



Destination DEEPPDALE

On the north Norfolk coast, in an area of outstanding natural beauty, lies Deepdale Farm. With a string of accolades and enough green credentials to sink a ship, a stay at Deepdale is just what the doctor ordered. Andrea Bramhall reports.

Holidaying in the UK is an option many of us are looking at this year. Not only does it fit our budget but it also helps the environment by reducing flight numbers. Seeking out an environmentally minded venue can help us to clock up even more carbon-reducing karma.

Deepdale Farm is one green establishment that can ease your worry about waste or lack of ethics. When farming began to decline, Alister Borthwick had the foresight to look at an alternative way of using his farm to earn a crust. First came the campsite, then a group hostel, and now you'll find that there is a 1000-acre farm surrounding an 18-bed group hostel, a 51-bed backpackers' hostel, an 81-pitch campsite, tipis, yurts, information centre, and a retail outlet at Dalegate market. All of this has been built and developed with the same ethos: conservation, reduction, recycling and good management.

This is a diversification project at its best with all of its staff working together to create an amazing space for its guests. "Deepdale Backpackers and Camping is a joy to be a part of. I love coming to work every day knowing that what we do here can make a difference to the people who stay and the environment that I'm leaving behind for my children," says James Allen, one dedicated member of staff. Deepdale Farm shows that a business can grow in size while also reducing its impact on the environment. Visitors experience a bustling holiday retreat as well as a working farm. It is a great place to chill or be as active as you like. Families, individuals and groups are all welcome. The mixture of guests and accommodation styles adds to its charm.

Environmentally friendly set-ups and quality can go hand in hand. Indeed, Deepdale has attained four-star ratings for both the campsite and the hostel. A change in mindset and values are required however, towards a less consumptive



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lifestyle. Many of us are ready for that right now. "Deepdale Backpackers and Camping fills a gap in the accommodation market that is not met anywhere else, to a standard that has no rival on the north Norfolk coast," claims Jason Borthwick, Alister's son. Jason has played an active role in making Deepdale what it is today.

Conservation

If you enjoy walking, Deepdale is the place for you. There are a series of paths across the land. These paths are all suitable for walking, cycling and horse riding – whatever takes your fancy. They are supplied under the Countryside Stewardship scheme, which includes 6-metre strips around

Employees at Deepdale Farm are encouraged to walk to work or commute by bus – which is not always possible, but they do try. "Working and living at Deepdale brings home to me the importance of environmental issues. Not only does it make ethical sense, it makes good business sense," reflects Louise Smith, the current owner of Deepdale Backpackers and Camping. Guests and staff regularly use the Coasthopper bus service. Coasthopper has worked very hard to tie in its service with trains arriving at Kings Lynn station and works with Deepdale Backpackers to supply tickets. It is possible to step off the train and get directly to the door of the hostel. Now that's what I call service.

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each field that create better habitats for nature. The most recent addition to the network of paths goes all the way to Burnham Market. You can hire bikes or bring your own, enjoy the water sports and kiting all along the coast or just pull on a pair of walking boots. You'll never be short of ideas of how to spend your days here.

Conservation is a top priority for the Deepdale team. Earth Day is an annual event they host, where traders and developers of eco-friendly technologies and products can attend to display their wares. This year's stall holders included River Nene Organic Box Scheme, a Green Party/Zero Carbon Caravan, which plans to travel to Copenhagen's climate talks without using fossil-fuel transportation. Its aim is to demand a zero carbon world, and achieve it as fast as we can. Solarworks also attended Earth Day. It installs the British made Thermomax Systems (which harness solar power) that are used by Deepdale (so let's hope we have a sunny summer this year). This educational day really assists people to make the best choices they can regarding their lifestyles and how they can do the best for themselves and the environment.

But that's not all! Deepdale Backpackers and Camping also runs an annual conservation weekend. People come from all over the country to get some hands-on experience in forest management, planting hedge rows and putting up bird boxes, among other things. It's a great place to increase your knowledge and be in nature.

Reduction

All companies that sell at Deepdale and Dalegate market are encouraged to decrease the amount of resources they consume and look at ways to reduce their carbon footprint. So at Deepdale Farm, lights are on sensors around the campsite; scrap paper is collected to be reused in notebooks; the toilet block over the retail unit uses harvested rainwater for toilet flushing rather than mains water.

For those who love a challenge, try the Deepdale Quest during your stay. A series of clues and riddles has been put together to show off some of the highlights of Burnham Deepdale and Brancaster Staith. Don't forget to ask for more details when you book your stay.

Recycling

Deepdale Farm encourages guests to recycle by placing recycling bins in all the main areas. The farm does its bit too, and ensures its waste is recycled or otherwise utilised. Vegetable crates are used as kindling rather than being sent to landfill. The farm, campsite and backpackers and Dalegate market work as a localized waste-management cooperative. To give an example of the reduction of waste going to landfill due to implementing all of the recycling, four landfill bins are emptied every other week spread between farm, camping, hostels and 12 retail outlets in Dalegate market. Many nationwide retailers would have four landfill bins for themselves emptied twice a week.

Deepdale Farm works very closely with a variety of local businesses in the surrounding villages, encouraging natural synergies that have formed over the years. By establishing outlets for local photographers and artists, Deepdale has helped to encourage and promote creativity within the area as well as providing guests with more unique keepsakes to choose from. The cafe pulls in locals as well as guests. Deepdale Cafe has worked hard to carve a niche for itself in a popular area, and it has done so with "taste, style and lashings of tasty recipes on the side," says one regular customer.

When asked why he runs his business this way, Alister responds simply, "I do this because I live here and it makes sense." To the rest of us, it makes sense to holiday in an environment with such a rich ethos, beautiful surroundings and friendly staff. There is accommodation to suit all needs and activities for all tastes. Deepdale Farm is a true eco-gem in the world of unique British holidays.