

## **Clough Bottom and Our Corporate Social Responsibility**

While the businesses that operate from Clough Bottom are varied and diverse, one thing they all have in common is a well defined Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework at their core. From our suppliers to our employees, from the local business community to the environment, everything we do here relies on a socially responsible attitude. With increasing emphasis being placed on CSR it is our approach and understanding of CSR in action that is becoming of interest to other individuals, groups and companies, with Clough Bottom being used as a 'case study' to highlight how others can exploit the benefits of CSR.

### **Living and Breathing Our Core Values...**

When our business started over 20 years ago, there were no other businesses doing what we were doing. We have implemented CSR across each of our businesses not just because it is 'politically correct' or 'right on' but because it is who we are. We haven't changed the way we do things over the years because we have grown organically, yet we know that for most businesses thinking about implementing a CSR strategy, this isn't as straightforward. So if you're thinking about what impact CSR could make to your business and how best to implement it, you might want to have a closer look at Clough Bottom.

### **Clough Bottom - CSR in Action**

Here are some examples of our CSR practices:

#### **Suppliers**

- We purchase our eco-friendly cleaning products from an ethical online supermarket that specialises in environmentally-sound products. They also care about conserving the planet and lowering levels of pollution and this is important to us. We buy these items in bulk to reduce mileage, pollution and energy wasted in deliveries.
- We buy Fair Trade tea and coffee for our cottage guests because we need to be accountable and fair in dealing with producers in developing countries.
- Our breakfast hampers and homemade ready meals use locally-sourced, seasonal ingredients that we buy from local suppliers and growers because it is important we support our local business neighbours.

#### **Environment**

- We have a strong commitment to waste reduction - our cottages all have recycling bins and we encourage our guests to use our recycling barn.
- We use recycled toilet rolls and paper and minimise our paper output by e-mailing booking forms etc to our guests.
- We only use low energy light bulbs at Clough Bottom.

- In 2006 we installed a borehole which we currently use for irrigation and for the livestock. Soon this will feed the entire site.
- In 2009 we purchased a bio-diesel manufacturing plant, and convert waste oil into bio-fuel for farm vehicle use.
- We have three waste sewage processing plants on site that convert waste and dirty water into clean water before it enters the stream that flows through our farm.
- All cleaning products we use are 'no phosphate/chlorine' and we use e-cloths.
- Our internal office systems are largely paperless and we have a strategy in place to create an electronic archive to replace our paper archives. We are also in the process of introducing a new, improved database that will facilitate higher service levels and reduce our paper output further.
- We have been part of the *Countryside Stewardship Scheme* for 20 years as well as *English Woodland Grant Scheme*. We therefore create wildlife corridors and ditches, create and restore existing ponds, maintain ancient woodland and create new woodland. When we purchased the farm 30 years ago, all hedge boundaries were dilapidated due to neglect and removed in favour of bigger fields. We reinstated all of these 'lost' hedges with blackthorn, hawthorn, oak, cherry, hazel, ash and beech, and estimate we have planted well over 100,000 trees around the farm.
- We invite all guests to use our complimentary organic veg patch and pick their own seasonal fruit and vegetables. We have just invested in a polytunnel to extend the growing season.
- We use our own organic produce when available (free range eggs, beef, fruit and vegetables) in both the lunches we provide to the corporate guests and delegates attending our [training courses](#) and in the homemade ready meals we offer our [cottage guests](#).
- We use all the fruit that is grown in our orchard - apples, pears, cherries, greengages, plums, damsons, raspberries, strawberries, blackcurrants, redcurrants and blackberries in our pies and crumbles and in our range of **Food from the Farm** jams, preserves and chutneys.
- We package our homemade ready meals in compostable sugar base containers and containers that can be recycled.
- One of our rising star businesses at Clough Bottom is the growing and selling of large, [mature trees and shrubs](#). Our first plantation was created in the mid-90s and now we have three. We have sold over 50% of the first 2,000 trees planted. After digging up a tree, the land is allowed to restore itself to its natural, original condition. It is predicted that within the next 5 years our first plantation will be back as a grazing field as it was before. This natural rotation of field plantations is key to keeping the land in good health.
- Over the last 15 years we have improved and replaced many of the original drains around the farm, laid during World Wars I and II by Prisoners of War. We have used natural materials rather than the modern, plastic alternative.

### **Local Community**

- As part of our purchasing policy we purchase as much produce, products and services locally.
- We encourage our guests to 'Stay Local, Eat Local, Buy Local, See Local' and feature local businesses, shops, restaurants and pubs on our website and in our Guest Information Folders. Not only does this save on fuel costs, but we see it as a vital part in enhancing the holiday experience - enabling our guests to embrace the rural community as well as encouraging them to increase levels of footfall and spend in the local businesses.
- We have two converted barns on site which can be hired for private parties, functions, meetings and conferences. We have given it free to a local community group and for a fundraising and education event. We have recently hosted a meeting held by the Forest of Bowland: Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty who invited 25 Norwegian's over to the UK. Harry gave a presentation on how we have developed and how Clough Bottom has diversified over the years.
- We are hosting our first 'Green Wedding' in December in the Middle Barn.

### **Our Future Plans**

- We are currently researching an innovative way to harness the water power generated by our natural stream to produce electricity and energy for Clough Bottom. Working with a local school in partnership with United Utilities we are keen to develop this as a viable and efficient wind energy alternative.

All of these strategies have made Clough Bottom Farm what it is today - a thriving, family-run working farm that has successfully blended a sustainable approach to life with effective CSR practices and an award-winning business. We currently hold a Green Tourism Business Scheme Gold Award and were finalists in the Lancashire & Blackpool Tourist Board 2009/10 Tourism Awards for Sustainable Tourism. We are members of Organic Farmers and Growers and various other conservation bodies.

### **Our awards & accolades**

- Winner of the 2010/11 **Sustainable Tourism** Award in the Lancashire & Blackpool (LBTB) Tourism Awards
- Shortlisted in the **Best Practice** Category of the Northwest Business Environment Awards 2010
- "Highly Commended" in the North West Category of the Beautiful Farm Awards (2009/10)
- Winner of the Lancashire Evening Post's GREEN Awards – **Green Business of the Year** (2009)
- Winner of the 2009/10 **Self-Catering** Award in the LBTB Tourism Awards
- Finalist in the 2009/10 **Sustainable Tourism** Award in the LBTB Tourism Awards