

Brilliant Businesses

Wensley Dales Cottages, Wensleydale



Building a way to differentiate your business

When Graham Redhead went to a seminar in Grassington about building stronger businesses in Yorkshire Dales, one key message made a deep impression on him.

It was the importance of finding innovative ways to differentiate your business from the competition.

Graham, who runs a self-catering business with his wife Pam, recalls that they talked it over together and came up with a novel ideal – to offer optional courses in dry stone walling.

“It’s such a distinctive and much-loved feature of the Dales that we thought guests staying at our two cottages in West Burton and Askrigg might enjoy it,” he says.

“We knew that Tim Peacock, who lives in our village of Carperby, was a dry stone waller so we approached him as it was a business opportunity for both of us to offer a walling experience to our guests and all other visitors to the Dales”.

Adding value

Tim, who works with Stewart Hunter, a dry stone waller from Hardraw, said they would both be delighted to get involved as holidaymakers often stop when they are working, intrigued and fascinated by what they are doing. Pam said she would be happy to offer packed lunches, adding further value to this unusual business idea.





Graham, Pam, Tim and Stewart launched the course – with three options, a full day at £75, a half day at £55 or a few hours at £20 an hour for a more relaxed introduction – in the late summer of 2011. All prices are per person and assume a minimum of two people on the half or full day course.

“We were pleased to discover that the first person to sign up for it, a hobby farmer and his wife from Shropshire, enjoyed it very much,” says Graham.

Foundation for a sustainable business

Graham cannot claim to be an expert in walling but he does have relevant – if brief – experience. Earlier in 2011 he was involved in a community project to build a new football pavilion in Carperby.

“I didn’t do any building work on the pavilion but I could help with a new stone wall we had to construct as part of a new access track to the sportsfield.

“I couldn’t do the more intricate work but I did fill in some of the middle of the wall with rubble and piled up stones for other more skilled people to place. It gave me a taste for dry stone walling and it convinced me that visitors would enjoy it.”

You could even say it has given Graham and Pam the foundation for building a sustainable business which really does offer something different.



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