



Case Study: The Our Land Environment Promise

Jenny and Philip Huxham

Pitlands Barn - Self-Catering Farmstay

"By converting the barns into holiday accommodation it has provided an added income, making the farm a more sustainable and secure family business for the future. It has also made use of and preserved a wonderful 1844 building in an area of outstanding natural beauty. We enjoy welcoming guests to Pitlands Barns and have many comments about the beautiful countryside, the wildlife and the peace and tranquility of the area."



What type of business do you run?



Our family has farmed Pitlands Farm, near the village of Walderton, since 1925. We now have three self-catering cottages the Cart Shed, Stables and Granary that have been converted from a Sussex flint barn.

Why did you start your business?



The Sussex barn, built in 1844, was used as the grain store and housed the grain dryer but it became redundant when the store and dryer were relocated. We needed to diversify our business, so in 2011 we converted the barn into luxury, environmentally friendly cottages so guests could come and enjoy the peace and tranquility of our countryside.

What do you do for the Environment?

We are committed to protecting our environment and conserving the local flora and fauna. The farm is mainly arable; growing combinable crops and is part of Natural England's Higher Level Environment Scheme. We protect watercourses and woodlands with grass strips around fields and leave headlands unsprayed with herbicides to encourage broad-leaved plants and insects. Stubble is left over the winter to provide food for birds and we also grow wild birdseeds crops for winter-feeding. The field corners are left uncultivated for bio-diversity.

We are also members of LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming), which promotes environmentally responsible farming.

There is a Roman Villa on Pitlands Farm and the site is a scheduled monument, and is protected from cultivation. We only allow shallow cultivations in the whole valley to protect the archaeology. We no longer plough for all the crops reducing our carbon footprint as far as possible and cultivate across slopes to avoid erosion.

We are members of the Green Tourism Business Scheme and Pitlands Barns have been awarded Gold. We have installed the latest, highly efficient sewerage system that returns clean water to the aquifers and



removes waste. All the barns have dual flush loos and we have installed a rainwater harvester to maximize water efficiency. We encourage our guests to conserve water and use it carefully. All water for crop spraying comes from the rainwater tanks on the farm where possible.

Heating and hot water is supplied by a combination of solar panels, air source heat pumps and wood burning stoves. The coppiced wood is supplied from a woodland maintenance and restoration scheme undertaken by the farm.

The barns are insulated to the highest standards in order to reduce carbon emissions. Low energy light bulbs are used throughout the barns. All our appliances are A energy rated, and we use environmentally friendly washing products and cleaning materials.



We recycle as much of our waste as possible using the various schemes available, and encourage our guests to do the same.

We offer a pick up and drop off service to the two nearest train stations and there is an infrequent bus service a mile from the barns that travels between Chichester and Petersfield. We encourage our guests to use public transport where possible.

Why is the landscape important for your business?



Pitlands Barns is situated in a valley surrounded by woods and farmland and our guests are free to explore the wildlife and flora.

The woods are beautiful in spring with first bluebells and then wild orchids.

We provide a booklet of circular walks from the farm, taking in different features of our countryside such as Kingley Vale Nature Reserve, one of the finest yew forests in Western Europe containing a grove of ancient trees, which are among the oldest living things in Britain. Another walk takes visitors round four of our ancient village churches, the oldest being Up Marden which dates from the 12th century.

We also provide a booklet on the Birds of Pitlands Farm and encourage visitors to note any sightings of birds they spot.