

CASE STUDY

Growing Success at Claremont Farm



Business Profile

Company: Claremont Farm Shop and Claremont Kitchen

Location: Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside

Established: Over 100 years ago

Sector: Food and Drink

Type of Business: Farm shop, food experience

No of employees: Nine

During a year out in Australia, while Andrew Pimbley was working as a fruit picker, he realised that he wanted to work outdoors with his hands and decided to follow in his father Ian's footsteps by becoming a farmer.

After achieving a National Diploma in Agriculture and gaining experience working on cattle ranches in Zimbabwe and Venezuela, he returned to his family's farm Claremont, in Bebington, Wirral. Andrew set about expanding the farm shop and with the birth of Claremont Kitchen and the Wirral Food and Drink Festival, he has put the farm on the foodie map.

Business Link Northwest has helped to bring Andrew's plans for the farm to fruition by being on hand to offer support along the way.

Building Success

The 250 acre arable farm Claremont is now being run by the fourth generation of the Pimbley family and as well as wheat, barley and oil seed rape, also produces asparagus, potatoes and fruits including strawberries, raspberries and gooseberries.

Andrew has built on the success of the farm shop by forging relationships with local restaurants keen to use the freshest and best produce. He was also one of the founders of the Wirral Food and Drink Festival, which is hosted by the farm.

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Andrew Pimbley, Claremont Farm Shop and Claremont Kitchen

Andrew's latest venture Chef and Farmer has seen him team up with celebrity chef Brian Mellor. Chef and Farmer offers visitors to the farm's spin off business Claremont Kitchen the chance to experience 'Field to Fork' days, an inspiring range of exciting foodie experiences.

Business Link Northwest Food and Drink Adviser, Philip Ambler, has worked with the Pimbley family since 2005, supporting the developments at the farm with advice and guidance. He is only ever a phone call away when Andrew and the rest of the family want advice on any aspect of the business.

Growing Success

Andrew says: “I think our Business Link Adviser is worth his weight in gold and his advice has been very useful. Working with him is like having an independent consultant on hand whenever we need him and whatever idea we get in touch about he is always incredibly enthusiastic and happy to hear from us.”

Philip says: “When I first began working with Claremont I carried out a rural diagnostic, which highlighted that there was scope to diversify and Andrew's vision for the farm has ensured that it has fulfilled its potential.

“I pointed Claremont in the direction of funding that was available at the time from the Rural Business Specialist Support Fund to help with the development of a marketing plan and websites for Claremont Farm and the new company Claremont Kitchen, as well as the Wirral Food and Drink Festival.”

Philip has also helped Claremont Farm Shop and Claremont Kitchen to create a sustainable business model and has guided the business to put structures in place to ensure the manageability of the ideas Andrew has for its future.

Foodie Weekends

Business Link is now helping Claremont with a bid for funding from the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), which if successful, will help the farm to increase its asparagus production with new equipment. The RDPE is jointly funded by the Government and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Claremont is also looking to increase the size of the farm shop and create a tea room with outdoor seating. Business Link is going to help source potential funding streams for this venture.

Claremont has now linked up with another local business owner Lorna Tyson, who runs a bed and breakfast in Bebington called Merebrook House. The two businesses are looking at collaborating to offer food themed weekends, with Claremont Kitchen offering the experiences through Chef and Farmer and Lorna providing the accommodation.

Philip says: “Andrew has a lot of enthusiasm for the farm and its future which is brilliant and it is already reaping the benefits of this.”

Andrew adds: “When we go to Business Link for information, we know that what we receive is of a high standard and trustworthy, which is very good to know.”



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