



## case study

# environmental sustainability



Objective One is  
part-financed by  
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The Objective One Partnership  
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

## POLDHU MARCONI CENTRE

The National Trust  
Poltesco Farmhouse  
Ruan Minor, Helston  
TR12 7LR  
Telephone: 01326 290865  
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

### *the project*

The National Trust, Marconi PLC and Poldhu Amateur Radio Club have used the investment to provide a visitor centre and community facility.

The Programme has invested £141,913 from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in the project which has a total cost of £311,913.

The development of the visitor centre celebrates the centenary of the first ever transatlantic radio signal which was received by Guglielmo Marconi from this site.



*Guglielmo Marconi at Poldhu Amateur Radio hut with a morse key like the one used by his grandfather to make the first transatlantic transmission 100 years ago*

### *measures of environmental sustainability adopted*

#### **To promote the prudent use of natural resources**

The architects (pdp Green consulting) were briefed to build energy efficiencies and environmental sustainability into the design of the building and have included warmcell insulation, solar gain through use of south facing windows, passive ventilation and the use of low energy light bulbs. There is little waste produced at the centre as goods and services are not bought or sold there. Rainwater is harvested from the roof for the low flush toilets.

#### **To protect and improve the environment**

The centre is signposted from the coastal path and is mentioned in the Coast of Cornwall leaflet to encourage walkers to visit. Information about travel by bus is provided on the centre's leaflet. The site is an SSSI so the National Trust commissioned a local consultant to carry out a survey to locate areas of important biological interest. This provided the information on where best to place the building to retain biodiversity and cause least environmental damage. Tenders for the main contract were encouraged from local businesses and a list of recommended local subcontractors was given to the main contractor. National Trust and local estate woodlands supplied the wood for the build where possible; otherwise it was sourced from Forest Stewardship Council accredited woodlands. Organic paints were used to decorate the building.

### *benefits of environmental sustainability*

The radio club who are regular users of the building have noticed how warm and dry the place is (which is good for their radio equipment) and how cheap it is to run in terms of energy and water bills. Importantly the radio club are really proud of the building and how it looks inside and out.

The green build fits with the nature of the site and with the ethos of the National Trust, plus it adds interest for the visitor.

Local sourcing keeps money in the community, helps get knowledge about the project into the local community and means problems are easier to sort out because the centre can use the same local contractor for maintenance. The locally sourced materials lent themselves to the design and they also fit in well with natural environment

Reducing the number of visitors arriving in cars helps reduce traffic congestion locally and increases the personal enjoyment of visitors.

In summary increasing the quality and value of the public product to reflect the designations and high quality of the surrounding natural environment has improved the visitor experience and this will secure and grow the visitor spend now and into the future. Further economic benefits which have been created through the

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adoption of environmental sustainability measures are cost savings in the running of the centre, work for local suppliers and contractors and increased visitor spend in the local area.

#### **lessons learnt**

Alastair Cameron, Countryside Manager for the National Trust had this to say: *"The public are now more aware of green building techniques and the use of good contemporary design with old construction techniques. They like to see them used in public buildings and, what's more, it adds more depth and interest to their visit."*

*"There are real cost benefits to environmental sustainability, and the investment from sources such as Objective One enables projects to realise real payback for the measures adopted."*

John James, Development Manager of the Cornwall Commercial Tourism Federation, states: *"If the private sector in tourism is to be encouraged to take on board sustainability issues in a big way, we need case studies like this to be publicised. The National Trust is in a unique position to develop projects like this and break them down in a manner that private sector operators can understand and copy. The message is: good sustainable practices can have a beneficial effect on your bottom line."*

**For more information about how you can incorporate environmental sustainability into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email [objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk).**

