

Woodpecker Camping Site Diversification of the Rural Economy

1. Put simply, Diversification means not having all your eggs in one basket and trying to spread the risk by having a number of different income streams.
2. According to DEFRA about half of all UK farms use some form of diversified activity in their farming business, benefits of diversifying include:
 - Making better use of a farm's physical resources and characteristics.
 - Integrating a farm with – and recycling money within – the rural economy.
 - Providing important rural employment opportunities.

There are few limits on the kind of businesses that can be diversified into. They can be either agricultural or non-agricultural, including Tourism – eg opening up land for camping or a bed and breakfast.

3. Arun's emerging Local Plan states; *'Tourism is an important cultural and economic driver for the economy and general well-being of Arun. Harnessed well it can provide additional facilities for local residents, a source of employment and a driver to enhance the sense of place in the coastal and inland areas of Arun. Visitor related development can play an important role in rural diversification'*.
4. The Woodpecker Camping site is on land at Hobbs Farm East that forms part of a larger complex of farms under the Home Farm group that is a family owned and operated business and has been in current occupation since 1966.

The farming practices are mostly arable cropping producing high value seed peas and milling wheats as well as hay and straw crops. There is a small beef cattle enterprise that supplies the local trade with rare breed beef as well as minor crops such as Asparagus and Duck, Goose and Hen Eggs which are all sold locally.

Other non-farming enterprises in the village of Climping include a paintball site, farm shop, beach car parks, 2 public houses, horse livery, a hotel, Bed and Breakfasts and some small scale commercial use lettings.

Hobbs Farm East is a former Model Farm Piggery being part of what was historically the Bailiffscourt Estate and is situated in a coastal location in and around the village of Climping. The farm today amounts to some 450 hectares (1,100 acres) in total and is part of the 'Home Farm' group of farms which includes Kents Farm (180 hectares), Church Farm (40 hectares) and Hobbs Farm West (32 hectares) as well as the foreshore from Elmer to almost the River Arun.

The Camping site is well serviced with retail and dining choices; it is to be owned and operated in hand supporting the retention of existing employment as well as contributing to the general local economy to provide new seasonal work.

5. Rural Development Programme LEADER is a Grant funding programme that supports the growth and development of rural businesses and is administered by West Sussex County Council.

LEADER aims to improve the competitiveness of farming and forestry, support a diverse and successful rural economy and help to develop vibrant and thriving rural communities.

Grants can be used for projects that will support:

- small business growth and farm diversification;
- rural tourism;
- rural services;
- cultural and heritage activity.

LEADER's stated vision is that the Sussex Downs and Coastal Plain programme will make an important contribution to achieving: a more resilient, productive and innovative rural economy, which celebrates and enhances our valuable landscape and natural assets.

Within the context of this vision the programme for 2015-2020 will focus on four strategic priorities, underpinned by eight activity areas.

Priority 1: Small rural enterprises that thrive and grow: delivering products and services that benefit local communities and visitors; and creating a range of quality local employment/self-employment opportunities.

Activity area 1A: Supporting new and existing small enterprises to grow and generate employment.

Activity area 1B: Supporting the provision of a range of workspaces to enable business and employment growth.

Priority 3: A robust year round visitor economy, which: celebrates the area's landscape, environment and heritage.

Activity area 3A: Supporting rural tourism enterprises to establish grow and introduce new visitor experiences.

Activity area 3B: Enabling the provision of a wider range of visitor accommodation to promote longer stays and visitor spend.

Whilst no expression of interest form has been submitted at this stage, an application is pending subject to the granting of planning permission, the applicant is confident that the proposal will be eligible for grant funding for this rural visitor accommodation diversification scheme.