

Scottish Agritourism Monitor Farm Programme

Meeting One Report – EAST CENTRAL

‘First Impressions Count’

DRIFT, North Berwick – Wednesday 3rd April 2019



The first meeting of the new three-year Scottish Agritourism Monitor Farm Project took place on Wednesday 3rd April at DRIFT. café, owned by East Central Monitor Farmers Stuart and Jo McNicol.

The business is located on Castleton Farm, just outside North Berwick in East Lothian.

The meeting theme 'First Impressions Count' and focused on how important customer views are and how first impressions of your business is the starting point of the customer's experience – good, bad or indifferent.



Stuart & Jo McNicol



DRIFT. Café



Happy Customers at DRIFT.

Feedback from Group Sessions

32 individuals from businesses across Scotland attended the meeting and had the opportunity to give their honest and critical feedback to Stuart and Jo about their 'first impressions' of DRIFT.

The individuals split into six groups and shared their thoughts and opinions on their first impressions of the café, looking at everything from social media engagement to car parking.

Three groups focused on first impressions from the customer journey pre-arrival into the café and three groups focused on first impressions after coming through the café door.

See below the summary of feedback from all six groups.

Groups 1, 2 & 3 CUSTOMER JOURNEY PRE-WALKING THROUGH THE DOOR

- Group 1, 2 & 3 Summary of Positive Feedback

Places to go in East Lothian

- 2nd on search 'places to eat' on google

Online presence, listings, website

- Appears on google maps search "DRIFT."

Social media followers/posts/engagement

- Good quality images
- 2713 likes on Facebook
- 2290 on Instagram
- Instagram excellent quality images etc.

Online reviews (Trip Advisor, Google, others)

- 3-5 stars on Trip Advisor
- Positive comments – "Views are great"

Getting there – signage/car park/first impressions from outside

- Car park is a good size and is tidy
- Is on google maps

Vibe/brand

- Pop up evenings good
- Rustic, stylish, original, cool
 - Like the gilets/t-shirts staff wear

- Group 1, 2 & 3 Summary of Suggested Improvements

Cafés in East Lothian/North Berwick

- 4th search on google – google is not claimed by the business

Social media followers/posts/engagement

- Twitter is linked to Jo's name so a lot of people may struggle to find it

- Perhaps do more to relate to staff etc. on social media (the faces behind DRIFT)
- Videos/boomerangs etc. of scones, soup, cakes being made (videos are the future)
- Menu specials on social media each day

Online reviews (Trip Advisor, Google, others)

- No replies made to trip advisor comments
 - Customer service where poorer comments made – make them feel like you are addressing their concerns
 - Improvement feedback – “Limited menu”, “Slow Service”

Getting there – signage/car park/first impressions from outside

- Not very clear signage on route to the café (many saying they found DRIFT only before they were looking)
- Barriers round the edge of the building/car park to reduce health and safety risk for children/visitors (cliff drop not far from café) ** Discussed further at future meeting focusing on Health & Safety **
- Disabled access – no ramp and gravel could make it hard for wheelchair/push chairs
- Bigger signage at the end of the road
- Septic tank needs tidied up (First Impression for a few people)

Vibe/brand

- Branding is cool and funky but not very clear what type of business it is (some people saying the logo could relate to anything and links more to a surf business)
- Change Facebook/Twitter covers to image of café to make it very clear as soon as people land on the page that the business is a café
- Instead of having signs/logos with just “DRIFT.” have “DRIFT. Café”

Link to farm/agritourism

- No farm connection
- Link farm/wildlife

Groups 4,5 & 6 – FEEDBACK POST COMING THROUGH THE DOOR

- Groups 4, 5 & 6 Summary of Positive Feedback

Look & Feel

- Stunning views as you walk through the doors and look out to sea
- Beach theme with wooden floors/crates used for shelves – sets the scenes for the location
- Very bright inside and much more spacious than it looks from outside
- Amazing views
- Unique building

Seating

- Comfortable seating
- Funky, cool & clean
- High chairs for children – big positive

Cleanliness

- Very clean and tidy
- Spotless

Service/Welcome

- Very good service – two individuals had visited prior to the meeting and thought staff were excellent

Pricing

- Good value for money – but what is good value to one visitor could be expensive/cheap for someone else

Toilets

- Good toilet facilities
- Baby changing – positive

– Groups 4, 5 & 6 Summary of Suggested Improvements

Look & Feel

- Perhaps some coat hooks on wall at entrance
- Can become quite noisy
- Queuing as you enter due to menu only being visible from next to the counter

Seating

- No obvious seating for kids (highchairs tucked around the corner)

Menu/Offering

- Limited menu
- Not clear what the café provides (not clear if you can have lunches or just cakes)
- More on offer for children
- Another menu board as you walk in the door as well as behind the counter

Service/Welcome

- Slow service, too busy to welcome people
- Perhaps over staffed for the size of the café

Use of local produce

- More advertising of local produce
- Not obvious where produce comes from

Link to farm/agritourism

- Not much links to the farm. Possibly put pictures of the farm on the walls
- No links to the farm
- Story board telling the story/development of DRIFT
- Story board showing the family connection

Information

- Possibly put some information on the tables telling the story about the café and food/drink
- Need leaflets – “Just found out about yoga classes, great use of space when closed.”
- Menu on tables – can’t see the menu until you are at the till, making it longer for people to order and risk of ques

Leaving engagement/sign up to newsletter

- Loyalty cards

BUSINESS FEEDBACK

What knowledge/ideas will you take home to your own business	What did you enjoy about the meeting?	Anything we need to improve for the next time?
• Attention to detail • Make sure you accept your business ownership on Google • Looking at your social media/website from different platforms • Look at your business from new eyes • Start small and move forward while retaining quality • Power of social media is crucial • Focus on what is manageable and achievable for your business. Keeping it relatively simple and expanding from there • Importance of good branding • Link with the “agri” • Signage is key • Branding/name – make sure it links to what you are doing • First impressions count for both outside and inside • Planning issues • Dealing with the public • The process initiated in depth or alternative way of thinking about my current project • Videos are the future • Importance of first impressions and taking peoples feedback into consideration	• Meeting interesting people • Friendly atmosphere with lots of interesting discussions • Meeting new people with similar goals • Swapping experiences/ideas • Quality of attendees • Everyone’s enthusiasm for sharing ideas • Networking • Truthful feedback • Hearing Stuart & Jo’s story and what they have gone through to get their business established	• Nope, it was awesome • Mixing up groups more • Can our businesses (within the community group) integrate their marketing/sales to mutual benefit? • Perhaps less on the café side and more on agritourism • Noise within the café • The follow up notes and information will be important

SUMMARY

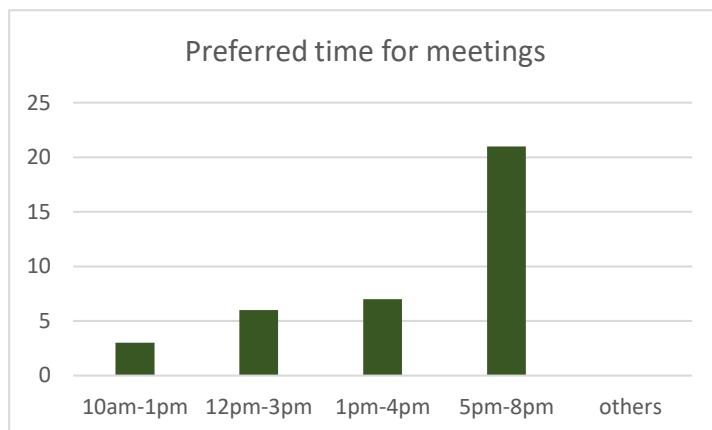
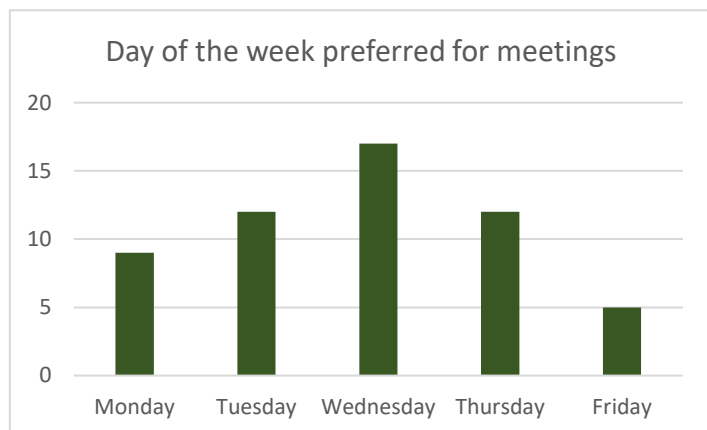
5 Quick Actions for East Central Monitor Farm to take;

1. **Claim your Google listing**
2. **Respond to all Trip Advisor and other reviews**
3. **Bigger, higher quality signage on roadside**
4. **Menu information outside of building, in queue area and on tables**
5. **Tell the story of the farm/family (information on display wall)**

FEEDBACK FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Those attending were asked for their preference on the best day of the week and time to meet.

They were also asked which topics, identified as important topics in the business review, were of the most importance to them.



Feedback on Topics for Future Meetings

Topics	Score
Staff Retention	94
Procuring a new website	119
Managing website design & construction	170
Marketing – getting most bang for your buck	218
Managing your online reputation	182
Developing a 5-year masterplan for growth	180
Sourcing of funding for growth	201
Sourcing local produce – how local is local?	123
How to integrate the farm & farm education into DRIFT.	176
How to stay ahead of your competitors	166

During a recent business review, Stuart and Jo identified critical areas for their business. These topics would be the suggested focus of upcoming meetings. At the monitor farm meeting, delegates were asked to vote on which topics they would like to see discussed at future meetings.

The topics Jo and Stuart selected as their top 5 priorities were –

1. Staff retention
2. Sourcing of funding for growth (also in community group priority)
3. Local produce – how local is local?
4. How to integrate the farm and farm education into DRIFT (also in community group priority)
5. Marketing – getting most bang for your buck (also in community group priority)

This information will now be used to plan for future meetings in 2019/20.

ENDS BR/CAM 10.4.19.