



planning farm tourism

Need planning permission?
Read on...

Achieving planning permission for your bright new diversification project can present itself as a daunting hurdle, especially within the confines of the Lake District. Now help is at hand from a free rural planning consultancy service based in Kendal.

A new rural planning guidance service has been established in our region to assist with farm diversification and rural development. Base in the Kendal offices of Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency (CREA), the Rural Planning Facilitation Service (RPFS) is available to farmers and small rural enterprises, and covers Cumbria, Lancashire and Cheshire. Their aim is to complement the business and environmental advice already available through the partnership agencies. The RPFS team of planning advisers and a planning facilitator are all qualified planners with local knowledge and experience of rural planning in this region. With funding from the Northwest Development Agency, they work alongside Farm Business advisers and Business Link advisers to enhance a client-oriented, integrated approach to advice and business support.

The RPFS planning advisers will visit the site and talk through the proposals; liaise with the farm/business adviser; examine the planning history and relevant policies; discuss the proposal with the local planning authority and other relevant agencies; and prepare a detailed planning assessment report. There is no charge for the service.

Carol Crawshaw, rural planning facilitator for the service, said: "The RPFS is very innovative. We build on the experience and expertise of successful rural business advisory services, and other initiatives in Cumbria and the northern region. "We aim to work with farmers and small rural enterprises to generate ideas which are financially viable, environmentally sound, and acceptable in planning terms. The experience of the Service so far suggests that the best advice is to understand the process and be innovative and realistic.

RPFS is managed by Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency in partnership with Business Link North and Western Lancashire and the South Cheshire

Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The RPFS Team of 17 locally based professional planners has been involved with 875 clients throughout the Region since it was first initiated in October 2001. With a wide range of experience, they contribute to generating and facilitating new ideas for rural development. One of the aims of the Service is to be responsive to, and positive about, changing ideas and circumstances. We try to help putting ideas into place.

The Service is widely regarded as a model of good practice.

For further information, telephone the Rural Planning Facilitation Service at Cumbria Rural Enterprise Agency on 01539 726624 (Carol Crawshaw) or e-mail carol@crea.co.uk; or Gemma Barnes e-mail gemma@crea.co.uk



The planning team based in Kendal

Cumbria Farm Tourism Initiative

Judith and Everley Buckley of Hill Farm, Ings, near Kendal have won a grant from North West Farm Tourism Initiative for both capital and marketing.

They plan to build six stables, a tack room and teaching room. This extension to the existing horse livery business will enable residential courses to be run - tailor made to suit any equine discipline, for clients of all ages and abilities.

Client's horses will be housed in the new stables, and clients will be able to stay with one of a number of tourist board accommodation providers to suit any pocket. The existing indoor school will enable courses to be run all year round whatever the weather conditions.

Judith is qualified as a British Horse Society Intermediate Instructor and her son Simon has recently returned home after gaining national success at both Junior and Senior levels. This extension of the existing business will create one more full time job, another riding instructor.

The Buckley's 90 acres farm was formerly run as a milk herd unit. But they decided to sell off the cattle and milk quota, and concentrate on Judith's strengths as a riding instructor. They still farm sheep on the land. Son Simon, still 21, has recently returned home after a spell with Warrington-based showjumper Arian Marsh. Simon was part of the successful Junior Euro Team 99 which



won the gold medal, and Simon himself also went on to win best senior newcomer at Wembley 2001.

Everley said: "In 1996 we decided to develop more into the riding business, and now cater for DIY livery – up to full livery, and we will even compete a horse for the client.

"We have some top class girl instructors working for us, and we aim to offer a very good professional facility here, which includes one-to-one teaching, if that is what the client wishes."

"We hope to boost the local economy, as we will be sending clients to stay in local accommodation."

Carl Bendelow of CFTI, and Katie Burton of Cumbria Tourist Board, have been the main driving forces with grant aid.

Everley said: "Both Katie and Carl are full of

enthusiasm and offer all the help they can give. For planning permission they pointed us to the Rural Planning Facilitation Service in Kendal (part of CREA) and they are being very helpful, and are driving some other planning issues for us now.

For further details contact Carl Bendelow, Farm Tourism Advisor at CREA on 01768 891414 or email carl@crea.co.uk

Eat the view - Herdwick meat to top Outlets

National Trust and NWFTI are working with Lakeland farmers to find new outlets for Herdwick sheep meat. The Borrowdale Herdwick Project, begun in 2002 to support Herdwick breeders, now has environment-friendly meat boxes which can be mail-ordered, or sold direct to consumers. The boxes are wrapped in Herdwick fleeces to retain their cool. "We wanted something that is both reusable and bio-degradable," said Sandy Boyd, the Food Produce Marketing Advisor for the Trust. "We were delighted when we realised we could use Herdwick fleece to solve the problem."

The meat also now features on the menu of two of the Lake District's top hotels: namely The Samling in Windermere which regularly attracts top stars like Posh 'n' Becks; and The Borrowdale Hotel in the heart of Herdwick country.



“New Fishing Lake”



An Altrincham farming family have just completed a two-year excavation project of a massive 2.5 acres fishing lake on their land to create a new sporting water for local anglers, all with the help of a North West Farm Tourism marketing and capital grant. Karen and James Bushell are tenants of the National Trust's Manor Farm, in the picturesque village of Dunham Massey, South Manchester. After an encouraging 'thumbs-up' from their landlords, they took consultation from experts to design the lake, which is beside 7.5 acres of natural woodland.

Karen, who runs their new business, says: "It was always a wet part on the farm in an area of heavy clay, which was impossible to drain. We knew there was natural springs in there, and we carried out tests to see if the

springs would be sufficient to keep the lake supplied naturally."

"So in many ways, we have taken this part of the land back to it's original state, as most ancient maps of our area show quite clearly it was a boggy part back then," adds Karen.

The Bushells have planted reeds and other natural plants, while letting the lake 'stand' for the spring and summer last year, to allow the build-up of natural food for the seven types of coarse fish they have stocked the water with. An island in the middle of the oval shaped lake has been heavily planted to create shade and an environment for wildlife and native birds.

Pegs have been set out to allow fair, competitive fishing, and the amenity is now open from dawn to dusk on mixed daily tickets, for both fishing clubs and individual anglers. Most of the business has come by word of mouth, although Karen did send out flyers to all fishing tackle shops in the area. Considering their location, it is not surprising to hear the fishing lake has become an immediate success. Karen says: "We are in a massive catchments area for a business like this, the Warrington Anglers Club alone has 12,000 members. We've been very busy since opening last month (March) and that's without much advertising."



The Farm Tourism Initiative help and advice came via advisor John Dickinson. John said: "The Bushell's farm has suffered from a drop in revenue over recent years and the need to diversify was a necessity.

"Karen and James have been realistic in their forecasts and projected returns, realising that providing a quality facility is the key to success. Early indications are that 2004 will a busy year for them and their hard work and dedication will be rewarded."

Contact: John Dickinson -
farmtourism@btinternet.com or 01942
493415



**National Farm
Attractions
Network**
(incorporating Rural Attractions)

“Jim Keetch” Farm Attraction of the Year Award 2004

The National Farm Attractions Network (NFAN) has launched a Farm Attraction of the Year Awards Scheme with the first award to be made in Autumn 2004.

Are you open to general public? Do you place high priority on visitor safety; enjoyment and experience; on-site parking and toilets; welfare

Cumbria Tourist Board



Welcome to Excellence courses are nationally recognised and aimed at those in a tourism business (large or small) who feel they want to brush up on customer care. The courses provide the opportunity to achieve excellence in customer service; exceed guest expectations; and provide a courteous environment where helpfulness and a warm welcome are standard.

There are five courses: **Welcome Host, Welcome Host Plus, Welcome All, Welcome Management and Welcome International**. All are one-day courses and the cost includes registration, certificate, badge and all refreshments. Once 50% of people in your business have attended a Welcome course, you can use their logo on your marketing material.

Which course is most appropriate to you?

Welcome Host - will provides communication skills and insights into customer expectations, helping you to provide service excellence and increased business performance. The key benefits of the course are:

- Understanding the tourism industry and its customers
- Delivering service excellence
- Successful communication

- Handling difficult situations
- Boosting business

Welcome ALL - all customers deserve excellent service and you need to be sure that you apply the same principles to everyone, and meet their specific needs. This course run by a sympathetic and enthusiastic trainer. The key benefits of the course are:

- Recognition of the benefits of an accessible service
- How to adopt a positive approach
- Effective communication skills
- How to improve the accessibility of your business
- Awareness of current legislation

Welcome Host Plus - has been introduced in reply to the demand for "something extra" once they have been on Welcome Host and have mastered the skills they have learned. The key benefits include:

- Advanced communication skills
- Ability to interact with different types of customer
- Understanding service recovery strategies
- Ability to convert enquiries into sales
- How to improve teamwork

Welcome Management - is aimed at all tourism managers or owners in all tourism businesses. The programme is highly effective, interactive and provides techniques needed to lead your team to success. Key benefits include:

- Understanding the importance of excellent customer service
- Build a profile of opportunities and threats facing your business
- Create your own customer service strategy
- Motivate staff
- Check your systems and procedures support your strategy
- Target business improvements

- Plan your own management development

Welcome International - this course has been designed so that everyone can extend a warm welcome to non-English speaking visitors. It provides delegates with a full phonetic guide covering pronunciation of common phrases in over 30 languages - a handy reference guide and a CD which gives vocal pronunciations for you to listen to and practice with. The key benefits of this course are:

- An introduction to key phrases in two selected languages
- An appreciation of cultural differences
- Takeaway guides covering over 30 different languages and cultures
- Overcome the fears of approaching customers in their own language

Welcome Line applies the issues of Welcome Host to customers on the telephone. It comprises of effective handling of telephone complaints, maximising opportunities for marketing and selling and developing a professional telephone manner. The key benefits of this course are:

- Confidence in handling telephone complaints
- Techniques in maximising opportunities to boost business
- Develop a professional approach to using the telephone

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of your animals; cleanliness and layout of the attraction; range of facilities at your attraction

- * Is it value for money?
- * Is there innovation in your approach?
- * Well-run and compliant with current legislation?

The award commemorates the NFAN founder Jim Keetch who died in 1998. Jim owned and managed his own Farm attraction in Welford, Northamptonshire.

The Network represents UK farm and rural attractions of all sizes and types. It provides a voice for this increasingly important part of the rural sector with

The categories are: Class A 50,000 plus visitors a year; Class B 20,000 - 49,999 visitors a year; Class C under 20,000 visitors a year

Deadline for entries is 30th June 2004, please contact Beth Gowling for an entry form (01536) 513397

NFAN,
Victoria House, 31-33 Victoria Street,
Kettering, Northampton
NN16 0BU

There are still places left on the current season's Welcome Host, Host Plus, Management and All courses scheduled to take place in Cumbria between May and July. Further courses will be run over the coming Autumn/Winter. Please contact Pauline Crossley at Cumbria Tourist Board on 015394 40446 or email pcrossley@gocumbria.org for further details or to make a provisional booking.

Welcome Host Plus	Tues 11 th May	Bassenthwaite, Keswick
Welcome Management	Wed 19 th May	Windermere
Welcome ALL	Thurs 20 th May	Penrith
Welcome Host	Tues 25 th May	Workington
Welcome Host	Tues 15 th June	Barrow
Welcome Host Plus	Tues 29 th June	Windermere
Welcome Management	Thurs 1 st July	Penrith
Welcome Host	Thurs 15 th July	Carlisle
Welcome ALL	Mon 19 th July	Windermere