

Historic inn transformed into arts venue



The Farmer's Arms, Lowick Green

A run-down Grade 2 listed inn in the Crake Valley, near Ulverston, the Farmer's Arms has been given a new lease of life as a community arts venue. Taken over by Grizedale Arts in 2021, it now offers a bar, restaurant and café as well as a shop and workshop for crafts such as pottery and woodworking. Upstairs the former landlord's flat has been transformed into a stylish, retro holiday let.

Actions taken

An energy audit was arranged through Cumbria Action for Sustainability just after Grizedale Arts took possession of the building.

"Continuously and carefully refurbishing the interior of the listed inn... we source and adapt vintage furnishings for use in the public and staff spaces, using skilled craftspeople and simple, natural materials."

Farmer's Arms

The audit "made us aware of the huge range of ways by which we could reduce our energy use and environmental impact."

Since then Grizedale Arts has undertaken a range of actions to minimize the carbon emissions associated with the site and to control costs. These include:

- re-use and recycling of existing pub fittings
- retrofitting energy saving features - low energy lights, electric water heaters and insulation in lofts and under floors

- building a new cold food store based on traditional Japanese storage building techniques. This well insulated space stays cool year-round and avoids the need to keep fruit and vegetables in refrigerators
- food growing plots and composting. Salads, herbs, root vegetables and edible flowers support the kitchen. Green waste is composted on site to feed the gardens.

"We source our fresh produce as locally as possible, using independent grocers and surplus from gardeners nearby. We believe in keeping food miles low, and in our kitchen produce dishes that centre on the fantastic seasonal flavours of just-picked herbs, vegetables and fruit."

Farmer's Arms

Plans for the future

There is still a lot to do! The aspiration for the site is to reach net zero emissions by 2030. Grizedale Arts is seeking funding to renovate the fossil-fuel based heating and cooking facilities, replace the ventilation system and to further insulate the building.

They are also planning for innovative low energy buildings on the site to demonstrate alternative approaches to environmental issues. An off-grid "nature house" will combine a greenhouse -type structure with solar photovoltaics and battery storage to provide both growing and teaching space.



Photo : Donna Munro

