

PRESS RELEASE

CONSERVATION WORK EARNS LOCAL FARMER A 'GREEN TOURISM AWARD'

Chris Parry, a local farmer and owner of Patty's Farm Barn, a series of self-catering holiday cottages in Cockerham, has received a *Green Tourism Award* for outstanding achievement in environmental sustainability. He received the award as part of North & Western Lancashire Chamber of Commerce's *Sustourex* programme.

Chris and his family converted Patty's Farm Barn into holiday accommodation in 2000, and since then have invested a great deal of time, money and effort in developing an ideal environment for local wildlife. In addition to creating a large freshwater pond that is now home to a variety of birds, Chris has also planted well over 4,000 broad-leaved trees including oak, ash and rowan. As a result, he and his family have created a rich diversity of habitats that will improve steadily with age.

The Green Tourism Award was presented to Chris by Alex Southall, an environmental consultant from Lancaster University, which is a partner on the Chamber of Commerce's EU-funded *Sustourex* programme. The award recognises tourism businesses and similar organisations that have made significant progress in improving the sustainability of their operations.

"It is clear that Chris has taken account of environmental considerations at every opportunity," notes Alex. "Inside, the holiday cottages have modern, energy saving appliances, effective insulation, low energy lighting and many other features that we would recommend to anyone wanting to save waste and reduce costs. Outside, the surrounding grounds are continuously managed to encourage and sustain wildlife."

For his efforts, Chris has been given a Silver Award – an achievement which only a very small number of tourism businesses in Lancashire have yet been able to match.

“This is certainly an impressive result,” says Alex. “Chris’ work has clearly begun to yield great benefits for native wildlife, and I very much hope that his business will benefit too when customers recognise the effort he and his family have put in. Tourists are increasingly quoting environmental concerns as an important factor in choosing their accommodation, so I’m confident that people will appreciate what Chris has done.”

Cockerham and the wider Morecambe Bay area is well known amongst ornithologists as an area that is rich in wildlife, and many of the regular customers at Patty’s Farm Barn include bird watchers, walkers and other nature lovers. Guests have reported that as the environmental management programme has progressed, the ponds and surrounding land have witnessed increasing numbers of visits by such species as grey partridge, dunlin, oyster catchers, lapwings and migrant pink-footed geese.

More information about bird watching in the Morecambe Bay area, as well as details of local routes for walking and cycling, can be found at www.pattysbarn.co.uk.

The *Sustourex* programme offers local tourism businesses free advice about energy efficiency, waste disposal and the availability of relevant grants. Information about the *Green Tourism Awards* can be found at www.green-tourism-awards.org.uk. Further details about the Sustourex programme can be found at www.nimtech.org.uk/sustourex.

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