

Sustainable businesses in touristic nature areas

Best case examples from 5 countries

«protect and prosper»

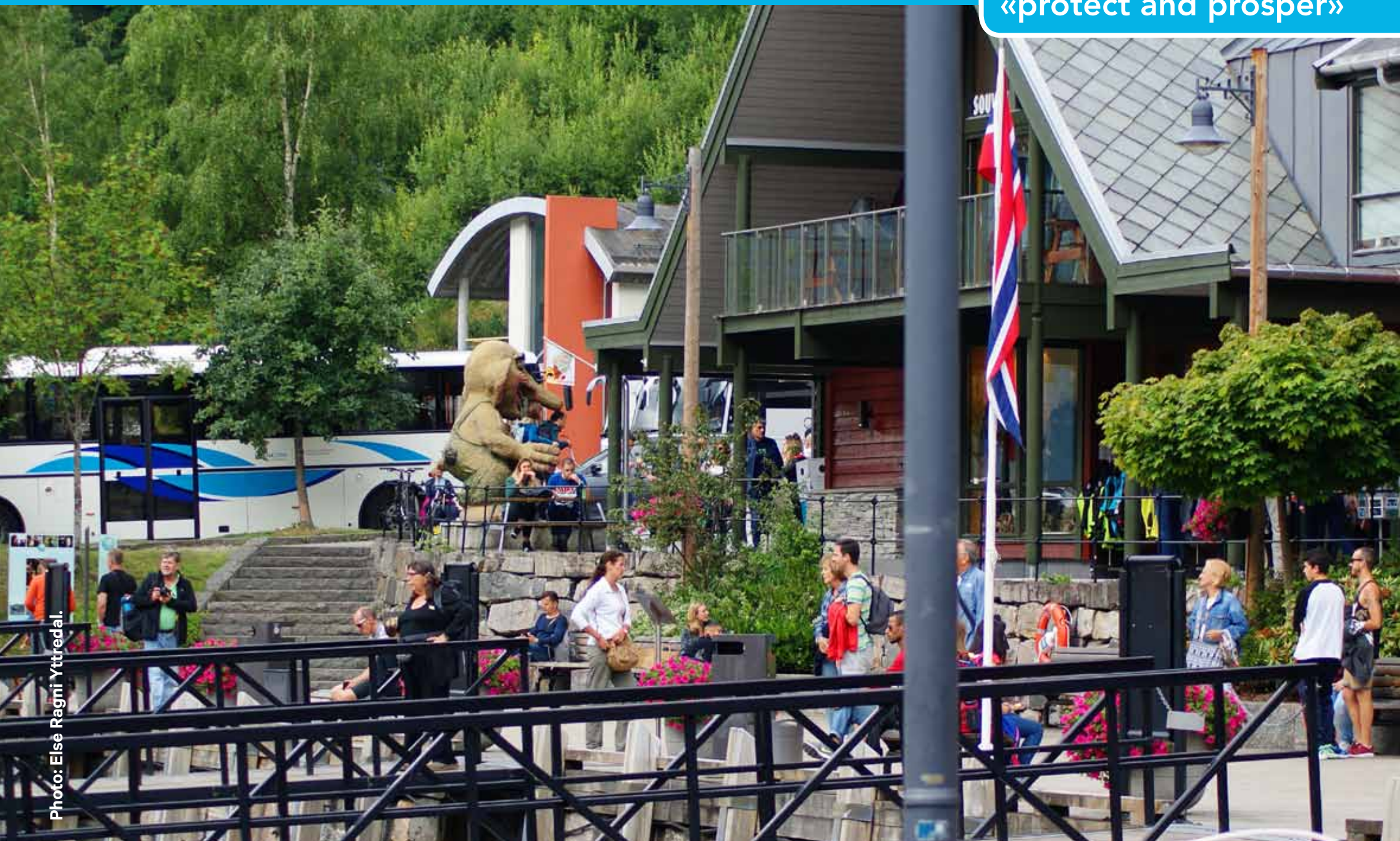


Photo: Else Ragni Yttredal.

This publication is a living document and will be updated
as new examples are ready to see the light of the day!



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For your inspiration!

Protect and prosper is the ethos of the EU Interreg project, Prowad Link. Prowad Link aims to unlock the potential of nature as a driver for jobs and sustainable development. This is achieved by working directly with Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) to develop nature as a brand, creating mutual benefits for SMEs and the natural environment.

Partners from The Wadden sea World Heritage site (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands), Geirangerfjord section of the West Norwegian Fjords World Heritage site (Norway) and The Wash & North Norfolk Coast protected areas (United Kingdom) are working in collaboration to build knowledge about sustainable business operations in touristic nature areas and to develop sustainable products and services.

This publication aims to inspire entrepreneurs to work towards a sustainable future.

We want to thank all the businesses who have kindly contributed to this research and report!

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«protect and prosper»



Photo: Else Ragni Yttredal.



Film from
**World Heritage Center
in Geiranger**



Film from
**Westerås Tourist farm
in Geiranger**



Film from
**Eagle Road to
Geiranger**



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«Our product is the environment: beautiful countryside, free sea air, big blue skies, salt marshes, woods and fields, nature at its best, let's keep it that way!»

Deepdale Backpackers and Camping!

“Leave only footprints”

Burnham Deepdale, North Norfolk Coast, England

«protect and prosper»

In short

Deepdale Backpackers and Camping small enterprise (14 staff) is located in North Norfolk Coast's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), a Government designated Nature Protected Area. Deepdale are well connected to their surrounding natural and cultural heritage and have set up a visitor centre to signpost their customers to local walks, attractions and activities. Deepdale pride themselves on excellent customer service by their well-trained, living wage salaried staff.

Due to Covid-19, Deepdale have had to cancel all of their summer and autumn music and social events in line with Government policy. Deepdale's customers were unable to visit during the lockdown.

Natural assets and benefits

"We use the nature, that is our biggest thing. The local walks, the Norfolk Coastal footpath is a huge thing for us, huge importance!"

Coastal Pathway Networks

Deepdale is located within minutes of one of the many Coastal Pathways. This is an asset that Deepdale encourage their customers to use through their visitor information center and well-trained staff.

Investing in natural capital

Deepdale run nature conservation weekends and engage with nature protection organisations, such as the Rivers Trust, to improve their surroundings, learn and then share their new knowledge.



Film from the Camping



Deepdale backpackers web

Deepdale farm web

Society and culture

"We are a catalyst for people to come and explore and be educated about the local area."

Events

Deepdale have used their strong ties with local musicians to organize events for their customers.

Business network

Deepdale use their visitor information centre to promote local activities.

Staff

"Staff are our greatest asset."

Deepdale take pride in their customer service and invest in their staff by providing "living wage" salaries and sending them on trips to sample local attractions.

Environment – special efforts

- Deepdale have phased out plastic. They offer customers reusable cups for events which are branded to promote the company long after the event.
- Deepdale are Green Tourism Gold certified.

Customers

Deepdale's main customers are semiretired or retired couples who visit all year. Families tend to visit during the peak holiday season. Deepdale reward their loyal customers with discounts on stays and Deepdale merchandise.

Sales Channels

"We do virtually no advertising during the high season, all of our marketing is really about encouraging people to come out of season."

Deepdale use traditional channels such as social media (FB, Insta etc.), websites (Tripadvisor, UK Campsites) alongside more innovative channels, such as:

Podcasts and newsletters - updating their customers on topics from local activities to their experiences during the Covid-19 crisis.



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«When you come to Geiranger 'Twizy' and great nature are waiting for you»



«We sell emission free mobility with a smile. Employees are supposed to have fun, it is easy going»

Photo: Else Ragni Yttredal.

eMobility!

Emission free mobility with a smile

Geirangerfjord, Norway

«protect and prosper»

eMobility in short

eMobility is a family owned limited company located in the village of Geiranger. The company provides fun adventure tours in audio guided electric cars. eMobility's key attributes:

- › 44 Renault 'Twizy' for rent with audio guide
- › All year employees pre Covid-19, 2 (including owner/manager), seasonal staff 2-4
- › 2020 virtually no activity
- › Main season: Pre Covid-19 from May to September

Natural and cultural heritage benefits

eMobility gives their customers an opportunity to navigate the steep winding roads, such as the 'Eagles Road' to the North and the almost 1500 m high Dalsnibba road to the South. The roads have stunning views and viewpoints to the Geirangerfjord World Heritage Area.

Society and culture– special contribution

- › All year local employment (2)
- › Active in the local community
- › Provide new adventure ideas for tourists
- › Introduce the area to tourists with their audio guide

Environment – special efforts

At the heart of eMobility is the idea of making business out of environmentally friendly products. The company is using electric cars powered by hydroelectricity. They are eco-lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn) certified paving the way for eco-friendly operation. The eMobility product also highlight green marketing advantages:

- › 100% electric cars thus emission free experiences
- › Having fun whilst avoiding CO₂ emissions

Customers – cruise based

90 – 100% of the customers are from cruise ships.

Sales channels

The main channel is direct sales on the street (approx. 65%). They also benefit from a variety of web-based sales channels:

- › TripAdvisor (booking)
- › Geiranger Fjordservice (local adventure firm) (booking)
- › Own webpage (booking)
- › Social media



Link to film from
the startup



Website



Photo with courtesy of Mrs Temple's Cheese.

«Our voluntary community work is educating people in the community about Norfolk farming and cheese making»

“I go out and do cheese cabaret... generally I provide the cheese and the wine, they provide the venue and charity gets the revenue»

Mrs Temple's Cheese!

Wighton village, North Norfolk Coast, England

«protect and prosper»

Mrs Temple's in short

Mrs Temple's Cheese is located within the North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). A family owned business, Mrs Temple's Cheese, produces a range of artisanal cheeses primarily for the Restaurant and Events markets. They employ 14 staff from the local community and use waste from their dairy farm to provide energy to the village through their anaerobic digester. Their regenerative farming methods help them to preserve and enhance the natural heritage and reduce environmental impacts.

Covid-19 season 2020 was a good season for Mrs Temple's Cheese. September was up by 40%.

Natural assets and benefits

Anaerobic Digester

The Temple's farm operates an anaerobic digester, using organic waste to produce electricity to the community and fertilizer for the fields.

Investing in natural capital – regenerative farming

The Temple's operate the farm to preserve the soil and protect their surrounding environment. Crop rotation, growing nitrogen fixing crops and the phasing out of tillage has resulted in higher carbon storage and less nitrogen leaching to nearby water bodies. Their cow breed, the Brown Swiss, were chosen for their ability to thrive outdoors; feeding on grass as opposed to expensive imported feeds, such as soy beans.

Society and culture – special contributions

Teaching and Research

Temple Farm is open for the public to visit by appointment to learn about farming and cheesemaking. In addition to this, the Temples provide educational tours to young farmers clubs, foreign agricultural clubs and veterinarians. The Temples also engage in collaborative agricultural research projects, helping them to keep their farming activities both sustainable and cutting edge.

Outreach

Mrs Temple uses local events to help educate people about Norfolk farming culture and cheesemaking.

Customers

"I lived in a cottage on a junction and I wrote down the name of every refrigerated van that drove past and gave them a call"

Mrs Temple's Cheese focusses on local customers to reduce "food miles". Prior to the Covid-19 crisis, they sold primarily to suppliers for shops, restaurants, hotels and even airline meal caterers. During the crisis there has been a shift towards local shop suppliers with some restaurant suppliers closing, and smaller local box delivery and mobile shops emerging.

Sales Channels

"I am a bit naughty; I don't pay for advertising"

Mrs Temple relies on her "larger than life" personality to attract the local press to write articles about her and the business and she regularly speaks at local events, which maintains the company's profile. Their website was recently set up by a close family member and they also have a Facebook page.



[Link to film about Mrs Temple's](#)



[Facebook](#)

«We want to fulfil small and big dreams for our guests; couples going on holiday, anniversaries, weddings...»

«and to ...take social responsibility by acting as a cornerstone company in our community, providing year-round employment...»

Hotel Union!

Keeper of the village AND environmentally conscious fulfiller of dreams

Geirangerfjord, Norway

«protect and prosper»

Union Hotel in short

Situated in the centre of Geiranger Village, Union Hotel is a large family run spa hotel and conference centre with a history dating back to the late 19th century. Union Hotel is open all year round, providing stable employment in the village. Key attributes of the hotel include:

- › 197 guest rooms, 3 restaurants, spa, swimming pools, conference facilities, bar lounges, hotel shop
- › All year employees about 70, about 70 seasonal staff
- › Turnover 2020 (covid-19 season) down by approx. 44 %

Natural assets and benefits

- › The nature and icon of the Geiranger fjord
- › Inside Geiranger area world heritage site
- › Hikes and other activities in nature

Society and culture– special contributions

Union Hotel takes and has a goal to take societal responsibility. It is the only hotel in the village open all year round, thus being the largest year-round workplace. It is an emergency hotel for the area, housing staff and others in case of emergency. In addition, the owners of the hotel have been active in taking, promoting and supporting local initiatives and activities. Examples of their social contributions in addition to employment are:

- › Promoter and user of local food
- › Has initiated, supported and promoted preservation of the local fjord farm culture
- › Ownership in several local businesses
- › Involved in local projects
- › Supports local sports and culture

Environment – special efforts

The hotel has also been in the forefront of taking environmental measures. Among them are:

- › Green fjord partnership
- › Eco-lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn, ecolabel) certified

- › Charging stations for el-cars
- › Heating system with night regulation
- › El-system connected to check-in
- › Smaller dinner plates to reduce food waste
- › Use of geothermal heating
- › Grinder for food waste (Turns into soil in 18 hours)
- › Waste sorting
- › Laundry for bathrobes to avoid transportation

Customers - from “everywhere”

- › Customer base depends on time of the year.
- › Summer 80% international (many from Asia) 20% Norwegian, all year round about 50/50
- › About 40% individual guests, 40% bus
- › 8% business and seminars

Marketing and sales channels – diverse

Union Hotel is dependent on very active and diverse marketing and sales. The hotel has their own marketing and sales division and depending on time of the year also other employees and owners are involved in sales. Marketing channel depends on customer groups. Examples are:

- › Social media / Youtube
- › Platforms; booking.com, De Historiske (group of historic hotels in Norway), Fjord Norway
- › Logos and profiling / Travel magazines
- › Presentation of the hotel
- › Google announcement
- › Market cooperation – local destination
- › Special activity program for the shoulder seasons
- › Advertisements



Presentation of the hotel

Link to film presenting

“the hotel that brings together the village”



Website



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«We sell because we have an idyllic farm:
fresh air, proximity to animals»

«As I see it, there is a
lot of work on the farm
without a direct eco-
nomic benefit... but
maybe indirectly...»

Photo hyke.studio.

Westerås farm!

The tourist farm AND keeper of the landscape
Geirangerfjord, Norway

«protect and prosper»

Westerås in short

Westerås is an idyllic farmyard dating back to before 1600. It is a family owned and managed enterprise combining a traditional working farm with a tourist business. The family take pride in their role of protecting and preserving the natural landscape and their cultural heritage. Westerås key attributes:

- › Located in Geiranger village
- › Stunning view
- › Traditional mountainside sheep and goat farm (lamas are a recent addition!)
- › High-end Restaurant with traditional Norwegian fare
- › 5 cabins and 2 apartments (self-catered)
- › Employees all year: 2 (the owners), 9 seasonal staff (2019)
- › Turnover 2020 (Covid-19 season) down by approx. 50%
- › Season: Pre Covid-19 from May to September, 2020: June 20 to mid-October.

Natural assets and benefits

Westerås is located within the Geirangerfjord World Heritage Area, giving it a range of competitive advantages:

- › Unique geology of global significance
- › Hiking – easy access both beginner and advanced routes
- › Waterfall walk
- › Stunning views over the fjord
- › Special natural and cultural landscape

Society and culture– special contributions

- › Preservation of the traditional mountain farming cultural landscape
- › Year-round local employment
- › Participation in local networks
- › Maintaining farming traditions and skills

Environment – special efforts

- › Preserving biological diversity in the fields
- › Focus on waste reduction and recycling
- › Eco-lighthouse (Miljøfyrtårn, ecolabel) certified
- › Green Fjord environmental network membership
- › Charging station for el-car

Customers - from “everywhere”

- › Guests come from all corners of the world.
- › 50 – 65% of restaurant diners are from the cruise ships
- › Guests in apartments and cabins are a good mix

Sales channels - diverse

A normal season for Westerås farm is 5 months. To keep up such a long season, several sales channels are used.

General: www.fjordnorway.com, Facebook, Word of mouth, Terra Nova Scandinavia, Destination company, www.visitnorway.no, Tripadvisor.com, <https://www.vos.to> / destination management.

Restaurant: Cruise operators: European cruise services, Olsen shipping company, Nordic Gateway.

Overnight stay: Online Travel Agents (OTAs) e.g. www.booking.com, www.hotels.com



Link to film from
the farm



Facebook

«We also forage for a lot of our ingredients, probably too many ingredients to list.»

«We have always set ourselves up as a community brewery.

The idea was that people should feel that they are a part of it.»

Wildcraft Brewery!

Community brewery
Buxton, North Norfolk, England

«protect and prosper»

In short

Wildcraft Brewery is a micro-enterprise (2 staff) located in North Norfolk, 3 miles from one of the many protected areas along the North Norfolk Coast. Wildcraft is a community brewery with a pre-Covid-19 focus on selling to pubs and restaurants. Wildcraft's beers are lovingly made using locally foraged fruits and herbs giving them a unique nature focused brand.

Natural assets and benefits

Foraging

Wildcraft have expertise in botany which has allowed them to exploit local natural assets to enhance their beer recipes with berries and herbs.

Investing in natural capital

Wildcraft use their brewing waste as animal feed for the local farmer and fertilizer for local community gardens.

Society and culture – special contributions

“We do an awful lot of outreach...”

Community engagement

- › Tap takeovers
- › Brewery tours
- › Wild Fest – music and community festival (1000 plus people in 2019)
- › Promoting charities – beer used to raise awareness of Norwich

Investing in local relationships

“We have tried to build up a community of people that feel like they are part of the brewery.”

All of Wildcraft's branding has been created for free by close friends with expertise.

“We have survived by having volunteers.” People from the local community dedicate their time and expertise to Wildcraft Brewery.

“This year I didn't have to go out at all foraging as people brought fruit and herbs to us for beer.”

Environment – special efforts

Aside from using locally grown raw materials in production and reusing their organic waste, Wildcraft is involved in a number of initiatives which reduce their environmental footprint.

- › Water usage reduction: 1 pint of beer previously required 7 pints of water, Wildcraft have reduced this to 3 pints of water.
- › Packaging from suppliers is used to repack Wildcraft's products.
- › 10 pence bottle returns.
- › Transport collective – Wildcraft decided to set up a transport company with other breweries to deliver their beer. 18 breweries have joined the collective which uses 1 van to deliver rather than 18.

Customers

Wildcraft brewery relied on wholesale customers (pubs and restaurants) for 95 % of their income before the Covid-19 crisis. A switch in business model has led Wildcraft to expand their B2C customer base, which focuses on home deliveries. After the crisis, Wildcraft aims to use their new customer database to target pubs and restaurants where a high number of their new customers live.

Sales Channels

“We are very social media led; we probably engage with 80 % of our community through social media.”

Facebook is Wildcrafts most successful channel but they also have a presence on Twitter and Instagram as well as their own well-designed website.



Facebook



Website

«I wanted to try to set something up that complemented, protected the environment and contributed something on the social part»

The Coastal Exploration Company!

Recharge on Nature
North Norfolk Coast, England

«protect and prosper»

Description

The Coastal Exploration Company (CEC) provides unique sail powered boat tours into some of North Norfolk Coast's most beautiful and pristine areas. Traditional, red-sailed whelk and crab boats are used to navigate the winding inlets and salt marshes along the coastline and provide each of their customers with a unique experience of the local natural and cultural heritage.

Natural assets and benefits

"Just being in a really beautiful part of the coast, which is for free and available."

North Norfolk Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

CEC is reliant on the AONB for its business model. The wilderness that is encompassed by the AONB is part of the product that CEC is offering. Moreover, a range of food is foraged directly from the coast, with CEC collecting shellfish and edible plants during their trips.

Society and culture – special contributions

"...all of those skills, the fishermen, boat makers, sailmakers have been using for 100s of years are kept alive."

Building Social Capital

CEC have made links with homelessness or ex forces charities to provide tours to take vulnerable people into nature to "give them a boost to get on with their lives".

Cultural Heritage

CEC is actively engaged in preserving the local cultural heritage in a range of ways:

- › Repairing and refurbishing traditional, wooden, crab, whelk and mussel boats.
- › Using food produced by local artisans, such as cheese, bread and jams.
- › Promoting artisanal products, such as WWII map smocks and traditional "Ganse" woollen jumpers.

Environment – special efforts

"For me, the fact that we could use these wooden boats, just repair, refurbish the ones that I found, meant that we were not bringing more lumps of plastic into this fragile beautiful part of the coast"

Zero emission transport: CEC use sailing and sculling to navigate Norfolk's coastal inlets; their small fleet is now almost 50 % engine-less.

CEC avoid the use of plastic on their boats and only rely on local food producers for their supplies.

Investing in natural capital

CEC invest in the nature by teaching people how to preserve and respect Norfolk's coastal protected areas through outreach programs, such as their "Traditional Sea School".

Customers

- › 70-80 % British.
- › North Norfolk families who don't own a boat themselves.
- › London based customers who want a unique expert guided tour of the Coast and salt marshes.

Marketing and sales channels

"That is one thing I have always understood that if you do something slightly different, most journalists and publications are looking to write an interesting article, so it is ideal for them."

- › Website: run by CEC and bolstered by high quality photos and videos.
- › Social Media: Instagram (professional photographers used).

Marketing centred around "interesting stories that people are drawn into rather than trying to immediately sell an idea up front".



Website with videos