

Athnamulloch Cottage- Operating Instructions.



Welcome to Athnamulloch Cottage! It is about 200 years old and was still in use as a family home until the second half of the 20th century. The Forestry Commission Scotland now owns it. The cottage is five miles west of the end of the public road in Glen Affric although it can be reached via a rough track with vehicles with reasonable ground clearance. A Forestry Commission key is needed to access this track.

Trees for Life has a 25 year lease and renovated the cottage in 2016 to provide a warm, weather-proof base for volunteer tree planting teams working in Glen Affric.

We have now started (Summer 2017) to rent the facility to private organised groups for short periods. Please treat the cottage with respect and leave it just how you found it only with a little less gas/ wood and a little more poo. Please remove everything you bring. It is important that you read these brief guidelines before and during your stay at Athnamulloch to ensure that it is ready for the next group and continues to function as intended.

Overview of facility.

Accommodation - the cottage sleeps 12 in basic accommodation with a dormitory room for 6, a bunk room for 4 and a small room for 2.



Upstairs dormitory

Common Room - sitting area for 12 people with Kitchen ensuite



Common Room

Kitchen - fully equipped with cooking and eating gear



Kitchen (off the Common Room)



Toilet - composting, in its own space



Drying Room - for all your wet clothing + private washing space

- Communications - forget it. You are remote from the world - no mobile phone signal, internet or telephone. Bliss.....
- However there is a satellite phone for emergencies inside the front door on the right. It must remain here.
- Power - solar panels to a bank of batteries
- Water - drinking water comes from a rainwater collection system piped into the kitchen via a UV filter. Cooking and cleaning water is collected from the nearby river.
- Sewage - the toilet is a dry compost facility.
- Food waste - to be removed by you and not buried in the ground !
- Gas - a bottled gas supply feeds the kitchen cooker.
- Firewood - logs are supplied in the barn
- We provide : Kitchen/cooking gear, Firewood, Matches, Gas.
- You need to bring : Pillow cases, Sleeping bags, Food, Toilet roll, Headtorch, Matches.

Detailed Instructions and Information

Kitchen

- The kitchen is fully supplied with a comprehensive and sufficient array of cooking equipment, with enough utensils for 12 people.

Kitchen storage

- Store food on racks, cupboards and where you can find space. The kitchen cupboards are labelled to help with organisation. Perishable foods are best kept outside on the south side of the building (in front of the door) or in the porch. Dairy goods can be placed in the burn where there should be a plastic crate that keeps milk bottles from floating away.

- Please return all items to where they were found and keep items in order with the labels around the kitchen.

Gas cooker

- Standard oven, grill and hobs but note that if the electricity isn't working, the sparker won't light the hobs and you'll need to use matches. Take care when lighting the oven or grill with a match.

- Be aware of the shelving in the oven, as it can be prone to collapse, take extra caution when taking things in and out of the oven. Cook large heavy trays of food low in the oven.

Gas

- Two gas bottles are attached to the system and stand on the north side of the building under the kitchen window-mounted change over mechanism. the indicator on the change over system show bottle on right is full and open.

- If both bottles run out (we hope not) a third emergency bottle is available. Use the gas bottle wrench (hanging in the porch) to change the bottles over. Loosen by turning clockwise (reverse thread). PLEASE tell us you have done.

- If a bottle runs empty please leave a note on the table for our caretaker. Please turn Gas off at bottles when you leave the bothy.



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Water

- Drinking water – the water supply to the kitchen comes from the tank, which holds 450 litres. It may run out in dry spells. It is filtered switched on underneath sink, look for green light) and treated with UV and potable. However please note that if the power supply fails the UV working and water should then be boiled just to be on the safe side.

- If water is not flowing then the tank is probably empty, when you arrive it idea to flush a few buckets through the system regardless. This can be onto the roof above the tank while opening the tap inside the drying

If there is water in the tank, then check that the filter is full of water, if not red button on top and watch it fill until a little water comes out the top, the air out of the system.

- The supply to the drying room is unfiltered and not drinking quality.



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- Cooking and washing water - collect in buckets provided from the river. Ensure to collect drinking water upstream from wherever any washing/disturbance takes place. All water not sourced from the kitchen sink should be boiled before drinking.

Wood burners

- There are 3 - one in the Common Room, one in the ground-floor bedroom and one in the Drying Room. All use a considerable amount of wood - please only use if you have to. The fire in the Common Room is very efficient and if you have it on the room will heat up fast and you'll be opening windows, so good is modern insulation to the walls.

- Firewood - stored in the steading barn (key on a pink ribbon hanging in the porch). There is a wheel barrow in the barn for carrying logs to the cottage. Kindling can be cut/split from the builders' offcuts and timber stripped out from the building- Watch for nails!

- Please chop some kindling in preparation for the next group- this applies to all fireplaces.

- Lighting – firelighters are provided and there may be a supply of cardboard to start fire with. Kindling takes very readily with the vents open on the stove, but the hardwood logs won't necessarily take directly from the kindling, so the fire may need to be 'nurtured' with the vents open for a bit until the logs have fully caught.

- Safety – nothing should be left touching the sides of any of the wood burners – they get very hot and the odd log has ignited after falling against the side of the big stove. You can also burn yourself on the 'hub' bits of the stove door handles.

- Cooking on the common room stove – the oven in this burner has been used to cook a little – sometimes with great success, sometimes not! If the fire is lit, it is a good idea to put a pot of water on the top to warm up for washing up/boil for drinking - saves a bit of gas.

- Ash – full ash pans will inhibit the venting of the stoves if they get too full. At the end of your stay please clean out the ash (if cold) and scatter it in the grass to the north of the cottage and away from the track leading to the bridge.

Windows

- Blinds – to close blinds pull silver trim slowly! To release push the silver trim towards window and raise slowly.

Please use with care - they are delicate.

- Midge screens – the downstairs windows have externally fitted screens and should be left on during midge season. Upstairs windows have opening midge screens to allow access to the windows. Please ensure these are opened with care and that windows are left slightly ajar as to not impede upon the screen. The silver handle can be pulled down once to open air vent but not the window – good for waterproof ventilation during the night.

Electricity

- Electricity for lighting and a few other minor power demands (such as the water filter) is solar powered. This works well in the months with longer daylight but tends to run out each day during the autumn and winter months, before recharging the following day.

- There are some wind-up battery powered lanterns in the main room that work quite well.

- Head-torches are essential.

Outside rooms:

Toilet

- We have a dry composting toilet, used just like any other but please note the following points :
- **Men** - please don't stand to pee into the pedestal – if you do, you will miss the urine separator which is the magic step to stopping the poo from stinking. There is a urinal for you to use.
- The toilet only requires a very small amount of wood shavings/sawdust in the 'bowl' each day. One of the small scoops in the shavings hopper should be added in the morning and in the evening. Please don't throw more in – it's not required and we'll run out of shavings!
- **NOTHING** - should go in the toilet apart from poo, wee and toilet roll. Sanitary products and everything else should go in the sanitary bin beside the toilet.
- Alcohol gel/ sanitizer is provided to clean hands after toilet use.
- Raking the mound- This should be done if a large group is staying for one week or more. Using the metal hooks in the window sill, lift the concrete pit cover and place to one side. Then using the rake pull material towards you to create a more level surface, preventing build up under the toilet pan.

Drying room

- Plenty of hangers, racks and clothes lines for drying clothes.
- The stove does use a lot of wood and gets the room very hot. Please take care that nothing is left touching the stove.
- This area can be used as a personal wash area as it is well lit and there are no windows!

Keys and Doors

- Front Door, Drying Room and Toilet - the same key opens and all doors to the outside. **The key safe shown in the picture is the back of the porch- the code will be provided to you on booking.**
- Locking up – when you're leaving the bothy unattended, please lock the three outer doors (front, toilet, drying room) and leave the key under the gas bottle.
- Outer doors – these are prevented from opening back fully on hinges by metal stays which protect the hinges from being overstrained. However, these stays will not withstand strong gusts, so please don't leave any of the outer doors open for too long if it's windy.



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TREE FOR LIFE - Special instructions

Parking- Please park on the east side of the burn in a space on the North side of the track. Minding not to block access to the larger ford across the river Affric itself.

Flood event- The vehicle is kept on the civilisation side of the burn for this reason. There is also a flood barrier for the front door of the bothy, it is simple to operate and should be installed if you feel there is a risk of rising water levels reaching the door. It is put in place and then using tool, expanded to fit snug.

Kitchen waste- The black bucket in the kitchen is the compost bin. When full empty it into a bag and store in the metal bin outside the front door until the end of the week.

- Do not leave perishable food items in the bothy when your stay is over, dry goods can be left on the free food shelf if packaged well.

Compost Disposal: Please take this out with you.

Recycling-Bottles/cans/plastics- Drop off behind the public hall in Cannich or at the Recycling Centre in Inverness. If you brought it in, you must take it out. We cannot provide recycling facilities.

Pillow cases - There is some spare bedding in the small upstairs bedroom for those who forget to bring pillow cases and/or towels. But please do not use this unless essential.

Tea-towels- Fresh tea-towels will be supplied each week but please bring out your dirty ones and leave at caretakers house with key. If they are still wet please hang them about in bothy.

Final Cleaning- - Before you leave the premises please clean the whole bothy and leave as you found it or better if possible. Cleaning materials can be found under the sink and there are various brooms and mop available. This should not take long as a group effort. Use only eco products.

Back up Generator

For power shortage/outage

- **EMERGENCY** supply.

If you are there during the latter months of the year when the days are short, it is possible to use the generator if the solar batteries run out. This is not ideal - it is noisy in the peaceful glen and uses much petrol which does not improve our green credentials much. However you may feel the need to run it as it will provide power for lights for the evening. One tank full- will provide 3-4 hours.

It does not, however, charge the batteries - yet.

The generator will be stored in the toilet at this time - in the summer it remains in the steading barn. The **petrol** to run it is ALWAYS stored in the barn. Please notify the caretaker of how much you use.

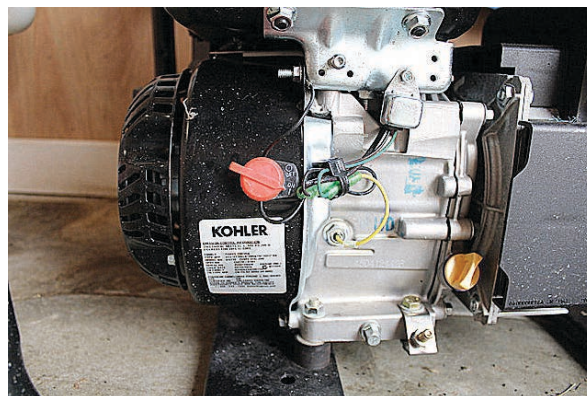
To run up the generator do the following:

1. Move it outside the toilet - 2 people to carry – please don't drag it.
2. Attach the long blue power cord to the BLUE socket on the generator, lay it out and connect to the BLUE socket on the backside of the porch.
3. In the porch there is a large red and yellow switch up to the left of the door. Turn it to the right - marked II (photo shows the switch in NORMAL operating mode when power is coming from the solar panels on the roof)



Change-over switch in the porch - upper left from the door

4. At the generator turn the RED round switch to ON - this sends power down the lead.



ON/OFF power switch

5. There are now 2 black levers to toggle : choke and fuel. Put both to O (ON).

6. Locate the pull cord on top of the generator and pull hard. (It should fire up first time but if not pull it until the generator leaps into life).

7. Immediately move the choke lever to I (OFF)- otherwise it will splutter and run too slowly.



Choke and fuel levers

If you have followed all these steps and put the porch switch to the correct direction, LO! there will be light, and all will feel happy and bright again.

If not, darkness will cover the earth and you'll have to tell lots of ghost stories until bed-time.