

Sarah and Graham Chaplin-Brice

Sarah Chaplin-Brice, at Low Bridge End Farm, and the business she runs with her husband Graham and the rest of the family is a testament to diversification, resourcefulness and the opportunities that a sustainable, accessible environment can bring.

Her farm sits alongside two walking routes that stretch between the High and Low Rigg Fells in St. John's in the Vale, near Keswick. The shorter walk opens up views of Helvellyn and the Dodds while the longer, high level route gives you a stunning view of Skiddaw. Both routes are peppered with wildlife from red squirrels and herons to wild goats and even lizards. The views, and the wildlife, bring 8,000 people a year along the two routes and straight past her farm.

"When you see an opportunity you need to be able to grasp it, and that's where funds like this come in," says Sarah. With the help of a number of funding programmes, including Forest Futures, she and her family have launched a camping barn that boasts 70 per cent occupancy levels, a woodland interpretation and training centre and a tea garden that serves drinks and homemade cakes to around 7,000 people a year. "Everything we do is little," she stresses, keen to emphasise that the business is working with the breathtaking environment that brings so many visitors to the area. She paints a picture of a business that is not just working with nature, but that stretches out and weaves into a much wider local economy. Of the £24,000 that the Chaplin-Brice's have received from Forest Futures, £10,000 was dedicated to the Interpretation Centre while £14,000 helped to develop and open up a woodland trail.