

HOTEL GOES HI-TECH TO HELP VISITORS HOOK A FISH

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09:00 - 07 April 2006



A Highland fishing hotel in a picturesque lochside location is using modern technology to attract more visitors to the area and help them catch more fish.

The Overscaig House Hotel between Lairg and Scourie, in central Sutherland, has installed computer equipment that will allow anglers to view maps or satellite views of available trout lochs and find out how to get to them.

It will also enable anyone considering a fishing trip to the area to see images and fishing records for the best spots and to read tips on the recommended ways to fish them. A grant from Caithness and Sutherland Enterprise (Case) for half the cost of the project has allowed the hotel's proprietors Martin and Jan Fraser to develop a uniquely interactive website, utilising the skills of Highland web company Digital Routes.

The website at www.overscaighotel.co.uk gives details of such things as local walking conditions, bird sightings and fishing updates.

A series of webcams will also provide live pictures of Loch Shin, views of the surrounding hills and local wildlife.

It is hoped the sophisticated equipment and detailed website will establish the Overscaig site as a favourite source of information about central Sutherland.

And, despite the hotel's remote location, guests will still have access to 21st century technology.

A wireless network will allow visitors to access their e-mails and carry out internet-based business or leisure activities.

The Frasers bought Overscaig House Hotel 18 months ago and are now restoring it to its former glory.

Mr Fraser said: "Already the website is encouraging people to come up for a visit and improving the hotel's image. As it develops, we are sure it will continue to do so.

"It enables people to journey from the city to the wilderness equipped with all the information they need to make the most of their experience.

"Once here, they can enjoy a complete break in a remote Highland landscape but, if necessary, they can use technology to keep tabs on important developments."

Case project officer Keith Muir said: "Case is keen to support this exciting project which is breathing new life into the economically fragile area of central Sutherland.

"By making full use of modern technology, businesses throughout even the most remote areas can compete on level terms within the global market."

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