

Climate Change Impact Plan

The Oaks | theoaks.uk

1. Our Vision and Commitment

At The Oaks, our goal goes beyond sustainability: we aim for **regeneration** — healing the land, enriching our community, and inspiring our guests.

We believe that a truly magical place must also be a **good steward of the future**.

As custodians of this historic woodland and meadow estate, we open it not only to guests, but to the wider community — sharing it in ways that are **sustainable, inclusive, and inspiring**.

Our Climate Change Impact Plan outlines the steps we take today, and the commitments we make for tomorrow, in the face of a changing climate.

2. Climate Risks Assessment

We have identified the following potential impacts of climate change on The Oaks:

- **Increased Storms and Flooding:** Threatening our pathways, guest accommodations, and the health of our woodlands.
- **Hotter, Drier Summers:** Affecting water availability, orchard yields, and guest comfort.
- **Biodiversity Loss:** Disrupting delicate ecosystems vital to the woodland magic and wildlife experience.
- **Energy Pressures:** Increased demand for cooling in summer and heating in winter.
- **Economic and Social Impact:** Risks to local tourism and community wellbeing in the region.

These risks guide our **mitigation** and **adaptation** strategies.

3. Actions and Strategies

3.1 Biodiversity and Land Stewardship

Tree Planting and Woodland Management

- Annual planting of native tree species (oak, hazel, beech, hawthorn) to sequester carbon and strengthen biodiversity.
- Maintenance of existing ancient trees with proactive health checks and habitat protection.
- Expansion of "wild zones" where nature can regenerate without intervention.

Pollinator Protection and Orchard Care

- Six actively managed beehives, maintained under the guidelines of the British Beekeepers Association.
- Orchard of over 40 fruit and nut trees, planted to support pollinators and diversify the landscape.
- Guest welcome hampers include a jar of estate-produced honey and handmade chocolate bonbons infused with our honey.

Wildlife Habitat Preservation

- Retention of deadwood and fallen trees to foster essential microhabitats for insects, fungi, birds, and mammals.
 - Designated wildflower meadows, established with UK native seed mixes, to provide nectar, shelter, and breeding grounds.
 - Installation of bat boxes, bird nesting boxes, and owl habitats across the estate by 2026
 - Minimised light pollution through low-level, warm-hued lighting with timers, protecting nocturnal species.
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3.2 Energy and Emissions Reduction

Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency

- Installation of air source heat pumps across properties, reducing heating energy use by up to 300%.
- Comprehensive transition to low-energy LED lighting and eco-rated appliances.
- Smart timers and guest education to minimise unnecessary use of outdoor lighting and heating systems.

Future Goals (2025-2030)

- Investigate installation of solar PV systems and battery storage for further on-site renewable energy generation.
 - Pilot a passive cooling program using shade sails, tree cover, and cross-ventilation upgrades to reduce future cooling loads.
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3.3 Water Conservation and Waste Management

Water Stewardship

- Transitioning to a private well water supply to reduce reliance on mains water.
- Installation of water-saving fixtures (low-flow showers, dual-flush toilets) across all accommodations.
- Rainwater harvesting systems proposed for irrigation of gardens and orchard.

Waste Minimization

- Recycling bins and detailed guidance provided in all guest accommodations.
 - Elimination of single-use plastics wherever possible through refillable amenities.
 - Reusable cloths, natural cleaning products, and bulk buying systems adopted to reduce packaging waste.
 - Composting systems for green waste and food scraps
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3.4 Sustainable Transport

Low-Impact Travel Encouragement

- Bicycle rentals available for guests, with mapped cycle routes provided.
 - EV charging station installed to support electric vehicles.
 - Promotion of local public transport options for eco-friendly arrivals.
 - Partner with local e-bike hire companies to offer delivery to the property by 2026.
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3.5 Carbon Footprint and Offsetting

Reduction First, Offsetting Second

- Annual calculation of The Oaks' operational carbon footprint through **Carbon Footprint Ltd.**
 - Clear reduction targets set yearly.
 - Purchase of verified carbon offsets supporting rewilding and renewable energy projects.
 - Public sharing of our annual carbon offset report on theoaks.uk for full transparency.
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3.6 Community Engagement and Place-Based Impact

Sharing The Oaks With the Wider Community

- Hosting artists as part of **Oxford Art Week** to foster creative engagement with nature.
- Organizing **Congenital Anaemia Network charity events**, welcoming patients and supporters.
- Leading **guided bat walks** in collaboration with Shotover Park conservationists.
- Hosting the **Shotover Park Clean-Up Campaign**, exchanging free crepes for litter collection each spring.

Education and Storytelling

- Interpretive signage around the property explaining habitat protection efforts.
 - Sustainability tips and climate action ideas included in guest welcome packs.
 - Future plans to offer educational workshops (pollination, tree planting, rewilding) for guests and community groups.
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4. Guest Participation

We invite all guests to be part of our mission:

- Adhering to our **Sustainability Code** during their stay (e.g., energy conservation, recycling, respecting wildlife).
- Encouraging guests to offset their own travel emissions (links and guidance provided).
- Involving guests in conservation activities where appropriate (such as tree planting during winter stays).

We believe that the most lasting impact is one we create **together**.

5. Monitoring, Review, and Future Commitments

This Climate Change Impact Plan is a **living document**.

Each year we will:

- Review and update this plan to reflect latest best practices and new risks.
- Publish an annual sustainability impact report, including our carbon footprint and offsetting achievements.
- Set new targets for further reducing emissions and increasing biodiversity outcomes.

Key Future Commitments:

- Achieve net-zero operational emissions by 2030.
- Plant at least 500 additional native trees and shrubs by 2028.
- Transition to 100% renewable electricity by 2026.