



QUINTA DO COBRAL ACTION PLAN - July 2022

We have achieved a huge amount in the last few years but realise we are not able to stand still. There is always room for improvement so we have set ourselves targets for the next 12 to 18 months. Not all of these things are necessarily going to be possible to achieve in this time frame but we will visit this plan from time to time during the next year and update it in July 2023.

We have a series of new plans and schedules to illustrate how and when we plan to achieve our goals, they are as follows:

- Environmental Policy - explains a bit more about what we are doing and why
- Accessibility Guide - information about our cottage for those with disabilities, includes a section on local public transport
- Responsible Visitors Code - to help you learn more about our farm and how you can enjoy what we have to offer
- Waste Management Plan - do you want to know how we recycle and deal with day to day rubbish? This is the plan for you!!
- Climate Action Plan and Carbon Management - step by step information on how we plan to reduce our already low carbon footprint and manage the problems associated with climate change
- Code of Conduct for visitors walking and enjoying our protected area
- Fire prevention - information for visitors on how to prevent fires and protect yourselves and your family
- Maintenance schedules and Risk Assessments are also available on our website

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

- Encourage the use of electric cars by our guests in providing an E-car recharging point for guests to use.
- Provide and store more solar energy throughout the year (see carbon management)
- We would like to add a main switch to our cottage and workshops which will cut off all lighting and sockets as you leave (thereby turning off all standby appliance and power plugs when not in use)
- Continue to use solar lighting around the farm and guest house outdoor areas.
- Concern over processed fuels especially manufacturing and transport of wood pellets that we currently use for our house heating system backed up by timber burned in our ESSE solid fuel cooker and water heater has led to us investigating another method. We are planning to switch our prime heat generation from Pellets to a log biomass boiler this year. This will reduce our dependency on manufactured products like pellets and mean that we can use more of our own locally harvested wood.

WATER CONSUMPTION

- To continue to inform and educate our guests on water saving measures
- To continue to improve our irrigation system making sure it is targeted through drippers and line feeds that go directly to where the plants need it. This also helps us cut down

on unwanted weed growth and helps us to reduce the amount of strimming and grass cutting we have to do.

- To continue to develop our hydraulic ram water system - we started this last year but it needs refining for it to be able to be added to our water management plans.
- Install new low flow shower heads.
- Choose plants suitable for dry arid conditions when replacing and improving gardens or planning new garden areas.
- We have just started to build a large Hugelkulture bed which will be ready for planting by Spring 2023. This will help with our watering and soil health.
- New rain collection and storage system from our huge wood store roof. This will be used to supplement our irrigation systems.

WASTE PRODUCTION

- Continue to measure current waste generation and report annually. We would like to see a 15% waste reduction in the next year.
- Regularly check www.zerowasteurope.eu for help and ideas on recycling, waste reduction and how to sustainably dispose of any items that don't fall into the more typical categories.
- We will strive to become a no-landfill destination
- Update our main recycling area with well labeled separate large bins for each recyclable product.
- Provide a battery recycling bin in the guest house.

ETICAL PURCHASING

- Hand made local terracotta dinnerware sets. We want to provide our own dinner ware, plates, side plates, bowls and mugs as well as jugs and serving dishes. As well as being very practical as they can be used on direct flame as well as in the oven, they look good and are produced less than 5k from us.
- We want to source compostable bags for our large bins, we already use them for the small compost bins in the cottage
- Sourcing bulk recyclable toilet paper supplied in paper packaging instead of plastic (as currently used)
- Investigate the introduction of more green and environmentally friendly products on offer in the guest house
- Supply homemade solid dishwashing blocks which require no packaging and are SLS and bleach free. Even though we currently use washing up liquid refills we would like to do away with it completely.
- We would like to offer a kitchen eco pack for sale to our guests to get visitors started when they return home.

CARBON MANAGEMENT

- Carry out a climate change risk assessment to inform future issues such as lack of water, river management, extreme temperatures etc.
- We will be installing 4 more, high generation solar panels on our roof taking our total from 12 to 16 we will also be increasing our battery array in conjunction with this. We will then be able to power all our needs, summer and winter, with no auxiliary generator power needed thus saving on diesel use.
- We would like to provide an on-site bike borrowing service for guests to explore the local area by bike thus reducing the number of car journeys.

- To continue to grow as much of own food as possible.
- Encourage our visitors to continue to “Think Green” and to keep on choosing green accommodation and ethical destinations, try to walk and cycle more, use more public transport, eat local food or try to grow some of their own if they don’t already and leave a light as possible carbon footprint.

RESPONSIBLE SUSTAINABLE MARKETING

- Improving communication with guests encouraging them to make more efforts to try and reduce energy consumption both in our cottage and (dare I say it?) when they get home. This year has been exceptionally difficult for us as it has for many destinations in the Iberian Peninsula. While we are used to very hot summers this years extreme heat has been very difficult to cope with. Our river has totally dried up making it impossible to use it for irrigation and for topping up the swimming pool. This makes clear, honest guest communication extra important. (we have been praised for changing the way people see waste and consumption by guests through their reviews)
- Provide an environmental guide with simple and achievable targets for their stay
- Increase social media - Instagram and facebook stories - provide a series of eco tips
- Add more of our “Kids Activity Sheets” and translate them to more different languages
- Provide a “Bug Kit” to help kids explore the micro community on our land, allowing them to inspect, and record wild life found - returning it back to where it was found of course.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Invite the local wildlife sanctuary to come and do a rescued bird release on our farm.
- Continue to support and donate to the local animal shelters.
- Continue to support and donate to our local Bombeiro volunteers (Firefighters)
- Provide Fire emergency guidelines to our guests in line with Safe Communities Portugal.

BIODIVERSITY

- We want to plant more trees in our top forested area. After the devastating wild fires of 2017 we lost all our pine trees but amazingly the native Oaks and Cork Oak as well as the Medrono (Strawberry Trees) came back and are doing well. This encourages us to plant more native tree species but will depend on our water supply to sustain the trees while small, before they become established. This will also help us to harvest more of our own wood for the wood burning stoves in the medium to long term and to act as a carbon store.
- We are investigating a rainwater capture system on our large roof over the wood store and equipment and parking bay. This building is at the top of the land and lends itself to a storage tank that could then be used for irrigation by gravity feed.
- To continue to encourage wildlife and biodiversity, create new homes and habitats to help preserve and promote existing and new creatures.
- Attend a local Bee keeping course so that we could have our own bee hives helping us to pollinate better, produce our own honey and other bee products.
- We are working in partnership with ICNF Environmental and Biodiversity department to develop a bespoke plan for our farm, this will help us assess and record new wildlife coming to us as a result of our work as well as recording higher levels of existing creatures and plants.

Quinta do Cobral - Ishbel Ramsay

This Action Plan was last updated updated in November 2022