

Nature's weather challenge and me escaping fallen tree





Walkmill Campsite

Beyond The BARK & Timber

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Walkmill Campsite

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Background & Motivation

The aim is to inform you of our experience at Walkmill Campsite for the planting of 1490 tree saplings native to Northumberland and the Great Northumberland Forest project.

- Nick and myself bought Walkmill in 2005
- A derelict property with over 8 acres
- We started Walkmill Campsite in 2012
- Open for up to 8 months of the year

North East England Tourism Awards

Our woodland project was an integral part of our application for the North East England Tourism Awards and proud to have

Achieved the...

2022 Highly Commended Award

2025 Silver Award

Award Winning Campsite

The enhanced setting helped us achieve the ‘Silver Award’ which has helped us to become an even more sustainable business with increased revenue.



Back To Motivation

- We wanted to enhance the field from being grazing for sheep
- Our field was nothing short of clumps of nettles and thistles
- We wanted a beautiful meadow with native trees and wildflowers

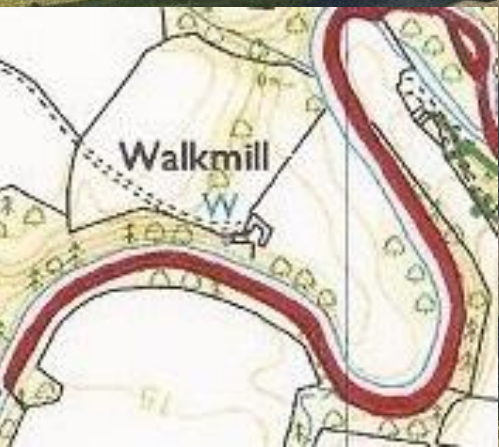


- We wanted to create our own woodland as well as restore what had been lost
- We developed the meadow around 3 existing tent pitch areas with various pathways throughout
- We believed this would increase biodiversity and enhance natural capital
- Becoming a future green economy business

Partners & Funding

- Great Northumberland Forest allowed us to move forward in July 2022
- Site Meeting discussed our ideas with Woodlands Forest Officer Kirsten Johnson
- Mapping exercise and planning application with Kirsten meant we were eligible for DEFRA Funding

- The number of native trees were calculated by Kirsten and where to be best planted
- This was done in collaboration with the Northumberland Council Ecologist
- Planting took place between 13th February and 19th March 2023





Tree Species

- **NEW WOODLAND: Open Field Planting** - Bird Cherry, Hazel, English Oak, Downy Birch, Rowan, Aspen, Small Leaved Limes
- **WETLAND PLANTING:** Goat Willow, Alder, Bird Cherry
- **NEW TREELINE: 322mts to thicken border of existing woodland** - Aspen, Bird Cherry, Holly, Small Leaved Lime, Goat Willow, English Oak



Walkmill
Campsite

Tree Species

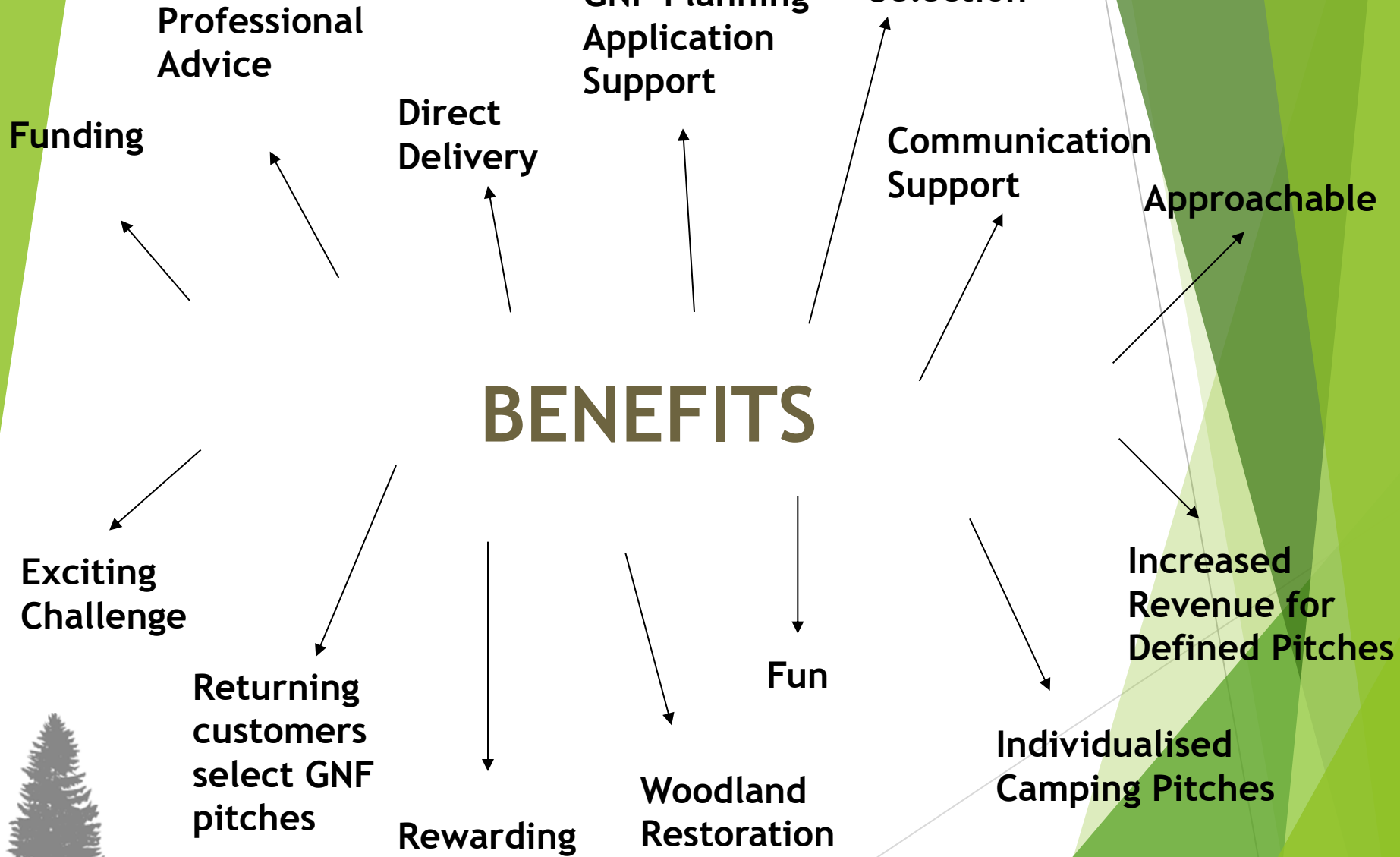
- **HEDGING & GAP FILLING:** Bird Cherry, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Holly, Hazel
- **IN FIELD GROUPS:** These formed the definitive spaces between the pitches for customers - Cherry, Hazel, Oak, Rowan, Downy Birch, Goat Willow







BENEFITS





RESPONSIBILITIES

Annual Tree Inspection

Sapling Replenishment

Storm Damage
~tubes & stakes~

Fifteen Year
Stewardship

Duty of Care

Planting Areas

Time

Thoughtful Planting
~time of year & soil quality~

~minimal & enjoyable~



- Cost of the project totalled £5.6k over 2 years
- We had to initially pay but claimed 100% back through the funding stream made available to us
- If we sell Walkmill any new owner will need to take on the responsibility of the developing woodland areas until 2038 when the 15 year period of responsibility ends

Storm Babet

After all the hard but enjoyable and exciting work frustration hit hard with Storm Babet...





Customers wanting to be on remote pitches

Customers asking for quiet pitches

MARKET RESEARCH & PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Customers asking for a wild camping experience

Customers wanting to be in a natural setting

Customers wanting to be in nature



YES, planting trees allowed to differentiate between areas

YES, Top Circle pitches have proved very popular because they are more individualised

YES, Crook of The River pitches have proved very popular because they are more individualised

SUCCESS IN METRICS

YES, Walkmill is enhanced by all the tree planting

YES, we would do it again

YES, it was worth it

YES, we have added a supplement onto these pitches for additional income and customers are happy to pay this

YES, returning guests will often book them







Top Tip

- Native Trees to Northumberland have done really well for us with less than the expected standard of 20% loss
- We have approximately 7% loss which has been replaced cost free through Northumberland council
- Go with Native Trees for Northumberland as mentioned in this presentation for a worthwhile project



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Great Northumberland Forest Award

www.walkmillcampsite.co.uk

THANK YOU