



## Broads business awarded first Green Mark for boats

A Broads boat hire company is the first business in the country to be awarded a new Green Mark accreditation for eco-friendly boats.

Norfolk Broads Direct of Wroxham received the grading when the Green Tourism Business Scheme launched its Green Mark for holiday cruisers on Wednesday June 8<sup>th</sup> as part of Green Tourism Week in partnership with Broads Tourism and the Broads Authority, which manages the Broads.

The award is based on 25 criteria specially developed for boats including eco-friendly design, energy efficiency, waste management and providing 'green' information for hirers. The Green Mark scheme in the Broads has been funded with money from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the STEP Interreg Two Seas Programme which promotes sustainable tourism in estuarine parks.

Barbara Greasley of Norfolk Broads Direct said: "For some time a group of environmentally aware people in Norfolk has been campaigning for a greener option for boating. The members of this Eco Boat Project in close partnership with Broads Tourism, the Broads Authority and the Green Tourism Business Scheme have been working to produce a set of grading criteria for Water Based Activity Providers. Norfolk Broads Direct is delighted to have been consulted on these criteria and we feel honoured that we will be the first business in the country to go through this grading process. As chair of Broads Tourism I believe that hosting the official launch of the scheme and having the first green graded boats in the country will be a tremendous coup for the Broads. Broads

Tourism will certainly be promoting take-up of the scheme to all of our members.”

Bruce Hanson of the Broads Authority commented: “Sustainability is of great importance to the Broads as a destination and it is our aim to be seen as ‘green leaders’ in the tourism industry. The boating sector here generates at least £95m in revenue annually – accounting for almost a quarter of total tourism spend in the Broads. This Green Mark will allow us to highlight our ‘guaranteed green’ environmental credentials to the marketplace with confidence.”

The hire cruiser being assessed, Fair Sovereign, has a low wash hull and its engine meets the current EU Stage 3 emissions requirements. Water is heated as a byproduct of the engine cooling and the majority of lighting is provided by LED bulbs. Norfolk Broads Direct sends customers information about the impact of phosphates on water quality prior to their arrival and advises them to use phosphate free toiletries and washing up liquid, as well as stocking some for purchase.

Andrea Nicholas, managing director of the Green Tourism Business Scheme added: “The environmental challenges faced by a boat operator differ from those faced by hotels and other tourism providers and the GTBS is keen to help the sector showcase its green-mindedness through these new bespoke criteria.’

The Green Tourism Business Scheme is the only tourism certification programme in the UK endorsed by VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales and has been validated by the International Centre for Responsible Tourism since 2008. Operated by a not-for-profit organisation, Green Business UK, there are over 2,300 GTBS members through the UK and Ireland. Businesses are graded by qualified environmental assessors and can benefit from significant marketing advantage and reduced running costs of up to 20%.

**For further information contact the Broads Authority press office on 01603 610734**

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