing practices, waste management and the shift to electric vehicles for business use will compound over time.

We acknowledge that visitor travel makes a 90% reduction ambitious. However, the direction of travel on the UK vehicle fleet gives us real confidence that this is achievable, and it is worth setting out why.

UK legislation now requires that no new petrol or diesel cars may be sold after 2030, and that all new cars sold must be zero emission by 2035. Scotland also has an ambition to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars by 2030. This means that from 2030 onwards, every new car entering the UK fleet will be electric or zero

emission. By 2040, our target year, any car bought new after 2030 will be up to ten years old and by definition electric. Cars bought before 2030 will be at least eleven years old, approaching or beyond the average UK car lifespan of around fourteen years.

This means that by 2040, the great majority of domestic UK visitors to Dod Mill should reasonably be expected to be travelling in electric vehicles. It is unlikely to be 100%. Some older ICE vehicles will still be in use, particularly second-hand cars purchased after the ban, but 80% or more is a realistic and conservative assumption. Given that Dod Mill's guest profile skews towards Edinburgh, central Scotland and northern England, areas with strong EV infrastructure and demographics that tend towards early adoption, the actual proportion may be higher still.

The carbon arithmetic of this is significant. Electric vehicles charged from the UK grid emit roughly 75% less CO_2e per kilometre than a medium diesel car. If 80% of domestic visitor journeys are made by EV by 2040, the visitor travel category falls from its current 19.2 tCO_2e to approximately 5.5 tCO_2e. That's a reduction of 13.7 tCO_2e from this category alone, and by far the largest single lever available to us. On the market-based method, this would bring Dod Mill's total footprint to around 12 tCO_2e. That is real and meaningful progress, but it is not net zero on its own.

For international visitors, the picture is different. Guests travelling from mainland Europe may come by ferry (a lower-carbon option for northern European visitors) or by air. Their journeys will not be zero-carbon by 2040 in the way that domestic EV travel will be. These are the journeys most likely to require offsetting through surplus grid export. However, international guests represent a small proportion of bookings (six out of 156 in 2024/25) so their contribution to the residual footprint is manageable.

Reaching the 2.6 tCO_2e target by 2040 requires the full package of actions in this plan working together: renewable energy investment reducing and eventually eliminating our remaining fossil fuel use; composting diverting organic waste from landfill; the transition to electric vehicles for business use and the cleaning team; and the grid-export offsetting mechanism absorbing what cannot be eliminated. No single action closes the gap, but the combination of a predominantly electric visitor fleet, a decarbonising grid, on-site renewable generation and genuine waste reduction makes the 90% target achievable. We will review our trajectory annually to ensure we remain on course.

Annual Review

We will repeat the carbon footprint calculation each year, using the same methodology and boundary to allow meaningful comparison with the 2024/25 baseline. The footprint will be updated in this plan at each annual review. Any significant changes to the business (e.g. major capital investment, changes to the supply chain) will be noted and, if material, will prompt a restatement of the baseline.

6. Carbon Reduction Action Plans

This section sets out the specific actions we will take to reduce our emissions across each scope and category. Actions are organised by scope and prioritised by their likely impact on the overall footprint.

Scope 2: Electricity

Our electricity is already sourced from a 100% renewable tariff, bringing our market-based Scope 2 emissions to zero. The remaining opportunity is to reduce consumption and increase on-site generation to create a surplus for grid export.

Action	Priority	Timescale
Investigate solar PV expansion across holiday property roofs	High	2026–2027
Commission feasibility study for micro-hydro on the mill lade	High	2026–2027
Investigate air source or ground source heat pump for replacing oil heating	High	2027–2029
Switch Fishing Hut propane hob to induction powered by existing solar	Medium	2027–2029
Review and optimise remote heating controls across properties	Medium	2026
Investigate smart energy monitoring across properties	Low	2027

Scope 3: Visitor Travel

Visitor travel is by far the largest emission source in the footprint. Our primary lever is making EV charging easy and accessible at Dod Mill.

Action	Priority	Timescale
Install additional EV charging points for guest use	High	Investigate 2026, install by 2028
Promote EV charging availability on booking platforms and website	High	2026 – standard domestic cable, 2028 full EV charging available
Begin tracking guest transport mode to improve footprint accuracy	Medium	2026
Explore partnerships with low-carbon transport providers (rail + local transfer)	Low	2027–2028

Scope 3: Purchased Goods and Services

Food and hamper supplies dominate this category. The most impactful actions involve sourcing locally to reduce embedded transport emissions, and continuing to choose suppliers with strong sustainability credentials.

Action	Priority	Timescale
Maintain and extend local sourcing: Spotty Dog, Firebrick Bakery, Tempest Brewing, Lauderdale Firewood	Ongoing	Ongoing
Investigate coffee pod recycling or switch to ground coffee (Fine Coffee Club)	Medium	2026
Continue bulk purchasing of cleaning products and toiletries to reduce packaging	Ongoing	Ongoing
Review cleaning product suppliers for lower-carbon alternatives	Low	2027

Scope 3: Waste

General waste to landfill is the most carbon-intensive waste stream due to the methane generated during decomposition. Diverting organic material to composting is the priority action.

Action	Priority	Timescale
Establish on-site composting system for food waste, garden waste and pony manure	High	2026–2027
Reduce general waste to landfill by improving recycling communication to guests	Medium	2026
Review soft plastic recycling route (currently blue bins, confirm local authority accepts)	Medium	2026
Investigate glass collection scheme to reduce owner transport to glass bank	Low	2027

Scope 3: Business Travel and Commuting

Both categories are relatively small in the context of the overall footprint, but there are straightforward improvements available.

Action	Priority	Timescale
Owner EV transition: replace Ruth's diesel car with an electric vehicle	High	2026–2028
Install additional EV charging point for owner and cleaning team use	High	2026
Consolidate supply runs to Lauder to reduce trip frequency	Medium	Ongoing

Action	Priority	Timescale
Encourage cleaning team car-sharing (already standard practice, maintain)	Ongoing	Ongoing

Scope 1: Direct Fuel Emissions

Scope 1 is a small part of the overall footprint but there are practical reductions available, particularly at the Fishing Hut.

Action	Priority	Timescale
Replace Fishing Hut propane hob with induction powered by existing off-grid solar	Medium	2027–2029
Investigate electric alternatives for garden machinery (battery-powered lawnmower etc.)	Medium	2027–2028
Record petrol and propane consumption annually for accurate Scope 1 reporting	High	2026

7. Adaptation and Climate Resilience

Our Approach

Climate change presents real and growing risks to Dod Mill as a rural hospitality business. More frequent extreme weather events, including heavier rainfall, more intense storms and warmer summers, are already affecting the Scottish Borders, and we expect these trends to continue. In this section we set out our specific climate risks and the steps we are taking, and planning to take, to protect our guests, our staff, our properties and the land.

Our greatest natural advantage in climate resilience is that Ruth and Jamie live on site. This means the site is monitored continuously, the river is observed every day, and the response time in any emergency is measured in minutes rather than hours. This is something no off-site managed property can replicate, and it underpins everything in this section.

We have used the Adaptation Scotland SME Resilience Checklist as a framework for this section, and we are connected to Climate Ready South East Scotland, the regional climate adaptation partnership led by Verture in collaboration with Scottish Borders Council and five other local authorities, to stay informed of regional risks and opportunities.

Our Climate Risks

Flooding is our most significant and site-specific risk. Dod Mill sits on the banks of the Boondreigh Water, with the Fishing Hut positioned directly adjacent to the river. The Brunta Burn runs to the north of our land; we have the right to draw water from a

weir there, and a mill lade carries water from the weir to our boundary and on to the mill pond. A sluice gate at the weir gives us a degree of control over the flow from the Brunta Burn, which is a meaningful mitigation. Nevertheless, heavy or prolonged rainfall can cause both watercourses to rise rapidly. The Boondreigh Water in particular becomes extremely fast and powerful when in flood, presenting not just a property damage risk but a genuine risk to life. This risk is expected to increase as Scottish rainfall patterns intensify.

Storms present risk to a wooded, rural site with several lightweight structures, multiple bridges, and access via the A697. Falling trees or branches, structural stress on the Stilt House and Fishing Hut, and disruption to road access are our primary storm vulnerabilities. The Stilt House is a particular consideration in high winds given its elevated, open position.

Power cuts are already a regular occurrence at Dod Mill. A particular feature of this site is that when the local electricity supply fails, the nearby phone mast also loses power, taking mobile phone signal with it. This creates a significant communications challenge, particularly if guests are in their properties and outdoor movement is inadvisable. The woodburning stoves in all four properties provide an independent heat source entirely unaffected by grid outages, which is a significant resilience feature.

Heatwaves while currently a lower-order risk in the Scottish Borders than in southern parts of the UK, are a growing consideration. Lighter-weight structures such as the Stilt House and Fishing Hut may be more vulnerable to overheating, and rising summer temperatures could affect guest comfort if not proactively managed.

Flooding: What We Do and What We Will Do

Current practice

We are subscribed to SEPA's Floodline alert service, which provides both a phone call and a text message when there is a flood risk in our area. Ruth and Jamie also observe the river every day as part of living on site, which gives us an up-to-date and well-practised understanding of how it behaves across all seasons and weather conditions. The sluice gate on the Brunta Burn weir provides an additional practical tool to help manage water flow onto the site.

Gap identified

At present our response to a flood risk when guests are on site relies on instinctive knowledge built up over years of living here. Writing this down as a simple protocol will make our response faster, more consistent and easier to pass on.

Flood guest protocol: to be developed and implemented

Level 1 – Monitoring (Floodline alert received or river visibly elevated): Ruth or Jamie assesses river and burn conditions in person and checks the sluice gate. No immediate guest action required, but properties adjacent to the water, particularly the Fishing Hut, are checked. Observation frequency increases and we remain on standby. Note: all guests park in the main car parking area at the main building group, so no vehicle movement is required.

Level 2 – Elevated risk (river rising significantly or amber Floodline warning): Guests in at-risk properties are contacted directly by phone. We explain the situation

clearly and calmly, discuss the conditions with them, and agree next steps together. Guests are reassured that Ruth and Jamie are on site and monitoring continuously.

Level 3 – Evacuation (river at critical level or any risk to guest safety): Given the speed and power the Boondreigh Water reaches in serious flood conditions, guest safety is the absolute priority. Guests are asked to leave the affected property immediately. Safe refuge is available in either Dod Mill House or the Kiln House, both of which are on higher ground and can comfortably accommodate evacuated guests. Emergency services are called if required.

Pre-arrival checks

During autumn and winter, and following any period of heavy rainfall, we will check the forecast and river levels before guests arrive, so we can brief them if conditions are likely to be difficult during their stay.

Longer-term actions

- Review ground-floor electrical installations and heating equipment across all properties to ensure they are positioned as high as practical, reducing flood damage risk.
- Look at natural flood management opportunities on the Dod Mill land, including maintaining and extending the riverside vegetation, meadow and tree cover that slow water flow. This also supports our biodiversity objectives.
- Continue engagement with Climate Ready South East Scotland and Scottish Borders Climate Action Network for regional flood resilience intelligence and any associated funding opportunities.

Storms: What We Do and What We Will Do

Current practice

Ruth and Jamie regularly assess trees that may present a risk, supported by Ray Hay, a tree services specialist who lives approximately one mile from Dod Mill. Guest safety information in the welcome pack addresses key outdoor hazards. The Stilt House is open to guests from spring through to autumn only, which naturally limits storm exposure; however, spring, summer and autumn storms do occur, and their frequency and severity may increase.

Storm guest protocol for Stilt House: to be developed

Level 1 – Monitoring (strong winds forecast or beginning): Ruth or Jamie checks the Stilt House and surroundings. Guests are informed of the forecast and advised to stay indoors and away from exposed areas. No evacuation required.

Level 2 – Elevated risk (sustained strong winds or gusts reaching a concerning level): Guests are contacted and the situation is discussed with them. They are advised to remain indoors and away from windows. Ruth or Jamie is available and monitoring.

Level 3 – Evacuation (structural concern or unsafe conditions): Guests are asked to move to Dod Mill House or the Kiln House until conditions improve and the property has been checked.

Actions to implement

- Formalise and document the storm guest protocol for the Stilt House.

- Establish a pre-storm seasonal checklist covering: inspection of trees with potentially unstable or dead branches near the properties and access paths; securing outdoor furniture and loose equipment ahead of named storms; checking gutters, drainage and roof fixings across all properties.
- Review the bridge maintenance schedule. The site's several small bridges are already identified as a slip risk in our guest safety information, and storm conditions make this worse.

Power Cuts: What We Do and What We Will Do

Current practice

Three of our four properties contain a power cut pack including a torch, candles and a wind-up radio. The welcome pack advises guests that power cuts are a common occurrence in this rural area and directs guests to the torch locations. The woodburning stove in each property provides warmth and a means of cooking that is entirely independent of the electricity supply, which is a real practical advantage during any outage. The Fishing Hut is a notable exception: it runs entirely off-grid on solar power and is therefore unaffected by grid outages. This makes it our most resilient property in terms of energy security, and a proof of concept for the renewable energy ambitions set out elsewhere in this plan.

Key vulnerability

When the electricity supply fails, the local phone mast also loses power, meaning that mobile signal is lost simultaneously. In the worst weather events, when a power cut is most likely and going outside least advisable, getting in touch with guests becomes very difficult. This is the power cut risk we most need to address.

Actions to implement

- Add a power cut guidance note to the power cut pack in each of the three grid-connected properties, covering: key steps on discovering a cut (light the wood burner for warmth; don't open the fridge unnecessarily; switch off appliances that could be hazardous when power returns; use the wind-up radio for updates); Ruth and Jamie's contact numbers; and clear advice that if mobile signal is also lost, Ruth or Jamie will come to the property in person to check on guests as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Look into options for keeping in touch with guests when both power and mobile signal are lost, such as a satellite messaging device, a fixed-line telephone or a battery-backed communication system. This is a modest outlay that could make a real difference to guest safety.
- Investigate solar PV with battery storage as a medium-term capital investment. On-site generation with battery backup would keep basic lighting, device charging and heating controls running through extended outages without relying on the grid. This also advances our net zero objectives and is a priority for funding applications.
- Consider adding a small portable power station to the power cut pack in each of the three grid-connected properties as an interim measure ahead of the solar investment.

Heatwaves: What We Will Do

- Assess the Stilt House and Fishing Hut for summer overheating, as lighter-weight structures they are most at risk. Consider straightforward improvements such as external blinds, better ventilation or window film to improve comfort.
- Ensure insulation improvements identified in our net zero energy actions are specified to perform well in summer as well as winter.
- Review planting around the properties. Shade trees and climbing plants on south-facing elevations reduce solar gain and double as a biodiversity improvement.
- Monitor summer temperature comfort as part of our guest feedback process and act on any consistent feedback about specific properties.

Key Actions Summary

Action	Priority	Timescale
Develop and document flood guest protocol	High	2026
Develop and document storm guest protocol for Stilt House	High	2026
Add power cut guidance note to each property pack	High	2026
Investigate communication solution for simultaneous power and signal loss	High	2026
Solar PV with battery storage: funding investigation	High	2026–2027
Pre-arrival flood risk check procedure	Medium	2026
Pre-storm seasonal checklist	Medium	2026
Review ground-floor electrical installations for flood risk	Medium	2026
Thermal assessment of Stilt House and Fishing Hut	Medium	2026–2027
Natural flood management: riverbank and meadow maintenance	Ongoing	Ongoing
Engage with Climate Ready South East Scotland / Scottish Borders Climate Action Network	Complete	2026

8. Biodiversity

Our Biodiversity Baseline

Dod Mill supports an exceptional range of habitats for a five-acre landholding. A biodiversity assessment carried out in September 2025, based on landowner observations and existing survey data, identified seven distinct habitat types on the site. This mosaic of habitats creates ecological variety more typically associated with much larger estates, and the assessment concluded that Dod Mill is already a site of high conservation value.

The assessment was based on landowner observations rather than a professional ecological survey. Commissioning a professional survey is included as a near-term action in this plan, both to establish a more robust baseline and to strengthen future funding applications for biodiversity and conservation work.

What Makes This Site Special

The meadow grassland is the site's most significant ecological asset. It has been assessed as MG5 neutral grassland, a habitat type that has declined by over 95% across the UK. Key indicator species include harebell, lady's bedstraw, bird's-foot trefoil, bitter vetch, common knapweed and wild thyme. Their presence is direct evidence of minimal fertiliser input and sympathetic long-term grazing management.

The river corridor along the Boondreigh Water supports confirmed otter populations, breeding dippers and a range of waterfowl including heron, moorhen and oystercatcher. Both otters and dippers are highly sensitive indicators of excellent water quality. The damp bankside woodland of willow and alder along the river provides important cover and habitat for a wide range of species, and contributes directly to the natural flood management approach described in Section 7.

The woodland contains a good mix of native species including oak, ash, beech, silver birch and aspen, with naturalized sycamore and maple adding further structural diversity. Great spotted woodpecker confirms the presence of mature woodland habitat. Woodland birds recorded include willow warbler, song thrush, dunnock and spotted flycatcher.

The orchard of traditional fruit trees, including apple, crab apple, cherry, plum and hazelnut, provides specialist habitat as well as a productive yield of approximately 750 litres of pressed apple juice annually. Crab apple alone is known to support over 90 invertebrate species.

Three red-listed bird species have been recorded on the site: spotted flycatcher, yellowhammer and skylark. Their presence, representing woodland, farmland and grassland specialists respectively, is a strong indicator of habitat quality and connectivity across the site.

Calcareous grassland pockets indicated by the presence of wild thyme, represent a particularly exciting opportunity. These micro-habitats of alkaline, well-drained soil are the only known habitat for rock rose, the sole food plant of the Northern Brown Argus butterfly, a species of significant conservation concern in Scotland. The potential to establish this butterfly at Dod Mill is a genuinely realistic long-term conservation goal given the site's conditions.

Current Management Strengths

The site is managed through rotational grazing across three fields using two ponies and four sheep, which has successfully maintained the species diversity of the grassland. This low-intensity approach, combined with minimal intervention elsewhere, has allowed the ecological communities to develop naturally over time.

In recent years we have carried out significant riparian planting along the bank of the Boondreigh Water. A previously grazed section of riverbank has been fenced off and planted with willow and alder. This work stabilises the bank against erosion, shades the water to keep temperatures down (important for salmon and other cold-water

species), contributes leaf litter and woody debris that supports the aquatic invertebrate food web, and provides undisturbed bankside cover that directly benefits the otter population. It is also beginning to develop into the kind of damp, scrubby bankside woodland that is increasingly rare along Scottish Borders rivers.

The biodiversity assessment concluded that the existing approach is already well-suited to the site's conservation value. Our approach going forward is one of gentle enhancement rather than dramatic intervention, building incrementally on what is already a remarkable foundation.

Our Biodiversity Actions

Near term (2026)

- Commission a professional ecological survey to establish a robust baseline against which all future monitoring can be measured.
- Establish an initial monitoring programme through annual wildflower and butterfly surveys, and begin building a photographic record and species inventory.
- Optimise the grazing rotation to exclude livestock from the meadow between March and July, protecting the wildflower season, with light autumn and winter grazing to maintain sward diversity.
- Locate and map the wild thyme and calcareous grassland areas as a precursor to potential Northern Brown Argus habitat development.
- Enhance the meadow through targeted introduction of field scabious, ox-eye daisy and yellow rattle, the latter being a valuable hemiparasite that suppresses coarse grasses and opens space for wildflowers.
- Continue to maintain and monitor water quality in the river corridor, supporting otters, dippers and the wider aquatic community.

Medium term (2027–2032)

- Trial Northern Brown Argus habitat by establishing rock rose in the wild thyme and calcareous grassland areas.
- Develop a woodland management plan to support deadwood habitat and cavity-nesting species.
- Expand the orchard with additional traditional Scottish fruit varieties.
- Establish a structured wildlife monitoring programme tracking otters, dippers, red-listed birds and butterfly populations over time.
- Develop the site's potential as a demonstration and education resource, linking conservation management to the guest experience at Dod Mill.

Technology-Assisted Biodiversity Monitoring

Advances in technology now make it possible to monitor biodiversity passively and continuously, without significant demands on time. Tools such as Chirrup and BirdWeather use AI to identify bird species from continuously recorded audio; AgriSound does the same for pollinators using acoustic sensors; and NatureMetrics can analyse environmental DNA from soil and water samples to identify species from the genetic traces they leave behind. Together, tools like these could build a far richer and more scientifically robust picture of Dod Mill's biodiversity than periodic

manual surveys alone. We see this as a medium-term aspiration from 2027 onwards, and one that supports our longer-term ambition for Dod Mill to be recognised as a reference site for Scottish Borders conservation.

Biodiversity and the Guest Experience

The biodiversity of Dod Mill is not separate from the guest experience, it is central to it. We want guests to understand what they are surrounded by, and to leave with a greater appreciation of the natural world. This means communicating the site's ecological value through the welcome information, making it easy for guests to observe and enjoy wildlife without disturbing sensitive habitats, and where possible involving guests in the story of what we are working to achieve. The long-term ambition is for Dod Mill to be genuinely known as a place where nature is thriving, a reputation that supports both our conservation goals and our business.

Key Actions Summary

Action	Priority	Timescale
Commission professional ecological survey	High	2027–2028
Optimise grazing rotation to protect wildflower season	High	2026
Locate and map wild thyme and calcareous grassland areas	High	2026
Establish baseline wildflower and butterfly surveys	High	2026
Meadow enhancement: field scabious, ox-eye daisy, yellow rattle	Medium	2026
Maintain river corridor water quality	Ongoing	Ongoing
Trial rock rose establishment for Northern Brown Argus habitat	Medium	2027–2032
Woodland management plan	Medium	2027–2032
Orchard expansion with Scottish fruit varieties	Low	2027–2032
Structured wildlife monitoring programme	Medium	2027–2032
Technology-assisted monitoring: Chirrup, BirdWeather, AgriSound, NatureMetrics	Medium	2027–2032
Biodiversity increase confirmed through repeat surveys	High	2032+

9. Circular Economy

The circular economy is about keeping materials, products and resources in use for as long as possible, extracting maximum value from them, and recovering and regenerating materials at the end of their useful life. At Dod Mill, this is not a new concept we are adopting in response to a sustainability framework. It is how we have

always approached running the business, shaped by practicality, resourcefulness and a reluctance to throw things away when they still have value.

We use the waste hierarchy as a framework for thinking about how we manage materials: Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Recycle, in that order of preference.

Refuse: Avoiding Waste at Source

Our first preference is to avoid generating waste in the first place by choosing products designed to last, buying in bulk to reduce packaging, and eliminating single-use materials wherever possible.

- Cleaning products are supplied by HomeThings as concentrated tablets, powders and sheets that are refilled into permanent aluminium bottles, eliminating single-use plastic bottles entirely.
- Guest toiletries are sourced in 5-litre bulk from Laura Thomas Co and decanted into reusable pump dispensers in each property, replacing individually packaged toiletries.
- Firewood is sourced from our own site and the nearby Hillhouse Farm with minimal or no packaging. Firelighters are bought in bulk (300 per box) and kindling in large nets.
- Sugar is provided in jars rather than individual sachets. Guest information is presented in permanent folders, reprinted only when genuinely out of date.
- We invest in higher-quality items where the evidence supports it. Our approach to linen is a case in point: some of our bed linen has been in continuous use for eight years with no sign of failure, while cheaper linen bought at other times has become threadworn quickly. Quality at the point of purchase is our most effective tool for keeping things out of the waste stream.

Reuse: Giving Materials a Second Life

When Dod Mill was first developed as a holiday business, we upcycled and repurposed as much as possible rather than buying new. This was partly a practical response to the economics of a new small business, but it also shaped an approach we have continued to follow because it produces results we are genuinely proud of.

- The kitchens in the holiday cabins were made by a local joiner from reclaimed pallets. The tables in the Kiln House are made from scaffold boards and pallets. These are not compromises; they are distinctive features of the spaces.
- When refreshing the cottage interiors, we retained existing kitchens, repainting them and replacing handles to update their appearance. An old sideboard was painted and brought back into use rather than replaced. Existing flooring was cleaned, repaired and in some cases painted rather than taken up.
- The two cabins, the Stilt House and the Fishing Hut, were extensively refreshed from a very run-down condition using as little new material as possible. Reclaimed corrugated iron was used to clad sections of the Stilt House exterior, giving it a character that new materials could not have provided.
- Willow cuttings and other garden waste are fed to the sheep where possible, keeping organic material on the site rather than sending it for disposal.

- Reusable cleaning cloths are washed and reused on-site. Compostable scrubbers made from coconut fibre, loofah and cellulose replace disposable alternatives.
- Property linen is laundered by a local laundry service, keeping this within the local economy and avoiding the need for industrial washing equipment on-site. Towels are washed and dried at Dod Mill House, making use of 12 solar panels and a battery on the house roof. Whilst the house sits outside our formal emissions boundary, this arrangement means that one of our most energy-intensive laundry processes is largely powered by renewable energy generated on site.

Repair: Extending the Life of What We Have

Our instinct is always to repair before replacing. We are fortunate to have access to skilled people, both locally and within our own network, who make this genuinely practical.

- All maintenance and building work is carried out by local tradespeople: a joiner based in Oxton, an electrician next door, and a plumber in Lauder. Short supply chains mean repairs happen quickly and with people who know the site well.
- When a bed leg broke recently, rather than replace the bed, two repairs were arranged through personal contacts: steel reinforcement fabricated at a family member's agricultural engineering business, and a repair to the wooden section by a family friend. This informal repair economy, relying on local skills and personal networks, is exactly the kind of resourcefulness we want to continue drawing on.
- We buy higher-quality furniture specifically because it is worth repairing and refurbishing. Cheaper furniture tends to be unrepairable when it fails.
- We will look to identify a local seamstress for textile repairs, and will monitor the Repair Café Scotland network for any sessions accessible from Lauder.

Recycle: Diverting Waste from Landfill

Where materials cannot be refused, reduced, reused or repaired, we aim to ensure they are recycled rather than sent to landfill.

- Guest waste separation is clearly communicated in each property. Blue bins take recycling including soft plastics; black bins take landfill waste. Glass is collected separately and taken by the owners to the glass bank in Lauder.
- Wood ash from the stoves is collected in a dedicated metal bin for separate disposal.
- Worn textiles are taken to the Scottish Borders Council recycling centre near Galashiels rather than sent to landfill.
- We will investigate the Fine Coffee Co pod recycling scheme or consider a transition to ground coffee, to address the current gap in coffee pod disposal.

The Composting Gap

The most significant gap in our circular economy approach is the absence of a formal composting system. However, the foundations are already in place. Pony manure is collected regularly from the fields as good animal husbandry practice and currently goes into a manure heap on site. Field-collected manure with no bedding mixed in has an almost ideal carbon-to-nitrogen ratio for composting, meaning we

already have a consistent, well-suited feedstock. The action is to formalise and extend this into a proper composting system that incorporates food waste and carbon-rich garden waste alongside the manure, producing finished compost that can be returned to the meadow, orchard and garden beds. The Zero Waste Scotland guide to on-site composting will be our starting point, and we will aim to have a system in place during 2026 to 2027.

Key Actions Summary

Action	Priority	Timescale
Establish on-site composting system	High	2026–2027
Investigate coffee pod recycling or switch to ground coffee	Medium	2026
Identify local seamstress and upholsterer for textile repairs	Medium	2026
Continue buying quality linen and furniture to extend replacement cycles	Ongoing	Ongoing
Monitor Repair Café Scotland network for local sessions	Low	Ongoing
Refurbish rather than replace furniture wherever possible	Ongoing	Ongoing

10. Progress to Date

This is Dod Mill's first written Sustainability Action Plan and our first carbon footprint. However, it would be wrong to suggest that we are starting from scratch. A great deal of what is documented in this plan reflects practices and investments that have been in place for years, often driven by instinct and values rather than a formal framework. This section records what we have already done.

Renewable Energy

- The Fishing Hut runs entirely off-grid on solar power and is unaffected by grid outages. It has no grid electricity connection and generates zero Scope 2 emissions, making it our most energy-independent property.
- Dod Mill House has 12 solar panels and a battery installed on the roof. Whilst the house sits outside our formal emissions boundary, the solar installation powers the washing and drying of towels for the holiday properties, keeping this business activity largely fossil-fuel free.
- Together these two renewable installations demonstrate that solar generation is already practical and productive on this site, and provide a firm foundation for the wider renewable energy ambitions set out in this plan.

Transport and EV Infrastructure

- An EV charger is already installed on site for Jamie's electric vehicle, providing infrastructure that guests and the cleaning team can also benefit from as EV adoption grows.
- Jamie uses an electric vehicle for his primary commute, reducing household transport emissions.

Circular Economy and Waste

- Single-use plastic bottles have been eliminated from the properties. Cleaning products are supplied as concentrated refills by HomeThings; guest toiletries are sourced in 5-litre bulk from Laura Thomas Co and decanted into reusable pump dispensers.
- When developing the holiday properties, we upcycled and repurposed materials as extensively as possible. Pallet kitchens were made by a local joiner; the Kiln House tables are made from scaffold boards and pallets; reclaimed corrugated iron clads sections of the Stilt House; existing kitchens, flooring and furniture were refreshed rather than replaced. Both cabins were brought back to life from a very run-down condition with minimal new material.
- We invest in quality linen and furniture for longevity. Some of our bed linen has been in continuous use for eight years. When a bed frame broke recently, it was repaired using the skills of family contacts rather than replaced.
- Wood ash from the stoves is collected separately. Glass is taken by the owners to the Lauder glass bank. Worn textiles go to the Scottish Borders Council recycling centre rather than to landfill.
- Pony manure is collected regularly from the fields and heaped on site, providing the foundation for the composting system we are establishing.

Biodiversity and Land Management

- We have carried out significant riparian planting along the Boondreigh Water, fencing off a previously grazed bank section and establishing willow and alder to stabilise the bank, shade the water and provide undisturbed habitat for otters and other species.
- The meadow is managed through rotational grazing with ponies and sheep, successfully maintaining MG5 species-rich grassland, a habitat that has declined by over 95% across the UK.
- A biodiversity assessment was completed in September 2025, identifying seven distinct habitat types and confirming the presence of three red-listed bird species, confirmed otters, breeding dippers and exceptional wildflower diversity.
- Willow cuttings and suitable garden waste are fed to the sheep where possible, keeping organic material in use on site.

Climate Resilience

- We have subscribed to SEPA Floodline alerts (phone and text) and carry out daily visual observation of the river during periods of risk.

- Power cut packs (torch, candles, wind-up radio) are in place in the three grid-connected properties.
- All four properties have woodburning stoves providing heat and a means of cooking that is entirely independent of the electricity supply.
- We have signed up to the Climate Ready South East Scotland newsletter, connecting us to regional climate adaptation guidance and resources.

Local Economy and Supply Chain

- All routine maintenance and building work is carried out by tradespeople based within a few miles of the site: a joiner in Oxton, an electrician next door, a plumber in Lauder.
- Firewood is sourced from our own land and the nearby Hillhouse Farm. Kindling is supplied by Lauderdale Firewood.
- Our cleaning team is based in Lauder, approximately four miles away.

Training and Engagement

- Ruth has completed the Climate Springboard programme, a structured course supporting Scottish tourism businesses to understand and act on their carbon footprint.
- This Sustainability Action Plan is itself a significant milestone: our first written, structured commitment to net zero, biodiversity and circular economy, with documented actions, targets and timescales.

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11. Wider Sustainability Initiatives

Beyond the core pillars of this plan, we are committed to seeking external recognition for our sustainability work, both to validate our progress independently and to communicate our credentials to guests. This section sets out our intentions around accreditation and awards.

Green Tourism Accreditation

Green Tourism is the leading sustainability accreditation scheme for the UK hospitality sector, founded in Scotland and globally recognised. Businesses are assessed against 15 Sustainability Goals and awarded Bronze (40%+), Silver (65%+) or Gold (80%+) certification, verified by independent assessors.

We intend to apply for Green Tourism accreditation in 2026. The first step is to complete the GreenCheck self-assessment quiz to establish our current score and identify any gaps. Given the breadth of what we already have in place, we are optimistic about achieving at least Silver in the first assessment, with Gold as a medium-term ambition.

Green Tourism accreditation will give guests independent, verified confidence in our sustainability claims, and will support applications for grants and funding that require

demonstrated environmental commitment. One business owner has estimated that their Green Tourism certification adds around 10% of new business each year.

Scottish Thistle Awards: Climate Action Award

The Scottish Thistle Awards are the highest accolade in Scottish tourism, run annually by VisitScotland. The Climate Action Award celebrates businesses that have made demonstrable progress on their net zero journey. Dod Mill would enter via the South of Scotland regional heat.

We intend to enter the 2026 programme which opened for entries on 15th March 2026 and closes on 27th April 2026. Completing this Sustainability Action Plan, establishing our baseline carbon footprint, and implementing the near-term actions across net zero, biodiversity and circular economy will give us a strong set of proof points to support our entry.

Notably, responsible tourism is embedded throughout the Thistle Awards: all entries, in any category, are required to provide evidence of how their business addresses key areas of responsible tourism. This means that the work documented in this plan strengthens any Thistle Award entry we make, not only the Climate Action category.

Key Actions Summary

Action	Priority	Timescale
Complete Green Tourism GreenCheck self-assessment quiz	High	Complete
Apply for Green Tourism accreditation	High	2026
Enter South of Scotland Thistle Awards – Climate Action Award	High	2026
Target Green Tourism Gold accreditation	Medium	2027–2028

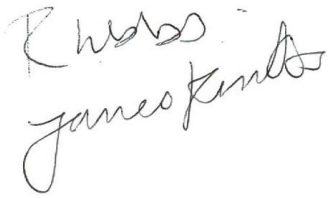
12. Declaration

This Sustainability Action Plan represents Dod Mill's commitment to operating as a genuinely sustainable business. The actions, targets and timescales set out in this document are our own, made freely and in good faith. We intend to review and update this plan annually, reporting honestly on progress made and adjusting our approach in light of what we learn.

We acknowledge that this is a journey. Some targets will be met ahead of schedule; others may take longer than we have planned. What we commit to is continued effort, honest measurement and transparent reporting.

We also acknowledge that Dod Mill is a small business, and that the decisions we make here have an influence beyond our own site. We hope that by documenting our approach, sharing our experience and engaging with the wider tourism and conservation community, we can contribute in a small way to a larger shift.

This plan was approved by the owners of Dod Mill in March 2026.



Signed:
Ruth Knibbs and Jamie Knibbs, Owners, Dod Mill

Date:
March 2026

Next review date:
March 2027