

Wroxham Barns

Tunstead Road, Hoveton, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR12 8QU

Summary

RATING	DESIGNATOR	OVERALL QUALITY SCORE
Accredited	Attraction	87%

VISIT DATE	VISIT TYPE	ASSESSOR
29 March 2018	Day Assessment	Ruth Bolton

DEBRIEF CONTACT
Ian Russell Director

On this occasion Wroxham Barn's has achieved an overall score of 87% and therefore retains accreditation as a Quality Visitor Attraction under VisitEngland's scheme. This is a great improvement on the 81% awarded when last assessed in April 2015.

The pre- arrival section has maintained the excellent 100% achieved at the last assessment with the arrival score increasing by 5% to 80%.

The attraction itself has seen a considerable improvement with a score of 80% achieved at this assessment visit, thanks to the better presentation throughout the attraction and the new chalkboard light touch interpretation for children on the Junior Farm.

Cleanliness has also seen a dramatic improvement with a higher standard noted in all areas.

Refreshed decor and new furniture and fittings in The Restaurant and The Pantry have helped lift the score in the key area of catering with both outlets looking very smart in terms of presentation.

Scores for staff have seen a small drop, although still achieving an excellent 90%.

Recommendations for improvements are given in the report and should be considered if wishing to raise scores at a future assessment.

This was a very good visit for Wroxham Barns. The attraction delivers a very enjoyable visitor experience with the stronger aspects being the excellent quality food and drink in The Pantry and The Restaurant. The family friendly environment and range of activities to suit all ages, together with the high calibre of retail outlets, studios and the friendly staff ensuring an excellent day out.

A weaker area to watch, if encouraging more visitors to the attraction and hoping for a longer dwell time is the toilet provision. There is great scope to provide enhanced facilities for families with babies and young children.

Quality Rating

How the Overall Quality Rating is Achieved

When VisitEngland assessors visit, they will evaluate and give a quality score to all assessed elements.

Elements in each section are scored as follows:

- 0 Unacceptable
- 1 Poor
- 2 Disappointing
- 3 Good
- 4 Very Good
- 5 Excellent

In order to achieve accreditation, a score of at least 60% overall and in all sections, excluding Pre-arrival is required.

Additionally, all individual elements must score 1 (poor) or higher.

A sectional or overall score below 60% or an individual element score of 0 (unacceptable) will result in a fail.

	SCORE	PERCENTAGE	RATING
Pre-arrival	10	100%	
Online Presence	5		
Leaflet/Brochure	5		
Arrival	16	80%	Accredited
Car Park	4		
First Impressions	4		
Layout & Entry Management	4		
Visitor Information & Signage	4		
Attraction	36	80%	Accredited
Layout & Visitor Flow	4		
Range of Content	5		
Visitor Information & Signage	4		
Appearance of Grounds & Gardens	4		
Appearance of Buildings	4		
Décor & Maintenance	4		
Presentation of Displays	4		
Quality of Interpretation (Fixed)	3		
Quality of Interpretation (Other)	4		
Activity			
Tour			
Trip			
Cleanliness	21	84%	Accredited
Car Park & Arrival Areas	4		
The Attraction	4		
Toilets	4		
Catering Outlets	4		
Retail Outlets	5		
Toilets	12	80%	Accredited
Provision, Location & Layout	4		
Décor & Maintenance	4		
Fixtures & Fittings	4		
Catering	23	92%	Accredited
Layout & Ease of Use	4		
Ambience & First Impressions	4		
Decoration, Furniture & Fittings	5		
Food: Range & Menus	5		
Food: Quality & Presentation	5		
Retail	19	95%	Accredited
Ease of Use & Visitor Flow	4		
Display Units, Fittings & Lighting	5		
Presentation of Merchandise	5		
Range & Appropriateness of Merchandise	5		
Staff	45	90%	Accredited
Appearance of Staff	4		
Guides: Customer Care	5		
Guides: Efficiency	4		
Guides: Knowledge	4		
Catering: Customer Care	4		
Catering: Efficiency	4		
Catering: Knowledge	5		
Retail: Customer Care	5		
Retail: Efficiency	5		
Retail: Knowledge	5		

Pre-arrival

When searching on Google for "visitor attractions near the Norfolk Broads" I found www.wroxhambarns.co.uk at the top ranking position on the first page. The fully mobile responsive site provides key visitor information including opening times, directions, car parking details, cafe and admission prices. (The website also started online bookings on the day of the assessment. I checked following the visit and found the system to be extremely efficient with Combo tickets for both adults and children offered.)

Looking at social media, Twitter has regular tweets and over 6000 followers. Instagram has some fabulous images and video uploads. A Facebook page has recent and engaging posts with 4.3 for reviews. All upcoming events are listed. Reviews are also very good on TripAdvisor scoring an average 4.0. The listing is placed 4 out of 5 in Hoveton.

The branded leaflet is colourful and eye-catching with excellent information also provided.

Recommendations

None

Arrival

The official brown and white tourism signs and markers on the approach roads through Hoveton were very helpful, leading me directly to the attraction.

Car parking was offered across different areas and no doubt the forward parking and accessible spaces will be appreciated by those who are less mobile. Car parks vary with some very good tarmac surfaces and some less robust grassed car parks.

The access road had to be driven carefully at the time of departure as it is quite narrow for two directional traffic.

Once on site first impressions are very good with the colourful boards on the drive raising anticipation and providing information of the activities and events taking place at the farm.

General presentation of the buildings at the entrance provided a most positive first impression.

Layout does mean that delivery vehicles to the attraction and the retail units have to navigate past the pedestrians at the entrance. It was good to see that car parking attendants were utilised to keep the flow of traffic and parking spaces well managed.

Recommendations

Long term plans could consider a separate entrance and exit drive to the attraction.

Consideration could also be made to providing of a separate trade/delivery route.

Attraction

I had a thoroughly enjoyable day with the variety of retail outlets, craft studios, Junior Farm and associated activities providing several hours of entertainment. Although not accompanied by children at this assessment visit, I observed families enjoying the funfair, and despite the large number of visitors no queues developed and the Fun Pass system appeared to work well.

All external areas are very well presented, although the path towards the funfair, past the new caterpillar ride is rather narrow.

There are plenty of picnic benches and seats dotted around the site and it was possible to find space to sit somewhere throughout the day

The Junior Farm and animal contact areas are well organised with chalkboard panels providing easy to read information which is informative. The demonstrations provided very good interaction for the younger visitors as did the cuddle sessions.

Animal enclosures provided great opportunities to get up close to the animals with the Easter Egg Treasure Hunt noticeably engaging many young children and their families.

The programme of events provided across the site was invaluable for planning the day.

Recommendations

Ensure that the Wroxham Barns information booklets are restocked in the Information Hut.

Replace the old English Tourism Council accreditation sticker in the Information Hut (see photo 1)

Ensure all display cabinets are fully utilised. (see photo 2)

Consolidate the overwhelming information boards in the small animal barn (see photo 3)

Consider widening the path to enable pushchairs/buggies to pass in and around the funfair area, particularly past the Caterpillar ride.

Bottle feeding and Cuddle sessions could always end with a reminder to visitors to leave reviews and to share their experience on social media.

Include more bite size interpretation panels for children as seen on the animal enclosures (see photo 4)

Cleanliness

It was obvious on arrival that cleanliness is high on the agenda at Wroxham Barns. Standards by the entrance and car parking areas were very good with just some minor wind blown litter noted by the Information Hut. Cleanliness standards in The Pantry initially appeared excellent, but the trays were noticeably dirty as was the paper napkin dispenser on close inspection. Standards within The Restaurant were also high with just a few crumbs noted under my table when being seated. Toilets had dropped tissue on the floor when visiting later in the day although had presented extremely well on arrival. The retail shops and outlets were pristine.

Recommendations

Ensure that trays are washed thoroughly after each use in The Cafe and The Restaurant.

A more thorough clean of the toilets at regular intervals is recommended. Consider a cleaning schedule/rota.

Remove crumbs from chairs in the restaurant when wiping the tables between customers.

Encourage staff to pick up wind blown litter if spotted.

Toilets

Toilet provision is very good considering the volume of visitors and were visited three times during the day with just short queues in the Ladies noted at busy times. Fixtures and fittings are robust and generally maintained very well. Toilets were all very well stocked with soap and water and there is good provision for baby changing and access needs.

Recommendations

Consider long term plans to provide an additional toilet facility to enhance baby changing facilities and family use.

Ensure that the red emergency cords in the accessible toilets hang freely.

If upgrading toilet facilities in the future consider low level WC and washbasins for small children.

Catering

Outlet(s) Visited The Pantry at 11.20am. The Restaurant at 12.50pm.
Food & Drink Sampled Coffee and Fruit Scone. Quiche of the day with salad. Local apple juice. Coffee.

The Pantry and The Restaurant each provide a positive first impression with both having been refurbished recently. New decor, flooring and furniture has created a modern and fresh appearance in The Restaurant with The Pantry now being set out more spaciouly, allowing families with pushchairs ample space.

Both outlets offered a tempting display of home baked cakes and savouries.

All diets are catered for very well and a range of meals were available from light bites to hot main meals. I ordered an Americano and fruit scone from The Pantry which was served swiftly. Coffee was of a good strength and the scone freshly baked and of an excellent quality. Both butter and jam were offered for the scone and fresh milk provided for the coffee.

Lunch choices were tempting in The Restaurant. I chose the goats cheese and onion quiche with salad. It was most enjoyable. The quiche was generously filled with goats cheese and the pastry crust crisp. Salad leaves were fresh and well dressed with a vinaigrette. The meal was delivered to the table within 10 minutes of ordering. Local apple juice was suggested when requesting a locally sourced product.

Space was a little constricted within The Restaurant with the table offered being by the entrance to the front dining area. As food was delivered past me my chair was knocked. Pushchairs brought into the restaurant also making it very difficult for the service staff to progress through with plates of food.

Recommendations

Ensure that all tables and chairs are accessible when The Restaurant is full. Stack highchairs away from the fire exits.

Encourage families to park buggies and prams out of the way of the main thoroughfares.

Replace worn table numbers in The Restaurant.

Cross market items such as tea leaves in both the food outlets and the retail shop.

Picnic boxes which can be provided for children in The Pantry could be more prominently promoted outside of The Restaurant. This may encourage families to use The Pantry.

Retail

Outlet(s) Visited All the craft studios and retail outlets were visited.

Purchases Made Greeting Card from The Gallery

The shops and studios are a delight to browse and it is unlikely that visitors will leave empty handed. I was tempted into more than one purchase! The range of items available is excellent and covers the complete visitor profile. All are inviting from the outside and extremely well presented. All retail outlets were visited.

Recommendations

None

Staff

Staff at Wroxham Barns are all dressed appropriately for their role although with the wide range of independent shops and studios it is not always easy to identify staff members. On arrival at the site an all male car parking team were very efficient and ensured a quick entry and effective management of parking.

Farm staff were knowledgeable when asked questions although did not interact with children and families unless spoken to. They were very good however at the bottle feeding of the lambs, answering questions and interacting well with the children. On admission to the farm excellent attempts were made to upsell animal feed.

Funfair staff were polite and operated the rides efficiently whilst appearing cheerful and well motivated. All were smart and wore name badges.

Catering staff although wearing name badges appeared to have a rather mismatched appearance with supervisors wearing their own style of outfit.

All were well briefed and had excellent menu knowledge although levels of service varied with the young male apprentice excelling in both hospitality and his eagerness to ensure customer satisfaction. A male supervisor was more laid back in his approach and possibly rather more reactive than proactive in his delivery technique.

Retail staff across all outlets were excellent and all had time to chat and talk about their produce or wares.

Recommendations

Ensure that car parking attendants are well informed of the events taking place during the day, they will be the first point of contact on arrival.

Ensure that eye contact is made with all customers waiting to be seated in The Restaurant in order to acknowledge their presence.

Encourage restaurant staff to clear tables as they go rather than return to the kitchen empty handed.

Ensure staff in The Restaurant present the menu to customers the correct way up.

Train all Junior Farm and Funfair staff to proactively engage with the visitors "are you enjoying your day?" would be a good question to ask all visitors.

Images

Wroxham Barns Photo 1.jpg



Wroxham Barns Photo 2.jpg



Wroxham Barns Photo 3.jpg



Wroxham Barns Photo 4.jpg



Useful Numbers

Customer Services 01256 491111

VisitEnglandAttractions@TheAA.com

All establishment enquiries, including assessments, reports, ratings, credit control, signage and logo requests.

 Twitter

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Action Plan

Record the key recommendations from your assessment, assign the action to an individual person and keep track of progress across the year.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Assigned To</i>	<i>Completed On</i>