Sustainable Tourism
Distant Horizons

Policy Statement

Distant Horizons is committed to follow the model for Sustainable Tourism as defined by UN World Tourism Organisation

“Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities”.

Objectives and Activities

We are addressing the environmental and social challenges for sustainable tourism in the following areas;

- Office Operations. Ensuring Distant Horizons minimizes the use of energy and physical resources and comply to the best labour practices.
- Product development. Developing itineraries taking into account the social and environmental impacts.
- Working with Suppliers by integrating sustainability principles in the selection process of suppliers (e.g. accommodations, transport companies, excursions).
- Destinations, by supporting destination stakeholders’ efforts to address sustainability issues, and contributing to conservation and development projects.
- Customer relations, by creating awareness and responsible choices through for example information and codes of conduct.
- Reduce Carbon Emissions

In terms of specific actions being taken by Distant Horizons to address the above

Office Operations

- In 2020 Distant Horizons introduced a new CRM to the business which will automatically generate all correspondences in electronic format rather than paper and so dramatically decreases the amount of paper, ink and other associated consumables as well as reducing the amount of post we send by at least 70%.

- The new CRM will also allow clients to sign up, pay and upload documents (passport copies, insurance documents etc.) directly to the CRM again reducing the need for our clients to post and send materials to Distant Horizons.

Product Development

- Introducing journeys which are either exclusively walking holidays or have a major walking element to the itinerary. This has the benefit of
  - Reducing the amount of overall ‘internal’ mechanised travel (air, train, vehicle etc.).
- Allow access to more remote regions and communities encouraging economic development in these areas.
- Provide opportunities for travellers to have more direct contact with the peoples and cultures they are travelling in.

- Substituting flights with train journeys wherever possible.
  - This has been particularly true in China where the progress of high speed train network development is allowing journeys previously taken by plane to take place by train. The trip 'China: Uncovered' due to take place in 2022 is the first Distant Horizons in China not to involve the use of domestic flights despite the itinerary covering a lot of distance within China.
  - For the Central Asia journey (perhaps the most popular Distant Horizons Oxford and Cambridge Universities trip), Distant Horizons has replaced two domestic flights in Turkmenistan with one overnight train journey and one road journey.

- Distant Horizons is also increasingly organising its journeys outside of peak times when there will be less crowds and strains on local resources as well as giving a longer and more stable revenue stream for local suppliers.

**Working with Suppliers and Destinations**

- Over the next 12 months Distant Horizons will engage with many of their agents and other suppliers of local services (accommodation, transport etc) to see how we can ensure our itineraries meet the overall objectives of sustainable tourism.

- Distant Horizons currently works and financially contributes to its local guides in Nepal to help their communities who have been particularly badly hit by the drop off of tourism following COVID-19 which came on top of the devastating earthquake in Nepal in 2015.

**Working with Customers**

- Distant Horizons sends out extensive notes on the histories and cultures of the regions where people are travelling so travellers are well informed about these areas not just historically but also about current cultures and expectations.

- Distant Horizons also sends out Environmental Guidelines to all travellers to demonstrate the need to be considerate of the communities and the environment by avoiding excessive waste, single use plastics, reducing energy consumption, dress respectfully, do not purchase or eat endangered species, support local economies etc

**Reducing Carbon Emissions**

- Distant Horizons is looking to join the ‘Tourism Declares Climate Emergency’ which is a not-for-profit organisation which helps tourism companies to reduce the carbon emissions of their activities. After joining the organisation, the next step will be to create a plan on carbon reductions. Distant Horizons is particularly interested in looking at carbon off-setting options.