

## NFAN Committee

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## 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](mailto:info@daviesandco.co.uk)  
[www.daviesandco.co.uk](http://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](mailto:randkhipkin@btinternet.com)  
[www.rayhipkin.co.uk](http://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](mailto:staylor@marshcompany.co.uk)  
[www.marshcompany.co.uk](http://www.marshcompany.co.uk)

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**Catering**  
 Chris Brown, Turpin Smale Catering Consultants  
 Tel: 020 7620 0011  
 Email: [chris.brown@turpinsmale.co.uk](mailto:chris.brown@turpinsmale.co.uk)  
[www.turpinsmale.co.uk](http://www.turpinsmale.co.uk)

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

**Employment and Human Resources advice and support**  
 Judi Badenoch & Ros Hammond, Cranbrook Consulting  
 Tel: 01628 857771  
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 Small Business HR Consultancy

# NETWORK NEWS

The newsletter of the National Farm Attractions Network



Issue 71 Autumn 2017



## New openings

NFAN members are investing £20m annually in new developments, according to the NFAN How's Business survey 2016. See page 3 for a brief roundup of some of the newest attractions, including the new William's Den in East Yorkshire (pictured).

## Northern Ireland Roadshow Tour

This year's summer roadshow tour was to Northern Ireland and started with a visit to the W5 interactive science centre and a Belfast City sightseeing open top bus tour. The group enjoyed a networking dinner with wine kindly provided by Timberplay. The evening ended in The Crown Liquor Saloon, a wonderfully ornate National Trust owned bar.

Day two was a coach tour with a full day of attraction visits starting with Streamvale Farm

Park where Judith and Johnston Morrow, and Chris and Helen Wilson gave us a great insight into how the farm park is the latest in a long history of enterprising developments by the family. This was followed by a hearty lunch at McKee's Farm Shop where owner Colin McKee gave a talk. Then it was on to The Ark Open Farm where Stewart and Lorraine Donaldson gave a tour of their farm park including the eponymous large wooden ark and the extensive nature trail. The fourth and final visit of the day was to We



Are Vertigo where manager Kate McNally gave the group a tour of the trampoline park and Alpine themed indoor soft play area. Delegates also had an opportunity to try out the indoor Sky Trail. The day ended with drinks outside in the evening sun and a delicious meal at the Mourne Seafood Bar.

The final day was spent at Titanic, the world's number one visitor attraction. Following a tour and talk from Ruth

## 2018 NFAN Conference

30 Jan to 1 February  
 The International Centre, Telford

the internationalcentre  
 telford



Next year's Annual Conference and Trade Show is set to be the biggest yet with more space for trade stands and an exciting conference programme. Tickets and trade stands will go on sale in the autumn.

**Tuesday 30th January**

1.00pm – 5.00pm  
 Optional afternoon visits to nearby NFAN members  
 7.30pm  
 Informal networking dinner & bowling

**Wednesday 31st January**

10.00am – 3.00pm  
 Open Day at Park Hall the Countryside Experience  
 6.00pm – 8.00pm  
 Trade show and drinks reception  
 8.00pm  
 Annual dinner and awards

**Thursday 1st February**

8.30am – 4.00pm  
 Trade show and conference

Cleland, Visitor Attraction Manager, the group enjoyed a final lunch together before heading off to the airports and home. A great end to three great days in the Belfast area.

Thanks to the Roadshow Tour Sponsor Davies & Co., and to everyone we visited who welcomed us so warmly. The NFAN summer roadshow tour takes place mid-June each year, details of next year's tour will be announced in the new year.

**GREENSPAN PROJECTS**  
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## BESPOKE DESIGN & BUILD FOR FARM VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Greenspan is a family run business with extensive experience working with farms to create bespoke, cost effective attractions to increase revenue including:

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## 2017 Diary of Events

**Cannon Hall Farm Open Day**  
**South Yorkshire**  
**Wednesday 20th September**  
 Winner of Farm Attraction of the Year 2016. Dinner the night before will be served in Cannon Hall Farm's new White Bull restaurant

**Counter Terrorism Awareness Workshop**  
**Tuesday 3rd October**  
 Willows Activity Farm, St Albans

**Health & Safety Workshop**  
**Wednesday 11th October**  
 Barleylands, Essex

**Succession Planning Workshop**  
**Wednesday 8th November**  
 Bocketts Farm Park, Surrey

**Marketing for non-marketers**  
**Wednesday 22nd November**  
 Farmer Copley's, Yorkshire



## An open day with Peter Rabbit and friends



**Willows Adventure Farm Park near St Albans hosted an open day in May attended by over 150 NFAN members. The night before around 80 guests enjoyed a networking dinner at Tewin Bury Farm Hotel and an inspiring talk about seizing opportunities from owner Vaughan Williams.**

Open Day delegates heard from Andrew Wolfe about the history of Willows before splitting into groups for a tour of the extensive range of attractions including the new Peter Rabbit themed play area created by Lappset Creative. After lunch there were presentations from; Denise

Wallin Head of Marketing, Antonia Wilson and Sarah Taylor gave an insight into events at Willows, and Paul Sharpe from Kids Play Childcare spoke about the Willows day nursery business. Despite the excellent presentations it was Peter Rabbit and friends who stole the show getting the audience up and dancing. Thanks to Willows for hosting the open day, to sponsors Lappset Creative and David Taylor Design & Play, Kids Play Childcare for sponsoring the wine at the networking dinner and Hatfield Park Farm and Standalone Farm for opening their doors to NFAN members the day before

### Farm Park For Sale

Long standing NFAN members Beryl and Roger Hoskins are due to retire and have put Highfield Happy Hens near Derby up for sale through Bagshaws. We wish them all the best in their retirement.

## New members

### Farm parks

Arden Estate  
 Causeway Fun Farm  
 Hounslow Urban Farm  
 JandJ Alpacas  
 Riverside Hub  
 Trethorne Leisure Park

### Trade members

Being Creative Limited  
 Bridle Insurance  
 Day Out With The Kids  
 KOMPAN (UK) Ltd  
 Play Area Hygiene Services  
 Proludic Ltd  
 Simply Planning  
 Teddy Mountain (UK) Ltd

## Business Rates update

The ratings review process is stirring up a great deal of controversy. NFAN has been working hard behind the scenes in meetings with the VOA, engaging professional advisors skilled in this area and now gathering case studies. We have set up a working group of farm parks who are willing to pool experience and information in anticipation of the legal challenges ahead. If you would like to join this working group please contact the NFAN office.

## New openings

These are exciting times for farm attractions with great potential for growth and success.

**Results of the NFAN How's Business survey 2016 showed that NFAN members are investing £20m annually in new developments. Here are just some of the newest attractions and investments.**

**William's Den** is a new £3m indoor-meets-outdoor timber crafted play adventure in East Yorkshire. It includes a 475sqm play barn and extensive outdoor play - including a 50-metre zip wire, den making area and 'mountains and molehills' space for kids to run, jump and roll around freely.



opened this year, the redevelopment of the visitor centre, restaurant and shop is due to open next spring. **Spring Barn Farm** in Sussex has completed ground works for its new barn development comprising an indoor play area and café, due to open Spring 2018.

**Amerton Farm** in Staffordshire has recently opened Billy's Farm Barn which is an indoor wooden play area.



**Fishers Adventure Farm Park** in West Sussex opened 'SkyFall' in February. Skyfall is an enormous outdoor frame with a 6m and 4m drop diving board, which lands on a giant inflatable cushion. This is the first at any farm park in the UK and has proved hugely popular with adults and children alike enjoying the fun.

Fishers also opened 'Higgledy Village' in May which is a fascinating concept of outdoor and sensory play, created within a heated indoor play barn.



**Marsh Farm Animal Adventure Park** in Essex opened its new 18-hole crazy golf course this summer. Designed to complement the countryside backdrop, the course is designed around centre pieces of old farm machinery with each hole featuring a beautifully carved wooden farm animal.

In Cheltenham **Cotswold Farm Park's** new entrance building and animal barn

## Workshop Roundup

**It has been a busy year for NFAN with more training workshops than ever before.**

Hall Hill Farm in Durham was the venue for the first workshop of the year, the ever-popular Health and Safety for farm parks. The Pink Pig in North Lincolnshire hosted an HR Essentials workshop. May saw a packed Retail Results booster workshop held at Amerton Farm, and in June Farmer Palmer's in Dorset hosted a Play Inspection Essentials workshop.

There are still more workshops to come this year as listed in the Diary of Events and on the NFAN website. As well as

New developments due to open later this year include the 15,000 sq ft SPROUTS Play Barn at **Millets Farm Centre** in Oxfordshire and **West Lodge Farm Park** in Northamptonshire both in the construction phase for major new play barns.

**Folly Farm** in Pembrokeshire has announced plans for a major new holiday village attached to the farm park. And **Rand Farm Park** in Lincolnshire is building a 12,000 sq ft animal barn to accommodate an enhanced Christmas experience with five Santas, Randolph's Sweet Factory, a living nativity, elf academy and enchanted forest.

## Countryside Alliance Award

**Congratulations to The Llama Park, in Wych Cross East Sussex, which has been named South East Regional Champion in the Tourism Enterprise Category of the Countryside Alliance Awards.**

providing useful practical skills and knowledge. Training Workshops also double as mini open days, giving you the opportunity to see around the host venue.

## New technology plants maize maze

**The Mega Maze at Hirst's Family Fun Park at Hemsby near Great Yarmouth is thought to be the first in the UK to use precision technology to plant seeds directly into the intricate pattern required - rather than tediously mapping out the**

**design on a planted field before hoeing or mowing the unwanted plants from the pathways.**

Owner Richard Hirst said: "Ten years ago the technology was not there, but it is now. It just struck me that firstly it would make my life easier, but it is also a very good way of showing off some of the advanced technology that we have in farming."



The completed maize maze at Hemsby. Picture: Mike Page.