



JAN 2017

Happy New Year from us all the Beech Tree. I do hope this is a good year for you & yours with much happiness & good health.

It has certainly been an interesting year to say the least. The staff & myself have never had to work harder to keep everything running as smoothly as possible at the Beech Tree. We have had to deal with a lot of distractions but are now trying to push ahead once more.

We are still fighting on the car park front, although everything may appear to have gone quiet... it hasn't at our end... 18 months on & we are still having issues. In case you didn't know the truth, the landlord of the car park threatened not to renew our car park lease at the same time as introducing me to his son who said "I want to buy the Beech Tree".

After loads of stress & sleepless nights, the public utility company agreed to lease me the land at the rear, we then put in for planning & the neighbours all objected, so we had no choice but to go public as we needed support for the planning, then finally we got the planning permission though. Then the landlord's son with his dirty business tactics - set up a caravan on the West Highland Way just 2 miles from us, giving away free food & drinks for "charities", which did have a big impact on our walking customers. Most of the summer we had hundreds of people coming in with all sorts of different stories/lies & most of them had been told not to use here by him. Obviously, we lost business with the walkers who are not local & just took what he said as the truth. I believe his plan was to reduce our turnover making it harder for us to fight back, which did work for him, but your support was so fantastic it gave us strength to fight back. Hopefully now with his son facing multiple police charges they will now leave us to get back to our real jobs, however I will still be looking over my shoulder to protect the Beech Tree as I am unsure as to what this year will bring.

This is still affecting the whole business & has been such a worry whilst being so time consuming, not least it will end up costing the business over £50,000 by the time it is finished as the business now needs to pay for the old carpark for another 4 years as well as finding the funds to pay for newly leased land at the back. This year we have spent over £15,000 & haven't even started the car park yet. The costs so far have been in moving the ponies over, fencing the area, building their stable, making a start on moving the West Highland Way path, changing the garden to suit, etc, but at least stage one is now started. We hope to complete the West Highland Way path this year & make a start on the new carpark at the end of the year. However, we must earn the funds before we can spend it, so it may be the following year. We are not a cash rich business, so it may not be developed for a couple of years yet. Your support with this has been over whelming & I want to say "thank you" once again as it has made a massive difference to keeping us all fighting for what is right. There are far too many people to thank, but hopefully you will have seen the posts on facebook or our website showing our gratitude. Your response & support was legendary - THANK YOU!



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So, what have we done this last year?

We converted the old smoking hut into the new aviary, this meaning you can now enjoy seeing the birds a lot better, they also have a heater & light in the hut so they can now stay out all year round. The chinchillas also need heat in the winter months so we have made them a cosy new house in the aviary so they can also be viewed better whilst benefiting from the heat.



We also had to sort out the old aviary so that was re-done into the goat summer house.



As mentioned, we built a new stable for the ponies, who are loving their new space.

The new West Highland Way path was supported by CEMEX UK, who arranged their team to come & shovel gravel all day forming the base for the path. This year we will take away the old rotten tables on the WHW as we now have our new tree seats in place. We are trying to make the place as rustic as possible & putting the countryside back by using natural products where possible. The goats even got a new log bridge to play on



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We took down the old ruck sack hut at the front door & built a new roof, making better use of the space for people leaving ruck sacks or just people wanting to shelter.



We opened out where the new main entrance from the new carpark is going to be by taking the corner off the shed.



As part of our subtle education for kid's program, we opened our Woodland Walk, it is very much a live mission & we are adding to it all the time. We have now put some "Did you know?" boards up in the garden with facts about the animals for the kids & are making more progress with adding in our bat boxes & wildlife habitats around the area. Obviously, this area is

much better in the summer months, but hopefully the trees we have planted (over 60) will soon make it more of an all year-round place to wander around. Even in the winter months it is certainly a wee haven for wildlife. We are hoping to be able announce some great news later this year regarding this.



We have continued to make homemade products in our shop with the introduction of our Tree jars. They all are homemade by us & we hope to convert a shed into a poly tunnel this year so that we can grow & make our jams & chutneys from our own produce. We used the Damsons on the West Highland Way to make our jams & jellies this year. We still print our own T-shirts & Baby Bibs & our Rustic Woods are selling really well, along with the Bird Boxes & Squirrel feeders. We will introduce more home-made products this year.



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We continue to support Balfron High School, currently we are printing up their inter-house bibs for sport & we have now given Chas over £9,214.57 from selling the duck food. Again, this last year we were able to support many others as you can view on our website on the “helping others” page.

We gave the bar a wee make over with lots of painting & adding in a fireplace. In the conservatory, we did a small refurb & took away the wait station to open it out for coffee & cakes. You may have noticed that we have slightly changed the logo by added the word “café” bar



In December, we introduced Kids Eat Free which we hope to be able to run indefinitely, but we advise that you check our website for up to date information as to the current terms & conditions. For me, the Beech Tree is about giving people time out of the “real world”, somewhere to come & enjoy the facilities, so hopefully this offer will mean it is more inclusive to families.



The staff have all worked extremely hard this year to help grow the business & my biggest of thanks goes to them. I do have to single out my Manager – Anne Skea & Assistant Manager – Donna McKay who have kept me sane in such a difficult year. Like everyone in the present climate we know that we must continue to work harder for less, but hopefully you will continue to enjoy the facilities at the Beech Tree & come back time & time again.

I cannot thank you enough for supporting this small independent business that I love so much & wish you all the very best for a good 2017!

With thanks

Lynne Alldritt  
Proprietor



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