

Planning and the Play Barn!

As attractions enter the winter months and the damp start to spring, and for some attractions their closed season. The question of what to offer your visitors next year is always challenging and tough decision? One option often considered by many is the introduction of a play barn or indoor play area to offer all year round weather proof fun and enjoyment. If thought about practically and carefully the introduction of a play barn could be your biggest attraction.

So how do you introduce a play barn to your attraction? Firstly you have to consider is your barn suitable and safe for its intended use? We would recommend that you first discuss the idea with a play barn provider to establish suitability, time scales and of course costs, consideration should also be given to the impact of the development on you visitor flow and how it can be incorporated within the existing attraction.

If after this your barn is deemed suitable, then you should engage with your local planning authority. The introduction of a play barn will be seen as a change of use of the buildings original intended use. As many play barns do no alter the external appearance of the building they are generally well accepted, it is important to note that any application will require a structural survey most likely together with an ecological survey to demonstrate the building is safe and no bats or owls etc are present, architectural drawings will also be required. Further consideration should be given to increased visitor numbers as a result of the play barn, and you should consider your highway access and car parking facilities. We would advise talking to county highways as the introduction of such a facility could have an impact on the local highways network and the surrounding area. Further more consideration should be given to planning conditions that could restrict the operation and use if approval is granted such as restricted opening times and visitor numbers?

A play barn can be a great introduction to any attraction and can become one of your main attractions adding both appeal and profit although if you are thinking of a play barn it needs to be planned carefully and further consideration should be given to the impact of the play barn in your business rates assessment.