

## Cotswolds LEADER Case Study – Conygree Farm

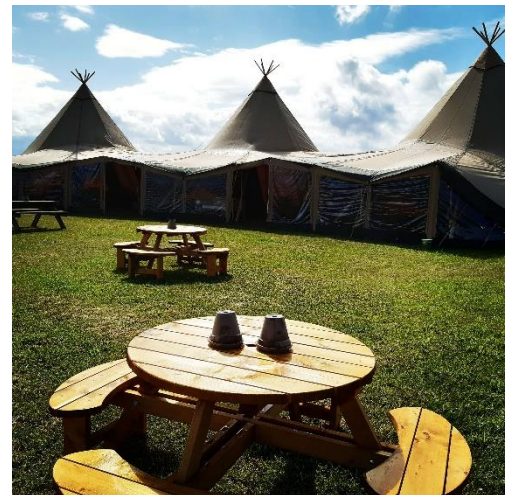


Jonathan and Mel Brunyee have been farming at Conygree Farm, which is part of the National Trust's Sherborne Park Estate, for around 15 years. The 75ha (180 acre) mixed farm is located in the heart of the Cotswolds, framed with dry stone walls, hedges and beech woodland. The soil is a thin and stony brash which is not ideal for growing crops but perfect for wildflowers.

The organically managed farm is home to rare breed Cotswold sheep, Traditional Hereford cattle and native breed pigs. The free range cattle and sheep are reared on a natural organic diet of grass, wildflowers and herbs all year round. Conygree Farm, which is assured by Organic Farmers & Growers as well as the Pasture Fed Livestock Association, produces meat to the highest environmental and animal welfare standards and sells direct to local consumers. This has won the family numerous National Trust *Fine Farm Produce Awards* as well as the prestigious *Farming with Nature Award* in 2017. In addition to the livestock enterprise, they also run a small DIY horse livery for up to five horses.

Jonathan and Mel love sharing their farm and conservation work with special interest groups, students and tourists. This passion for hosting and educating has led them to hold a small number of landmark events in recent years, hiring equipment and utilising their limited barn space. After successfully testing the market, the family decided to develop their brand, grow their unique offer and diversify into an events business, making the farming business more resilient in the process.

In February 2019 a £28,444 Cotswold LEADER grant was awarded to Conygree Farm towards three linked and two catering tipis, two disabled toilets, a chiller trailer and a generator to facilitate the creation of the events business. The first event was successfully held on 20 July 2019.



All Photos Credit Conygree Farm

Due to the investment, the family can now deliver bespoke on-farm events including weddings, birthday parties and small scale food festivals. It also allows them to sell more of their own produce and offer better educational and knowledge transfer events promoting sustainable land management. Up to 150 guests can be seated in the tipis.

These flexible and off grid 'pop up' facilities are erected, taken down and moved around the farm and through the farm's wildflower meadows in the summer and shoulder months. When not in use at Conygree Farm, the facilities are hired out to other local businesses and events. Over time the venture is hoped to increase the farm's turnover and profit as well as create a full time event management role and casual event support roles.

For more information on Conygree Farm visit: [www.conygreefarm.co.uk](http://www.conygreefarm.co.uk)



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