

CLIMATE ACTION FOCUS AREAS

-  CARBON NEUTRAL CERTIFICATION
-  WATER CONSERVATION
-  TACKLING FOOD WASTE
-  BIODIVERSITY

CASE STUDY FALLS HOTEL & SPA

ABOUT US

The Falls Hotel & Spa is a 140 bedroom, river-side hotel located in the bustling market town of Ennistymon in North West Clare on the Wild Atlantic Way. The hotel is certified as a carbon neutral property by GreenMark.ie through the Green Hospitality Ireland Programme. It is the first hotel in Ireland to achieve carbon neutral certification by generating its own electricity.

“ Once we were logging data for a while, we really started to see the results of any action we took – in black and white figures. This encouraged us to keep going and take more actions in other areas of the business that would make a difference. ”

Sharon Malone, Sales and Marketing Manager, Falls Hotel & Spa

How small steps can make a big impact

GETTING STARTED

"At the outset, the big question was 'Where do we start?'. It came down to deciding one day that we would log the information from our energy bill from the previous month in our spreadsheet. We committed to doing that at the beginning of each month once the bill arrived. Over time, we started to see trends and areas where we could make savings for example changing our light bulbs.

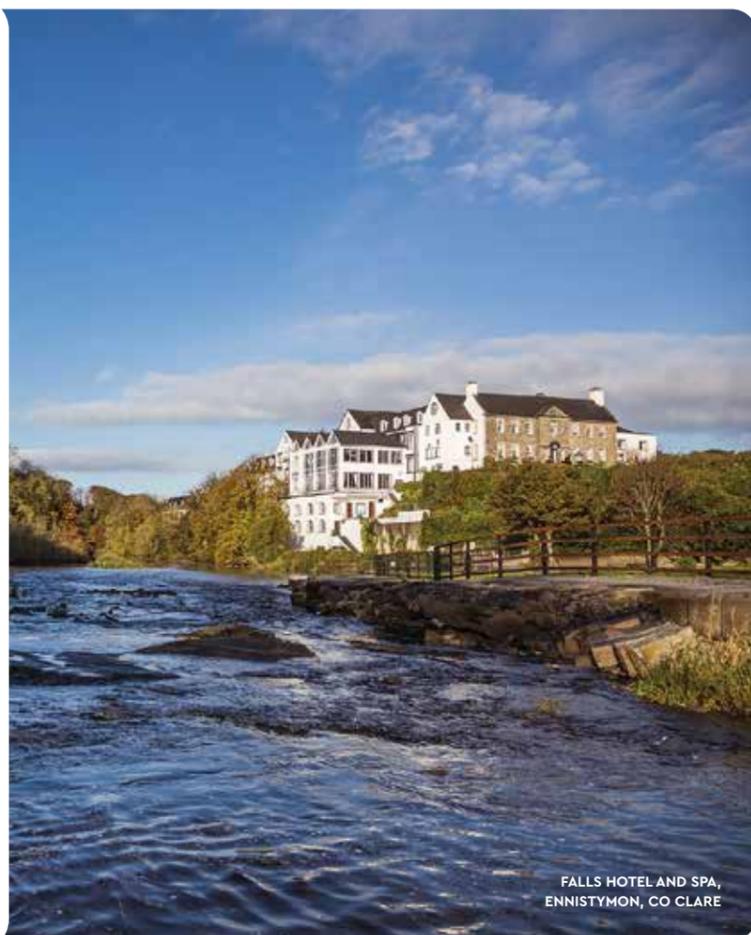
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In other areas...

To embed a culture of sustainability, staff completed the Fifty Shades Greener online training programme and through that, a Green Team was established with representatives from all hotel departments. When purchasing, eco-friendly and local suppliers are prioritised and quotes are only requested from suppliers that align with the hotel's sustainability ethos. The hotel reserves areas of the estate as unmanaged wildflower areas – even the resident donkeys have to keep out! The hotel put a tree planting programme in place, and over 1000 trees have been planted on the hotel grounds in a two-year period. A local expert completed a Site Biodiversity Audit and the hotel now has information on the species that live on its grounds, which ones may be endangered, how they can be supported and how to spot and manage invasive species. This will form the basis of future biodiversity support plans.



FALLS HOTEL AND SPA,
ENNISTYMON, CO CLARE

ENERGY: COULD THE CASCADING WATERS OF THE RIVER INAGH POWER THE HOTEL?

During the 1960s, previous owners of the hotel had used a small turbine to generate electricity from the river. Inspired by this far-sighted ambition,

the McCarthy Family commissioned a hydro-electric turbine to harness the natural power of the river and help them achieve carbon neutrality.



IMPACT

% reduction in energy costs:	60%
% reduction in carbon emissions:	80%
Payback time:	Initially estimated at 30 years.
Subsequent opportunities to sell electricity to the grid plus anticipated improvements in battery technology (which will allow unused energy to be stored) have reduced this payback time to 20 years.	

WATER: MORE SAVINGS TO BE MADE?

The Green Team identified and implemented a number of measures to conserve water and reduce water costs, with tangible results.

These included:

- ✔ monthly leak detection procedure
- ✔ aerators in all bedroom taps and shower heads
- ✔ sensor-operated showers and

- ✔ toilets in the leisure centre
- ✔ push-taps in the public toilet areas of the hotel
- ✔ sensor-operated urinals
- ✔ high-level insulation in the pool area

IMPACT

2019 Water consumption per overnight sleeper:	118 litres
2020 Water consumption per overnight sleeper:	75 litres
2019 Water consumption per average guest (day and night combined):	25 litres
2020 Water consumption per average guest (day and night combined):	18 litres

The estimated payback time on purchase and installation of new fixtures was 12 months.



BUILDING MOMENTUM: TACKLING FOOD WASTE

Taking a methodical approach over three days, the hotel's Green Team analysed the food that was being sent back to the kitchen for every breakfast, lunch and dinner. Insights from this process led to the following changes:

- ✔ changed from toast service to self-service toaster
- ✔ reduced plate sizes for carvery
- ✔ switched to bulk-buying jams and sauces and using refillable jars
- ✔ partnered with waste collection provider to train chefs

IMPACT

These actions required low or no financial outlay and so the payback time was almost immediate. Food waste decreased by more than 50% in a 2-year period, significantly reducing waste collection costs.

ACHIEVING CARBON NEUTRAL CERTIFICATION

Throughout the hotel, actions were taken to reduce further carbon emissions, wherever possible, for example switching to BioLPG, eliminating plastic bottles from the hotel, installing segregated bins in bedrooms, providing green bins on the grounds, enhancing

communication with staff and guests.

To offset carbon emissions that could not be reduced in any other way, Falls Hotel & Spa planted approximately 500 native trees on their hotel grounds during

2020–21. Each tree offsets one tonne of carbon in its lifetime. This was the final step in the hotel's journey to carbon-neutral certification. For the future, the hotel is committed to planting 300 trees per year on their own grounds.



FALLS HOTEL AND SPA, ENNISTYMON, CO CLARE

Top Tip

"It's daunting at the start but once you have your data spreadsheets set up and your Green Team in place, then you have a system that is very manageable. You can monitor and measure the impacts of all your actions. Get those essential structures in place and then commit to maintaining them – you will really see the benefits."

Sharon Malone,
Sales and Marketing
Manager,
Falls Hotel & Spa

About climate action

This case study is part of Fáilte Ireland's suite of climate action business supports, helping tourism and hospitality businesses on their climate action journey.

Find out more at [Climate action \(Failteireland.ie\)](https://www.failteireland.ie)