

# Country Parks Update

Culture & Communities Select Committee

21 September 2020

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Head of Countryside

# Country Parks Transformation

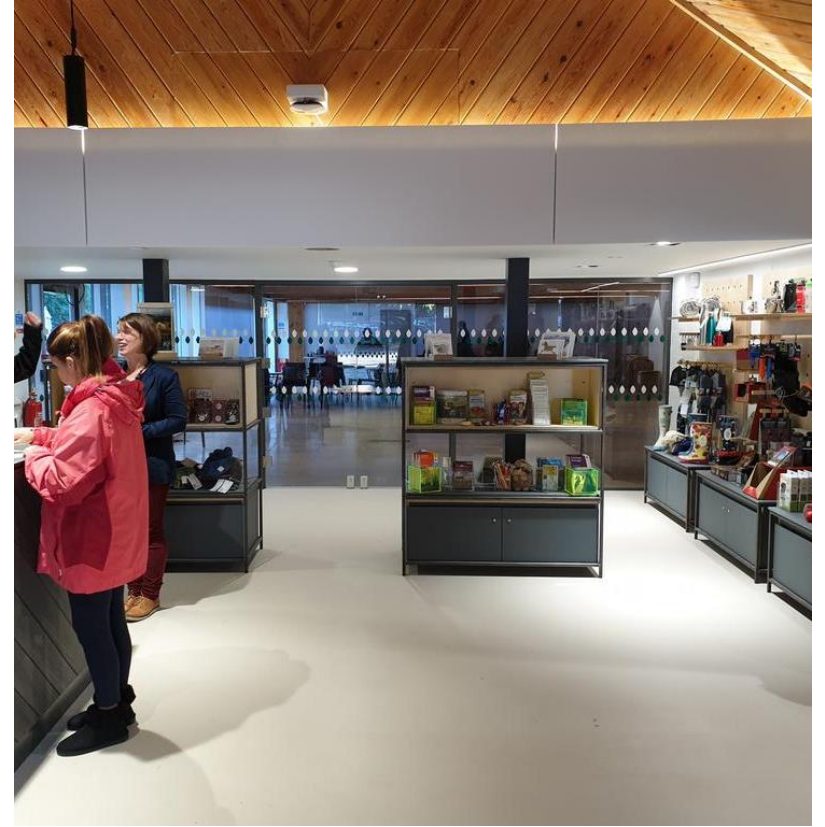
Once in a generation opportunity to create a suite of modern  
21st Century parks that are operationally self - financing

Park	Completed (planned)
Lepe Country Park	May 2018
Royal Victoria Country Park (Chapel)	August 2018
Queen Elizabeth Country Park	September 2019
Staunton Farm & Parkland	September 2020
Manor Farm	October 2020
River Hamble Country Park	March 2021
Royal Victoria Country Park (café)	July 2021

# Lepe Country Park

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# Queen Elizabeth Country Park

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Royal Victoria Country Park (Chapel)

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# Manor Farm

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# Staunton Farm & Country Park

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Work in progress

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# More to come.....

Café at RVCP



Barn at Barnfield (RHCP)



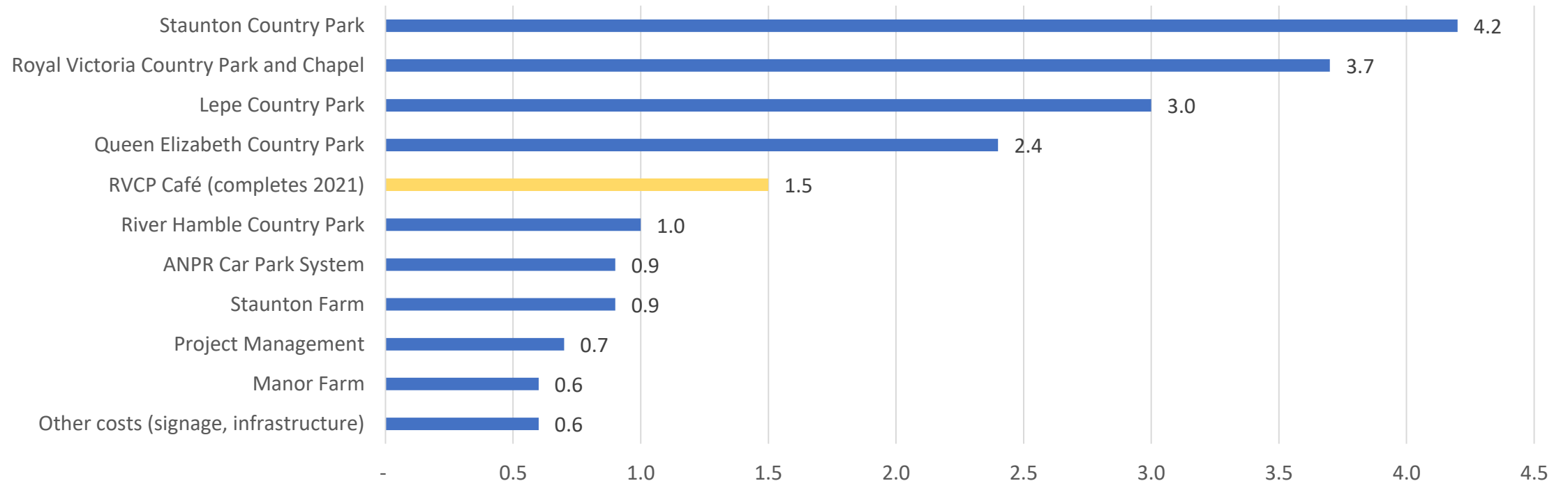
# Country Park Transformation

- Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) has increased honesty rating from average 73% in 17/18 to over 95% average, which has been maintained since January 2019
- ANPR go live at Staunton and River Hamble Country Park by the end of 2020

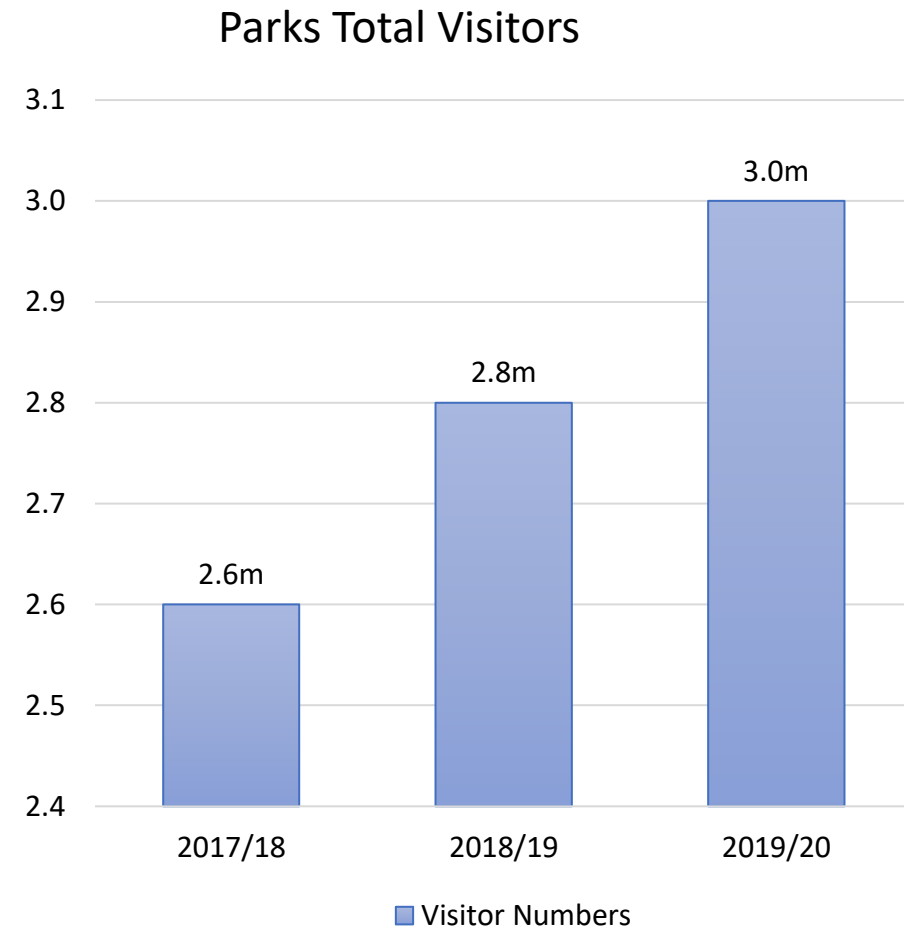
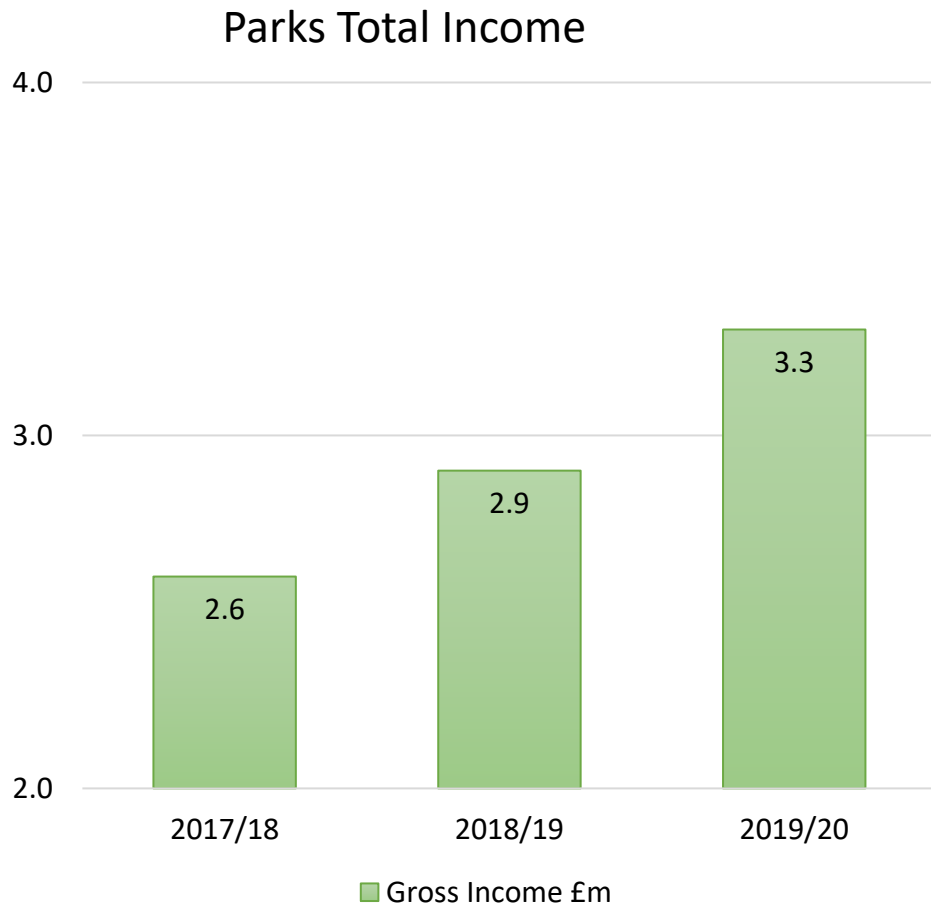


# Country Park Transformation

Level of investment £19.5m



# Benefits of Investment



# Impact of Covid

- 22 March car parks and facilities at all parks closed
- Still open for access, walking and cycling
- Only catering and visitor services staff furloughed



# Impact of Covid

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## Financial

- Forecast for 2020/21 - £2m (net loss) less income, increase expenditure and some savings.
- 21/22 - £1m (net loss) forecast (reduced capacity etc)

## Staff

- 122 furloughed (44 staff and 78 casuals), 80% returned to work by 1 August, only 10 casuals currently still furloughed





## Impact of Covid

- Increased use of countryside
- Rights of way reports up 30%
- Basingstoke Canal Towpath use up 300%
- Sites such as Lymington Nature Reserve 3x number of visits in same period
- Anti-social behaviour on the increase
- Productivity impact

# Impact of Covid – research findings

**90%** of the responses have **visited a country park or farm attraction** managed by Hampshire County Council.

**80%** **can not** visit a country park by foot or by bicycle.

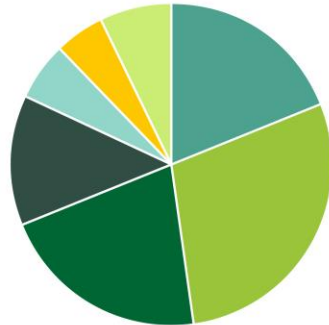
**32%** have **visited a country park** after some restrictions had been lifted on 13th May 2020.

**89%** agreed that they are most likely to **visit a country park within 3 months** of them opening after the COVID-19 restrictions.

## Travel time

The responses show that the **majority of people travel up to 30 minutes to get to their local country park.**

- 19% travel 10 minutes or under
- 29% travel between 11-20 minutes
- 21% travel between 21-30 minutes
- 13% travel between 31-40 minutes
- 6% travel between 41-50 minutes
- 5% travel between 51-60 minutes
- 7% travel 60 minutes or over



## SURVEY RESULTS



## HAMPSHIRE COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

**During lockdown**

- Over **70%** would visit a local greenspace or park and use **local paths** for walking or cycling.
- 98%** of these **will continue** this post lockdown.

**44%** stated that their appreciation for country parks or green spaces has increased a lot.

## Visit frequency

- 52%** believe that the frequency of their visits to their local country park will **stay the same.**
- 42%** believe that the frequency would **increase.**
- 7%** believe it will decrease as they would **prefer to use a more local green space.**



**99%** believe that outdoor spaces have a **positive impact on mental health and wellbeing.**

{ Of this, **81%** has found this more **important since lockdown.** }

**85%** are **unlikely to take a holiday overseas** in 2020.

**72%**

believe that Hampshire County Council's country parks have had a large impact in improving their **family's quality of life**, scoring between **8-10/10**.

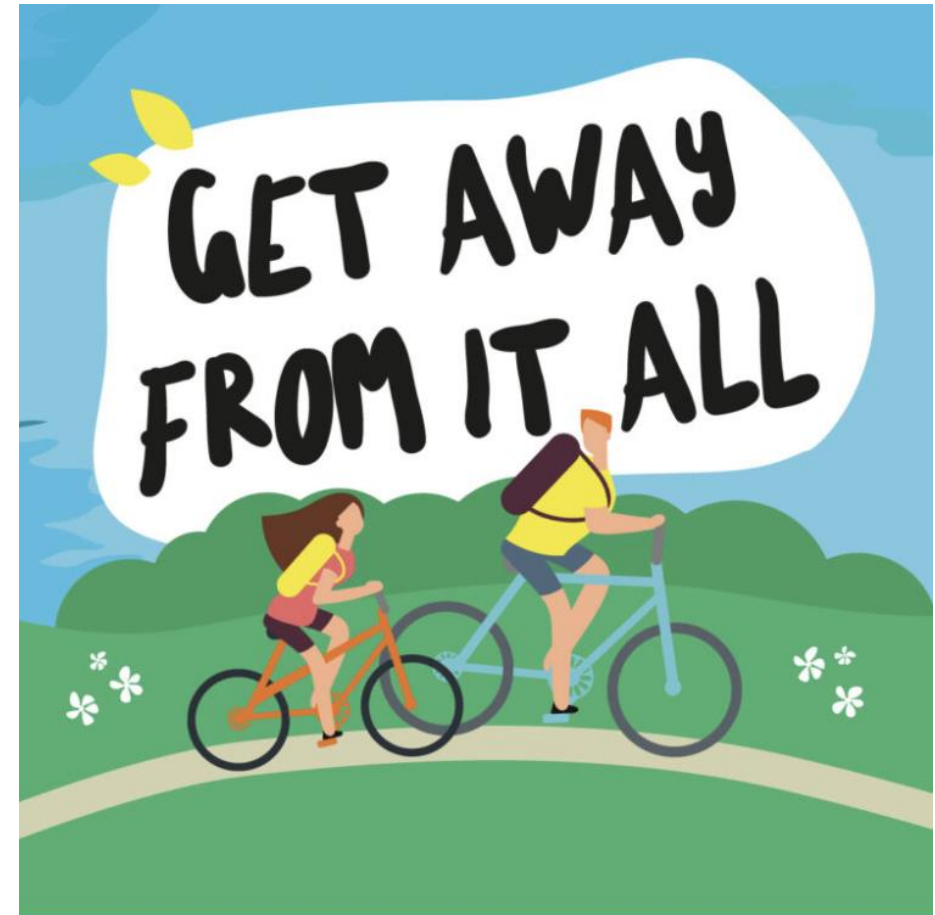


The majority of people asked in this survey have stated that in order to encourage more frequent visits to the country parks, **full access to toilets and washroom facilities** would have to be provided, as well as **pre-visit information about the precautions taken** to ensure visitor safety.





# Responding to the issues #walktherightway



# Service Recovery

## Good Communications

- Making sure our customers knew what we were up to *behind the barn door*
- Preparing them to return safely
- Keeping in touch with all our volunteers & casuals (nearly all back with us now)
- [BBC Video](#)



**WE'RE OPEN\***

Book your members and  
non-members tickets now!

\*You cannot visit without a pre-booked ticket.

# Service Recovery Strategy

## Aim to reopen facilities as soon as possible

- 13 May – Car parks and toilets opened
- 20 May - Increase in car parking capacity
- 15/16 June – Catering & visitor services (kiosk)
- 4-7 July – BBQ hire
- 7 July – Farm attractions and Titchfield Haven.
- 4 July onwards – working with concessions to open as quickly and safely as possible
- 4 July - Volunteers returned



# Service Recovery

- Current position
  - Issues in countryside are reducing slightly
  - Continue to open up indoor catering with reduced capacity
  - VAT changes
  - Working with changing guidance to review risk assessments and service delivery
  - Trying to figure out how to have a socially distanced Santa!
  - Close to budget now on all parking income (3% adrift) 80% down on admissions and memberships, catering 50% down



# Service Recovery Strategy – what next?

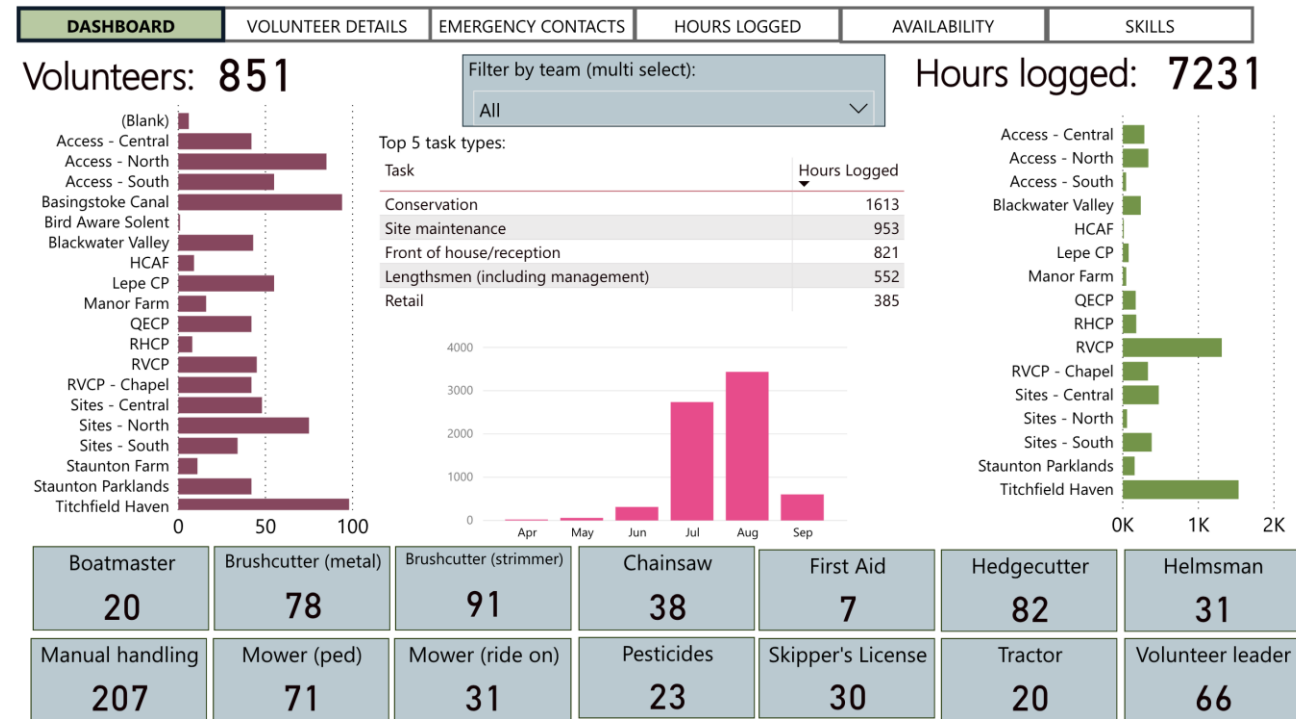
## **Generate more income through improved facilities and additional activity**

The most significant opportunities to increase income lay with the planned transformation works which have now restarted. This is the core focus for the Service although the majority will open in the Autumn. This includes:-

- New 300 space ANPR car park at Staunton CP
- New visitor hub at RHCP and ANPR go live
- New indoor play barn at Manor Farm along with catering and toilets
- Bike hub at QECP
- New café at RVCP (2021 delivery)
- New products/activities - First drive in gig in the South held at RVCP
- Making the most of people staycationing

# Service Recovery - opportunities

- Set up staff register during lockdown now learning from this informed development of volunteer register.
- Changes in eating in means table service - better for both staff and customers.
- People clearly appreciating the countryside more - we will continue to make the most of it e.g. working with MIND.



*"Never waste a good crisis"*

# Leave you on a high note...



## Staunton farm

Staunton farm have done an excellent job at timing entry and allowing you to feel safe in these times of covid. We honestly felt so relaxed and happy that a place has been so good about social distancing and precautionary measures. My 2 year old didn't seem to even notice we didn't feed the animals this time and he usually loves that part so we were pleasantly surprised. We went to marwell a couple weeks before and in comparison Staunton blew them away, so much better here. Thankyou Staunton :)

[Read less](#) ▲

**Date of experience:** July 2020

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Thank you for your time  
Any questions?