**THE STONE GUEST HOUSE**

**RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY**

The Stone Guest House acknowledges the potential benefits afforded not only to our business, but also to our employees, the surrounding community, and the natural environment by adopting operational practices that are aligned to the principles of responsible tourism. In our understanding of this, we have adopted the definition of responsible tourism as defined in the Fair Trade Tourism’s Standards for Responsible Tourism.

**Responsible Tourism**

tourism management strategy in which

the tourism sector and tourists take responsibility

to protect and conserve the natural environment,

respect and conserve local cultures and ways of life,

and contribute to stronger local economies

and a better quality of life for local people

*(SANS1162:2011)*

As part of our commitment to implementing responsible practices in our tourism business, we have systems in place to manage the long-term sustainability of our business operations in the following areas:

**Environmental Management:**

* Energy conservation, including monitoring our consumption, seeking alternatives to non-renewable sources of energy generation, and finding ways to reduce our consumption through operational and technical improvements.
* Taking climate action so that we minimize our impacts and do our part to achieve global commitments of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030.
* Water conservation, including monitoring our consumption, finding ways to re-use waste water, and reducing our consumption through operational and technical improvements.
* Managing waste as responsibly as possible, including generating as little waste as possible, implementing a composting solution, and encouraging staff to take any recyclable materials that may be of use in their children’s / community’s schools. Although recycling facilities are not available locally, we still separate our waste in order to create a culture of recycling in-house and to make it easier for anyone who collects waste at the landfill site.
* Promoting our local nature reserves and engaging with their conservation experts to support our efforts to provide information about local birdlife and to work towards having only indigenous vegetation on our property.
* Engaging our guests in our efforts to reduce environmental impacts by informing them of our activities, and encouraging them to reduce their own footprint during their stay.

**Social and Cultural Impacts**

* Creating a visitor experience that features the nature and culture of the area in which we are located, not only in the design and décor of our facilities, but also in the menu offerings of our restaurant and in promoting things for our guests to see, do and purchase.
* Engaging with our local community to pursue development projects that meet their needs and priorities.

**Economic Impact**

* Promoting opportunities for other businesses to benefit from tourism by sharing information with our guests about local attractions and activities.
* Providing employment opportunities that give preference to people from the local area, and providing them with a working environment that is not only fair and non-discriminatory, but that also adheres to legislated requirements for the sector.
* Actively engage in local tourism forums to encourage strategic partnerships that benefit tourism development in the area.
* Pursuing a purchasing strategy that favours local and small businesses, as well as products that are Fair Trade-certified and less harmful to the environment.

**Quality Tourism Experience**

* We pride ourselves in offering an experience that exceeds the expectations of our guests, not only in our rooms service but also in our teambuilding, events hosting, and our restaurant. We invite guest feedback so that we can improve the quality of their experience and we provide regular training to staff so that they are empowered to do their jobs well and have a positive work experience.

**Healthy and Safe Business**

* We have a number of measures in place that ensure our workplace is safe for staff and guests alike. These include appropriate safety equipment and training for staff in procedures that ensure a safe and healthy workplace.

We acknowledge that the responsible tourism journey is one of constant improvement and we commit to reviewing the systems referred to above from time to time to ensure that they are meeting our goals effectively.

We also commit to ensuring that all our staff are welcome to provide input to our policy and related activities in order to improve our performance. Staff receive training in order to ensure that their role in our business operations contributes to meeting our responsible tourism objectives.

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The Stone Guest HouseTeam