



Deepdale Farms



Deepdale Farms is an exemplar of farm diversification based on demand from visitor markets.

Deepdale was originally, and still is, a working farm but has converted disused barns into hostel accommodation, providing camping facilities, tourist information, shops, yurts, tipis and events all dedicated to servicing their particular niche of the visitor market.

Deepdale Farm has been a family farm for four generations, with Alister Borthwick and his son Jason now at the helm. Changes in technology had led to a number of redundant farm buildings; but Jason, using his experience with the backpacker scene in Australia, saw a gap for hostel accommodation servicing the nearby Norfolk Coast Path trail.

Taking things forward Deepdale have:

- Converted one of the disused barns into Deepdale Backpackers hostel, with further buildings converted to meet demand.
- Created a small camping field that has grown to include first tipis, then yurts and shepherd huts, meeting increased demand for glamping.
- An independent Tourist information centre was developed to service the needs of so many visitors.
- A shop complex at Dalegate Market supported by the influx of tourists was developed and is now an attraction in its own right.
- Created festivals and events to bring attention to the business and wider area.



What have they gained?

- Diversified a working farm into a backpacking, camping and glamping complex
- It now accommodates over 50,000 bed nights a year and has a turnover in excess of £300k
- Events, such as Christmas Markets, attract up to 10,000 people a year

Leasing the tourism side and shop/café/tourist information centre tenancies mean that the day-to-day running of the business does not fall to Jason anymore, however he still retains a degree of control and vision for the overall development.



Top Tips

- 1** To use social media as a key tool to inform people what is going on.
- 2** To always give positive weather forecasts as this is key to visitor decision making.
- 3** Events are well worth doing, just as long as you manage the costs and don't spend huge amounts in early years. Deepdale used a Jazz Festival to put them on the map. It was a great marketing tool, which outweighed the cost of running it.
- 4** Work together with other like-minded businesses, it gives much greater reach and forms a real community.
- 5** Don't ignore the potential of using your business as a film location. Deepdale have hosted BBC dramas, wildlife films, adverts and was turned into the rice paddies of South Korea for the James Bond film "Die another Day"



"Focus on who your visitors are. This means thinking about the facilities and services they are looking for and offer info/services based on their needs. Don't be afraid to diversify and try new things."

Also make sure to tailor marketing to your audience - making sure different elements of the business are marketed using the right tools to reach specific people - creating a buzz in the right place."

Jason Borthwick - Owner

Find out more...

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