

NETWORK NEWS

The newsletter of the
National Farm
Attractions Network



National
Farm
Attractions
Network

Issue 65 Autumn 2015

2016 NFAN CONFERENCE

2-4 February
Titanic Hotel, Liverpool

The Titanic Hotel in Liverpool has been chosen as the venue for the 2016 NFAN conference and trade show. We've got a spectacular line-up for you. Online bookings for tickets and exhibitor space will be available shortly at www.farmattractions.net.

Tuesday 2nd February

Optional visit to Stockley Farm Park, Cheshire. Informal evening meal.

Wednesday 3rd February

Open Day at Cheshire Farm Ice Cream Trade Show opens with pre-dinner drinks reception. Awards dinner.

Thursday 4th February

Conference and Trade Show.



A WINNING WALES TOUR

Kate Humble.

Croeso i Cymru the signs read (Welcome to Wales) as we crossed the border into Wales. From the Monmouthshire hills to the Pembrokeshire coast, 40 members of NFAN spent three days together in June visiting a range of attractions on the South Wales roadshow tour.

The tour started at TV presenter Kate Humble's farm near Monmouth. Humble by Nature specialises in running courses on a variety of topics, from small holding for beginners to building a pizza oven. Rachael Geddes gave a talk on the history and plans for Humble by Nature which is developing the visitor attraction side of the business with a new adventure play area, farm trail and animal barns to compliment the delightful café and farm shop. Afternoon tea was taken on the sunny terrace where we were joined by Kate Humble, her husband Ludo Graham and Farm Manager Tim Stephens, before heading off to the Vale Resort hotel just outside Cardiff where the group enjoyed a networking dinner.

Day two started at Cefn Mably Farm Park near Cardiff. We were welcomed by owner Rhys Edwards and his wife Alona who gave a talk on the challenges of getting planning permission for developing the farm park and the benefits of working with an experienced

planning consultant like Barry Davies from Davies & Co. Visitor numbers have exceeded all expectations and we saw at first hand the developments taking place to expand the coffee shop and bistro to provide extra seating for the indoor soft play barn.

The Farm Park is also home to the award-winning Moody Sow Farm Shop and we were delighted to sample their award-winning scotch eggs.

Lunch was at another award winner, the Cwmcerrig Farm Shop & Grill, and after a hearty lunch we heard from Roland Watkins, one of the members of the family who own and operate Cwmcerrig, on the secrets of building a successful destination farm shop.

The afternoon was spent at Heatherton World of Activities in Pembrokeshire. Operating a 'pay as you play' pricing model, Heatherton has expanded by innovating and adding new attractions over the years including the first automated Baseball batting cage in the UK. Charles Davies and Andrew McDonald gave the group an escorted tour of the park where we saw the newly installed high ropes course and the hedge maze which is due to open this year. Following the tour there was time to

try out some of the attractions, with the pedal boats and the go-karts being popular choices, though things did get a bit competitive on the track!

The final day saw the group head for Folly Farm. Since it opened in 1988 Folly Farm has grown to become one of the UK's biggest Farm Parks with over 400k visitors pa. Still with farm animals at its heart it now includes zoo animals and boasts Europe's largest undercover vintage funfair. Following a welcome talk from Head of Marketing Zoe Wright, the group spent time exploring the Jolly Barn which houses the farm animals in creatively and highly themed areas. Even though Folly Farm has the lure of big zoo animals, visitors still highly value the opportunity to get up close and interact with the farm animals, something which isn't possible with the zoo animals. Led by Zoo Manager Tim Morpew the group was privileged to see the lions being fed and heard about the value of investing in themed enclosures.

Thanks to all the farm parks and attractions who opened their doors to us and provided welcome refreshments and to Davies & Co who sponsored the South Wales Roadshow.



Diary Events 2015

Tulleys Farm, West Sussex - Open Day
Friday 9th Oct



Seasonal events can be big business. Tulleys Farm have evolved to become a seasonal events destination, opening for Easter, the Summer Maize Maze, Spooktober Fest halloween family fun by day, Shocktober Fest nights, and a fast growing Christmas event. In a departure from the usual schedule for an NFAN Open Day, the event starts at lunchtime on Friday 9th with presentations and behind-the-scenes tours and goes on into the night for the chance to experience the Shocktober Fest event. Discount accommodation has been arranged at the nearby Holiday Inn Hotel on Thursday night and/or Friday night. For details see the NFAN website.

Visit NFAN at the Farm Business Innovation Show – 11th to 12th November 2015

The Farm Business Innovation Show is the show designed for all farmers, smallholders, land owners, estates and everybody with an interest in rural business, who are looking for new ways to use their land to bring in more money. This is not an agricultural show with farm machinery, plant and livestock, but a farming business show with new ideas, advice, suppliers and resources to make your business more profitable.

Stand 940

We'd love to see you at the show - www.farmbusinessshow.co.uk

Behind the s Farm Park

BBC Countryfile presenter Adam Henson welcomed NFAN members to his Cotswold Farm Park for an open day in May. The event was a sell out with 150 members attending. A networking dinner the night before at the historic Wyck Hill House Hotel was well attended with over 50 members present. The wine was kindly sponsored by Magenta Star.

Winner of the 2014 Farm Attraction of the Year, Adam Henson's Cotswold Farm Park was the first 'farm park' of its kind and was opened by Adam's father Joe Henson in 1971. NFAN members heard presentations from Adam, Farm Park Manager Kate Lord, and from members of the Cotswold Farm Park team who spoke passionately about their areas of responsibility.

The group split for tours of the farm park taking in the Touch Barn, Woodland Walk and Conservation Area, Farm Safari Tour, and also learning about the Cotswold Farm Park brand and how it is being applied to various products.



Adam Henson.

Thanks to Adam and his team for making us so welcome and to Marsh & Co Insurance and Regency Purchasing Group for sponsoring the event.

NFAN open days are a great opportunity to see behind the scenes at how other farm parks operate, to learn and network with fellow members and trade suppliers. The next open day is at Tulleys Farm on Friday 9th October.

RECORD BREAKERS!



scarecrows. Meanwhile at Adventure Valley in Durham, Bertie sprinted into the record books to become the world's fastest tortoise covering the 5.48m course in a speedy 19.59 seconds. If you are a

Congratulations to two NFAN members who are featured in the new Guinness World Records 2016 book. Visitors to the National Forest Adventure Farm in Burton on Trent got busy with old clothes and

record breaker the NFAN office would love to hear from you.



Bertie the tortoise (above) receives his award, and (left), one of the many record breaking scarecrows.

scenes at Cotswold



The captivated audience hangs on every word of the inspirational talk by Adam Henson.

£8 million funding for rural leisure and tourism businesses

Details of the new European funding worth over £8 million have been released. Grants provide a boost for rural businesses such as NFAN members by supporting projects that promote tourism, bring high-quality jobs to rural areas, and grow the local economy. The grants are available through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPS).

Further information is available in the resources area of the NFAN website.



FACEBOOK NETWORKING GROUP

Don't forget to join the NFAN Facebook Group and connect with fellow members. We have 50 members so far who are benefitting by sharing advice, helping with recruitment, sharing supplier details and finding new business opportunities.

It is a closed group, so only members of the group will be able to see posts. You need to join through your personal Facebook account not your business page. Email info@farmattractions.net with the email address you'd like your invitation to join to be sent to.

Business Rates – resources on the website

Business rates and the way they are assessed are a hot topic again. NFAN's advice via Davies & Co can be found on the resources section of the NFAN website. Members are encouraged to read the advice notes before submitting any figures to the Valuation Office.

New members

Farm attractions

Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo, Pembrokeshire

Gullivers Farm & Dinosaur Park, Milton Keynes

Lower Drayton Fun Farm, Staffordshire

Mark King, Newmarket Suffolk

The Ark Open Farm, Northern Ireland

Trade members

Balloon Supply & Distribution Ltd, Surrey

Fenland Leisure Products, Cambridgeshire

Nuneaton Signs, Warwickshire

Paragon Entertainments, York

COP updated version

The Industry Code of Practice has recently been updated. The latest version can be downloaded from the link on the NFAN website.

NFAN Committee

Chairman Colin Evans Cantref Adventure Farm
Treasurer Richard Waring Rand Farm Park
Barry Davies Davies & Co
Matthew Heast Mead Open Farm
Lesley Knight Rupert Oliver's Ideas Factory
Neil Milbourn Walby Farm Park

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Phil Pickersgill Innovative Leisure
Louise Possegger Springbarn Farm Park
Richard Powell Park Hall Countryside Experience
Steve Vinden Odds Farm Park
Andrew Wolfe Willows Activity Farm

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Tel: 07841 562559
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All general enquiries should be directed to the NFAN office - tel: 01904 615059, email info@farmattractions.net.

Helpline – free advice for NFAN members

As a NFAN member you are entitled to free advice from the following experts. Please limit your free calls to one per annum. The experts can advise you further, subject to their terms of business. You will find them all prepared to offer special rates for NFAN members.

Planning legislation and business rates

Barry Davies, Davies & Co. (Chartered Surveyors)
Tel: 01536 524808
Email: info@daviesandco.co.uk
www.daviesandco.co.uk

Specialising in planning legislation including change of use, enforcement notices, advertising boards and business rates appeals.

Health & Safety/Environmental Health Guidance

Ray Hipkin, Health & Safety Practitioner
Tel: 01844 353407
Email: randkhipkin@btinternet.com
www.rayhipkin.co.uk

Exclusive insurance scheme for NFAN members

Steve Taylor, Marsh and Company Insurance Brokers
Tel: 0116 204 3400
Email: staylor@marshcompany.co.uk
www.marshcompany.co.uk

Providers of competitive, specialist insurance including unique cover extensions for E.coli outbreaks. We offer a site survey and full insurance needs assessment.

Catering

Chris Brown, Turpin Smale Catering Consultants
Tel: 020 7620 0011
Email: chris.brown@turpinsmale.co.uk
www.turpinsmale.co.uk

Advice on all matters catering including help with increasing sales, improving standards and making margins.

Accountancy, taxation and financial services

Ben Young, Haines Watts
Tel: 01536 483513
Email: nfan@hwca.com
www.hwca.com

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