

MARKET RESEARCH

TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GLAMPING

POD SITE AT

'HUDEGATE HIDEAWAY'

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Market Research

Market research to support the development of a Glamping site to be called 'Hudegate Hideaway' in the Middleton-in-Teesdale area of County Durham.

Middleton-in-Teesdale is a market village in the north Pennines around 30 miles from Durham City. The area and surroundings are rich in an array of tourist attractions which create a significant economic benefit to the area.

This report will examine whether current accommodation options local to the North Pennines, specifically Middleton-in-Teesdale, and the surrounding areas are sufficient to meet tourist demand. It will also look at tourism trends to suggest if a new glamping site in this area is warranted.

1.0 Durham County Tourist Markets

Durham County has a thriving tourism market. The latest figures available were from 2019, Durham saw 20.13 million tourist visits, with an average of 1.61 million visitors staying overnight with a spend of £4.4 million, which is an increase from the previous 2018 figures [1]. It was reported there were 18.52 million day visitors with a spend of £551 million – another increase from the 2018 figures. Tourism has seen a 2.1% rise in tourists since 2018. The tourism sector contributes £5 billion to the North East LEP area economy.

It is key to note during this research that within County Durham's Local Plan adopted in 2020 noted that tourism accommodation in rural areas can have a positive impact on the local economy, in which case they would be supported [2]. It is a new style of accommodation to the area, something which it is lacking, with more modern features and luxuries provided compared to those such as camping sites. There has been an increase in staycations to the area, this is something that glamping can satisfy the need for.

We believe that due to the popular demand for glamping that it will aid in the aim to explore new means of longer staying visits and outdoor experiences. The nature of glamping makes it an attraction in its own right.

1.1 Main Tourist Markets

1.1.1 Tourists

Domestic visitors, international visitors, tourists, and sightseers are the main market for County Durham's tourism. Since the tourism sector in County Durham has risen over the past few years, we can assume that it will continue to accelerate with Brexit and Covid 19 factors feeding into this rise. It is reasonable to suggest that there will be demand for this development (Glamping) well into the future, being a desirable alternative for those who do not wish to stay in hotels or B&B's or are seeking an affordable private alternative.

1.1.2 Historic Sites & Attractions

HIGH FORCE

5 miles from the farm. England's biggest waterfall, dropping 70feet into a plunge pool, from where the river travels on its way into the North Sea.

LOW FORCE

2.5 miles from the farm. Series of waterfalls in upper Teesdale. After cascading over High Force, the River Tees continues its way passing over Whin Stone which has formed many smaller falls. These falls are famous for the number of canoeists who take up the challenge of the falls.

BOWLEES VISITORS CENTRE

2 miles from the farm. A must to see the history of the Upper Dale and the many attractions to be seen. From the car park, walk to Gibson Cave, a spectacular waterfall that cascades over the front of Gibson's cave. With care, you can stand in the cave and watch the falls.

Another walk from the centre will take you to the Winch Bridge, with wonderful views up the river to Low Force. Walkers can continue from here to High Force.

ST MARY'S PARISH CHURCH

The site has had a church since 1170 and was rebuilt in 1876. The bell tower stands alone and can be viewed daily. St Mary's bell's ring out each Sunday and can be heard to celebrate many events in the village.

THE FIZHNGH LIBRARY

A short walk from the farm into the village, you will find this amazing place full of books and maps. For those searching for family history in Teesdale, this is a must.

1.1.3 Walks & Nature

COWGREEN RESERVOIR

Should be a must in spring, where you can see the Blue Gentian, one of only two places in England where this Gentian grows. From here you can walk to Caldron Snout, a long cascade of waterfalls, watch the outlets from the reservoir pushing the water down the falls.

RIVER WALKS

From the farm along the river to Leekworth Farm, then back through the village, with a chance to see the village and visit the many shops including a gift shop selling items made locally. A visit to The Corner Shop will leave you amazed.

KIRK CARRION

Standing high on a hill, in full view from your accommodation, you can walk to this ancient burial ground. Look down on the village and the river Tees. To the West, you can see across into Cumbria.

BLUEBELL WOOD and BECK ROAD

Walking from the farm this circular walk will take you along Beck Road. Kings Walk will take you into bluebell woods, where in spring every bit of ground is covered in these wonderful flowers. Horseshoe falls and the pool is deep enough to take a dip in warmer weather. Keep walking and you come to old lime kilns.

PENNINE WAY WALK

You can walk part of the Pennine Way Walk from the farm along the river Tees.

1.1.4 Activities & Experiences

THE FAMOUS BOWES MUSEUM

12 miles from the farm, built by John and Josephine Bowes to house their vast art collection. The museum is open daily, allow a whole day, this is a big building and a must to visit. Check the website to see which exhibition can be seen.

GRASSHOLME RESERVOIR

If you enjoy the water, then you can sail, canoe and paddleboard at Grassholme. Contact the reservoir for booking.

FISHING

The river Tees at Middleton is a good brown trout river. Permits are available from the village.

NIGHT SKY

Bowlees Visitor Centre offer dark night sky evenings. Watch the clear sky and see the many stars and even the Milky Way. Or you can sit outside your accommodation and enjoy the dark sky.

AONB

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty offers walks and talks on the local flora and fauna. Night walks are offered to see the night animals and during the warmer months, they offer Bat nights with talks on the different bats.

1.1.5 Food and Drink

Middleton has amazing places to eat, award-winning fish and chips, a pizza shop that will deliver to the farm, and many cafes & tearooms. A French restaurant offering amazing French cuisine. The Teesdale Hotel serves meals throughout the day and evening meals to make your mouth water. Many of the food places will offer you a takeaway menu, so you can sit outside and enjoy the meadow field and the peace & quiet.

2.0 Tourism Demand Analysis

2.1 Demand in the Area

Tourism in the area appears to be enjoying stable growth in recent years. We, therefore, expect demand for accommodation to grow in the years ahead. This is due in part to the Brexit effect (more on this later), and the ever-increasing demand for this new style of accommodation.

This number does not take into account seasonal fluctuation but does suggest a large potential market for the proposed development, which is unlikely to be met by existing accommodation options, especially during peak season.

2.2 Glamping Popularity

Each year we witness a cyclical increase in google searches for glamping (as seen below). This trend matches Glampitect’s experience of witnessing increasing demand. Interestingly the trend shows increased demand for both peak and off-peak seasons & shows no sign of decreasing for the time being.

After a search of the surrounding area there appear to be little options for Glamping. With multiple caravan, only sites close by the nearby glamping sites mostly consists of traditional glamping pods but do not offer luxurious Glamping. The concept of luxury glamping is now gaining popularity throughout the UK, with standards and guests’ expectations on the rise. It is intended by the site operator that this site will be amongst the best available in the area. At the moment, there is little presence in the Durham area offering this kind of luxury pod accommodation giving guests exclusive facilities. Therefore, we feel the site would be providing a positive alternative for visitors to the area, where none currently exist in Middleton-in-Teesdale.

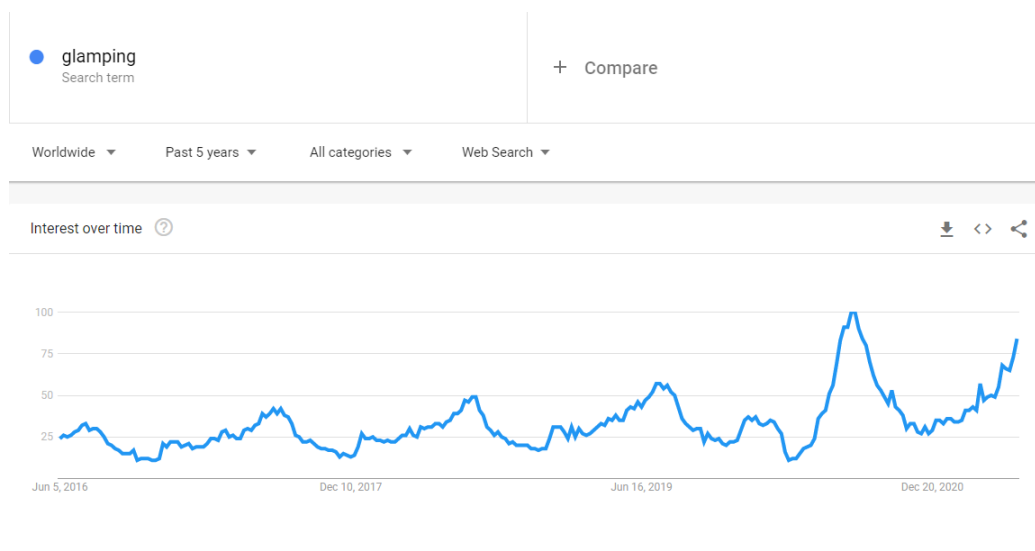


Figure 1 - Glamping Popularity

We have seen in other parts of the country that glamping sites are popular even in areas short of tourist attractions, and when close to other glamping options. Glamping has a certain novelty meaning it is now an attraction in its own right. The location of this site being in Middleton-in-Teesdale will certainly affirm it being ‘its own attraction’.

2.3 Brexit Uncertainty & Covid-19 Impact

Historically, uncertain political times have seen UK based tourists favour 'stay-cations' over foreign holidays. Fears over foreign travel due to the Covid-19 Pandemic are also expected to encourage home-based tourism. This is tempered by the possibility of fewer tourists arriving from the International Market due to the same uncertainty. However, domestic tourists using accommodation typically outnumbered international tourists by a ratio as high as 9:1 so we view this as a potential net benefit.

3.0 Existing Accommodation near Hudegate Hideaway

Below is a list of accommodation options near the proposed glamping site and the surrounding area.

- Hillside Farm Glamping – Bowbank – Glamping Pods - £150 per night
- Wigwam Holidays – Forcett – Lodge cabin - £169 per night
- Hillcrest Park – Windermere – Caldwell - £35 per night
- The Teesdale Hotel– Middleton-in-Teesdale – Hotel - £73 per night
- The High Force Hotel – Middleton-in-Teesdale – Hotel - £149 per night

Several things stood out during our research of existing glamping sites. Firstly, there were a reasonable number of glamping sites in the local area, which does suggest demand. This perhaps makes sense given the reputation these areas hold for beautiful countryside and leisure. With glamping's popularity growing ever stronger (and the impact of Covid-19 likely to accelerate it further), we can be confident of sufficient glamping demand to justify Hudegate Hideaway. Secondly, there is a gap in the market for a higher-end glamping facility where none exist in Middleton-in-Teesdale, it also suggests that there will be a demand for glamping within the immediate area.

By comparison to the choices above, the proposed glamping site would be a different proposition to current options and likely attract a demographic who at present are not catered for locally. The site could expect to command upwards of £120 per night per unit.

The proposed glamping site will accommodate for disabled access throughout, by the use of widened footpaths, an accessible parking space and an accessible glamping pod fitted with the appropriate features. This will be unique to the area as the surrounding glamping sites do not offer these services. The nearest glamping site that also offers this feature is approx. 40 miles North of the proposed glamping site. This site would be a unique feature to the area, the inclusion of an accessible pod will attract a wider range of guests, allowing more visitors to the surrounding areas which in turn will provide further benefit to the local businesses.

Accommodating this new demographic should also see benefits pass through to the local economy. Increased spending by guests of the site is guaranteed and jobs created will be filled by local residents. It is expected there would be at least one Housekeeping role created and possibly a second for groundskeeping.

The tourist trade in the winter months is naturally low in most parts of the UK. Despite this, we believe there would still be sufficient demand for a glamping site in the low season, again due to the wild solitude, nature and leisure activities.

4.0 Summary

Tourism in the UK is expected to increase in the years ahead, even without the effects of Covid-19 & Brexit, which are also expected to accelerate demand and evidence of this is already apparent in County Durham. This should also mean increased demand for tourist attractions and accommodation in and around the North Pennines, coupled with the ever-increasing demands for glamping experiences.

The proposed low impact development will also boost the local and rural economy and offers a scenic stay for guests. We believe that the proposed development will be beneficial to this part of the North Pennines without sacrificing the areas ecology, landscape, or residential amenity.

5.0 References

[1] <https://democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s128231/103020-EE-CT-Item8ii-VCD-PRES-App2.pdf>

[2] <https://www.durham.gov.uk/media/34069/County-Durham-Plan-adopted-2020-/pdf/CountyDurhamPlanAdopted2020vDec2020.pdf?m=637424969331400000>