

Rural Rebranding at Tapnell Farm!

STUDENT INTRODUCTION

Tapnell Farm is a former dairy farm located in the west of the Isle of Wight, on the site of the 1970 Isle of Wight pop festival. Once upon a time, not so long ago, 500 cows grazed the lush pastures of the farm for 33 years, producing 24,000 litres of milk each year!

It was the biggest dairy herd on the island; the milk produced was enough to fill 50 Olympic-sized swimming pools and keep everyone on the Island sipping the wholesome white stuff for 3 ½ years!

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The colourful cows can be found around the farm and you can find out all about them when you visit.

In recent years, Tapnell Farm has **diversified**. Farm **diversification** involves farmers deciding to use their land and facilities to do other things to generate and/or supplement their income.

Tapnell has diversified into tourism and leisure; it is a popular visitor attraction and holiday accommodation provider. It has also diversified into energy production, with four arrays of solar panels across the farm, as well as contributing to biogas generation on the island and using biomass to heat the restaurant.

Although the large dairy herds are now no more, they also still maintain young livestock rearing for their farm on the mainland.

During the pre-visit, on-site and post-visit activities, you are going to learn all about what Tapnell Farm Park was once like, and how it has diversified into the major Island attraction that it is today.

You will investigate and consider the concepts of 'placemaking', 'rebranding', and 'reimagining', in order to understand the reasons behind the diversification of the farm, how and why the developments were implemented to create a new 'place meaning', and the relative successes of what has taken place here.



PRE-VISIT TASKS

Before your visit to Tapnell Farm Park, you are going to explore the meaning of the key terms from page 1, which are associated with this study.

You are also going to learn a little bit about where Tapnell Farm Park is, what it was once like, and how diversification has resulted in the attractions and facilities there today. Firstly, let's look at what we mean by 'place'...

What is a place?

A 'place' is an area of geographical space that can be defined and described by its human and physical features. A place contains certain human and physical elements, as follows:

1. The **physical site** – weather and climate, animal and plant life, and all of the physical (natural) elements of the landscape, such as geology, soils, relief etc.
2. The **human characteristics** of the place; the people and cultural 'landscape' (race, religion, language, etc.) and the economic landscape (employment, and the exchange of money/flows of investment).

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Task 1: Place Perceptions

We all develop a '**mental image**' of a place, whether consciously or sub-consciously. People's perceptions of a place are influenced by a wide variety of factors such as religion, race, ethnicity, age, gender, and sexuality.

In addition, people's '**lived experiences**' of a place affect their view of it; things like the 'role' they play within a place, or the activities they do/have done there, or experiences that they have had within that place.

» Consider the place you live, or one that you know very well. Write its name here:

Now, in the space below each, write down your thoughts in relation to these questions:

1. How do you 'use' this space?
2. What is your mental image of this place? Describe it using adjectives and descriptive sentences.

3. Why do you think that you have this mental image; what factors and lived experiences have influenced your image of this place?
4. Has your mental image of this place changed over time and, if so, why do you think this is?

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Task 2: Formal and informal representations of place

Places can be represented either formally or informally, as follows:

1. **Formal representations** of place include things like census and statistical data
2. **Informal representations** of place include things like the media, such as TV, film, advertising, tourism/travel agencies, music, art, photography, literature, graffiti and blogs/social media. Most informal sources provide qualitative information.

You are going to investigate some of the formal and informal representations of Tapnell Farm as a 'place', in terms of what it was like before, during, and since, it diversified from a dairy farm.

On the following pages, you will find a range of maps, photos, additional information, and links to web-sites, which will help you to investigate this.

Using all of this information, complete the tables provided on page 7 and 8 in as much detail as you can.

Part (a) Informal representations

Figure 1. The location of Tapnell Farm on an OS map extract



Tapnell Farm

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Figure 3. Images of the farm during construction and development



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Figure 4. Tapnell Farm following diversification



Figure 5. Other sources showing ‘representations’ of Taphell Farm

- ▶ The GIS map here: <http://www.natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk/MagicMap.aspx>
Zoom into the western Isle of Wight, find Tapnell Farm marked on and then ‘explore’ what the location/area is like by turning layers on and off in the ‘table of contents’
- ▶ Isle of Wight tourism websites, here: <https://www.visitisleofwight.co.uk/things-to-do/tapnell-farm-park-p1193211> and <http://www.isleofwight.co.uk/attraction/tapnell-farm/>
- ▶ Reviews and comments about the farm on TripAdvisor here: https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attraction_Review-g503893-d8567468-Reviews-Tapnell_Farm_Park-Yarmouth_Isle_of_Wight_England.html

▶ Tapnell Farm’s Facebook page, here: <https://en-gb.facebook.com/tapnellfarm/>

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▶ View Twitter and Instagram here <http://tapnellfarmpark.com/>

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- ▶ Search for, and investigate, reports about Tapnell Farm by searching the Isle of Wight County Press (the IWCP is the IOW newspaper!) website, here: <http://www.iwcp.co.uk/>
- ▶ Google images – search for ‘Tapnell Farm’ using Google images to find images of the farm
- ▶ Type ‘Tapnell Farm’ into YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/>

Source	How this affects my mental image of Tapnell Farm as a 'place'	Reasons why this source influenced this mental image	How, and why, this mental image might vary over time, from person to person
OS map			
Photos before construction			
Photos during construction and development			
Photos following diversification			
GIS map			
Tourism websites			
YouTube			

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Source	How this affects my mental image of Tapnell Farm as a 'place'	Reasons why this source influenced this mental image	How, and why, this mental image might vary over time, from person to person
TripAdvisor website			

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Tapnell Farm's website			
Twitter and Instagram			
IW County Press			
Google images			

Part (b) Formal representations

You are going to investigate some statistical data for the Isle of Wight.

This will provide **quantitative** data about the area where Tapnell Farm Park is located. Tapnell is located in the 'West Wight' Ward and, therefore, you will look at the data concerning this part of the IOW in particular.

You will find statistical information for housing, population, health and wellbeing, and education, skills and employment, in West Wight here: <https://www.iwight.com/Council/OtherServices/Isle-of-Wight-Facts-and-Figures-Ward-Area-Data/West-Wight>

You should study this information, as guided by your teacher, and then complete the questions below:

1. What 'mental image' does the data you have studied give you about this area of the IOW?

Fully justify and explain your points, with reference to specific data.

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2. Having looked at informal representations of Tapnell Farm Park in part (a), has this formal data altered your mental image at all? Fully develop your answer to explain both how and why it has/hasn't changed.

3. What influence, do you think, can both formal and informal representations of Tapnell Farm Park have on people's perceptions of the place?

PRE-VISIT
TASKS



Task 3: Why diversify?

As you already know, from the information in the introduction, Tapnell Farm Park has gone from a dairy farm with a several hundred-strong herd of cows, to a top Island leisure and tourism attraction. Why has it done this?

The quote below was given by Tapnell Farm Park, when asked why they decided to diversify:

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larger dairy farm.”

Now, read the article in the Guardian Newspaper here: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jan/16/dairy-farmers-milk-prices-economy>

Once you have done this, you might also want to explore some of the ‘more on this story’ articles recommended at the bottom of the page too.

- ▶ Using this information, write a paragraph in the space below to describe the pressures and problems facing UK dairy farmers, and use this information to explain the reasons why a dairy farm such as Tapnell might look to diversify.

ON-SITE TASKS

Welcome to Tapnell Farm Park, as it is today! You have studied a wide range of both formal and informal representations of Tapnell Farm as a 'place'.

You have also learnt a little of the 'background' concerning the issues faced by dairy farmers, and therefore the causes of a desire/need to diversify.

Rebranding and reimagining at Tapnell Farm Park

You are now going to visit the farm for yourself, and see first-hand what has been done to rebrand and reimagine the farm's identity. You will make judgements whilst there about the successes of this, including how sustainable the placemaking process has been at Tapnell Farm Park.

First, let's ensure that you understand these terms!

Rebranding is the term used to describe the development and marketing of a place in order to change its identity.

You may also encounter the term **reimagining**, which refers to steps which are taken to change the image / views that people have of a place.

Placemaking is an 'umbrella' term that refers to attempts to rebrand, reimagine and regenerate a place to change the meaning of a place to the wider world in order to attract investment and visitors.

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You are now going to investigate an attraction. You will carry out a range of different activities, which will help you to learn and understand:

- how the farm has diversified into recreation and leisure, from dairy farming, and how it has become a honeypot site
- how rebranding has changed the identity/image of this place, and how successful this has been
- how Tapnell Farm Park is striving to be a sustainable tourism / recreation provider, as an indicator of the success of the rebranding.



You should work your way through the activities below, as instructed to do so by your teacher.

Activity One: Getting a sense of the place

'Mental', or 'sensory' mapping is a 'new' type of field studies technique whereby an individual walks through a place and explores it using all of their senses.

You are going to do this around Tapnell Farm Park (your teacher will tell you how much time you have!) You should stop regularly and make notes.

Come back together and share your thoughts, and then compare them to get a sense of 'lived experiences' and differing perceptions of 'place'. This will introduce you nicely to Tapnell Farm Park as a re-branded 'place'.

You might even take it a step further and consider how your sense of place now that you are 'present' at the farm, compares to your sense of Tapnell Farm Park pre-visit, where you used the 'representations' to investigate it. Has your sense of place / mental image now changed and, if so, why do you think that this is?

Your teacher may also carry out a technique called 'Placecheck' with you at this point.

Activity Two: Rebranding evidence

You are now going to explore the farm for yourself and see first-hand what has been done to rebrand it, including assessing the relative success of rebranding/reimaging.

The table below and on page 13 shows the main attractions and facilities on the farm. It is your job to find the attractions/facilities pictured and named, and complete all of the columns in the table for each.

Attraction/ facility	Rebranding How has the development of this attraction / facility helped to 'rebrand' Tapnell Farm?	Reimaging Explain why this particular attraction/facility is attractive and enjoyable. Who might it appeal to and why? How has it changed the 'image' of Tapnell Farm?	Placemaking What is Tapnell doing to manage this attraction/facility to ensure that people have a safe and enjoyable visit? How has the development and management of this changed the image of Tapnell Farm?
 <p>Play Attractions - bouncing pillow, Straw Bale Adventure Barn, The Play Barn, outside play areas</p>			
 <p>Animal experiences - 'Meet the Animals', Animal Barn, the Paddocks, Wallaby Walk, etc.</p>			
 <p>The café and shop</p>			

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**ON-SITE
TASKS**

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<p>Attraction/ facility</p>	<p>Rebranding How has the development of this attraction / facility helped to 'rebrand' Tapnell Farm?</p>	<p>Reimaging Explain why this particular attraction/facility is attractive and enjoyable. Who might it appeal to and why? How has it changed the 'image' of Tapnell Farm?</p>	<p>Placemaking What is Tapnell doing to manage this attraction/facility to ensure that people have a safe and enjoyable visit? How has the development and management of this changed the 'image' of Tapnell Farm?</p>
 <p>Animal activities - keeper talks,</p>			
 <p>Other on-site attractions climbing, abseiling, other 'Adventure Activities'. Haven Falconry, Top Targets, etc.</p>			
 <p>The Cow Co. Restaurant</p>			
 <p>Accommodation - Safari tents, cabins, modulogs, pods, cottages and manor house.</p>			

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Activity Three: Assessing Success!

ON-SITE
TASKS

How successful has the rebranding been at Tapnell Farm Park?

You are now going to carry out a variety of tasks, and examine different 'evidence' to consider this question.

1

Behave yourself!

This task is an '**Observation study**' and is, again, a new technique being used in Geography fieldwork to investigate 'place'.

In this case, we are interested in the 'placemaking' that has happened at Tapnell Farm Park. You are going to be observing visitor behaviours around the farm to help to gauge the success of rebranding (subtly and as unobtrusively as you can - as you don't want to influence; you should find a good people-watching place to sit where you can quietly observe and watch visitor behaviour).

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Your teacher will tell you how much time you have, and will also give you any other specific guidance or instructions. The space below is for you to record your observations:

Number crunching

You are going to do a little mathematics now, to assess the economic benefits of rebranding.

Tapnell Farm Park started work to diversify in 2014 and opened its first stage facilities and attractions in 2015. The number of visitors through the park, and the number of bookings for guest accommodation since then, are given in table 1 below.

Table 2 then shows the number of staff employed on-site when it was a farm, and how many staff are now employed. You should represent the data in an appropriate way, in the space provided on the next page.

Then, you can write a short paragraph about what the graphs show about the growth of

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	www.edudest.uk Farm park visitor numbers	Accommodation guest bookings
2015	20,000	2,500
2016	40,000	2,825
2017 (estimate)	90,000	3,248

Table 2:

Staff employed on dairy farm in 2010	Staff employed at Tapnell Farm Park in 2017 (post-diversification)
6	45

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Analysis

EQA away...

EQA stands for **Environmental Quality Assessment**, and it is a type of survey commonly used in geography fieldwork to make judgements about the quality of the environment (both natural and man-made) of an area or specific location. It is aimed at investigating a variety of different variables where each is given a 'score'.

See the example below...

Aspect	Description	Score					Description
		1 Very Poor	2 Poor	3 Average	4 Good	5 Excellent	
A. Noise	Very noisy						Very quiet
B. Restrooms	Unpleasant pollution e.g. litter						Attractive environment
C. Safety	Unsafe, e.g. lack of lighting						Very safe
D. Open space	Very crowded, limited greenery						Open space, green- ery, landscaping
E. Air quality	Very smelly / polluted						Very clean / no smell
F. Environment	No services						Wide range of services
G. Design / Maintenance	High quality, maintenance						Low quality / maintenance

The EQA above is typical of one which might be carried out at different points along an urban transect in order, for example, to assess how the environmental quality changes (perhaps with distance from the CBD, or with distance from a particular feature).

You are going to develop your own EQA in order to assess the 'quality' of the attractions, facilities and general area of Tapnell Farm.

Think carefully about what variables you want to include and how your 'scoring system' is going to work, and then also consider how you are going to carry this out (e.g. the number and location of sites) in order to get some reliable results!

Design your EQA in the space on the following page.

EQA design

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TASKS

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Extension

ON-SITE
TASKS

Virtual Questionnaires

One of the ways in which the success of a development such as this might be investigated is using a questionnaire.

Tapnell Farm Park does not want visitors to have their time at Tapnell interrupted by students and so it is not possible to carry out a questionnaire, but that doesn't stop you from taking 15 minutes or so to think about how one might be designed and carried out, and why this might provide interesting results to help 'assess the success' of the rebranding that has taken place here.

Before you do this, discuss with a partner the different factors that one should consider when designing a questionnaire (to investigate anything, not necessarily rebranding – we're talking questionnaire design in general!) and what makes a 'good' questionnaire.

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Share ideas in a small discussion with your teacher and write down some key points in the text box below...

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Factors to consider when designing a questionnaire...



What makes a 'good' questionnaire?

Extension**ON-SITE
TASKS****Virtual Questionnaires**

Now, following your discussions, design a questionnaire in the frame below, which could be used to gain people's opinions about the rebranding developments that have taken place at Tapnell Farm:



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POST-VISIT TASKS

Task One: Assessing sustainability - placemaking for the future at Tapnell Farm Park

Tapnell Farm Park has a golden rule, which is: “to pass on our farm in better environmental and productive health that it was at the beginning of our life’s tenure”.

Sustainability is at the heart of all that they do.

Discuss the term **sustainability** with your teacher and make sure that you understand what it means. Write down some key points in the space below:

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A Honeypot Site?



Tapnell Farm Park might now be considered by some to be a **honeypot site**.

Places and attractions that are popular with visitors and therefore attract large numbers of people are known as honeypot sites. Tapnell Farm’s developments have been welcomed and have received a very positive reaction amongst both locals and visitors, due to the positive impact on the area by increasing local employment, more visitors to the Island, increase in renewables and adding something fun for locals to do all year around.

However, honeypot sites can result in conflict. You are going to learn about some of the considerations and issues that Tapnell has had to face, and what it has done to manage these.

Key players have been involved in the rebranding of the farm; Tapnell Farm Park itself is of course a central player. The IOW Council has overseen the planning application and approval process, and also managed the zoo licence application.

A LEADER Grant was also applied for and awarded to build and furnish the eco-lodges. LEADER is a rural development fund for England; funding is delivered via LEADER Local Area Groups (LAGs). £138 million is available to local businesses, communities, farmers, foresters and land managers in rural areas of England between 2015 and 2020 under the scheme.

(continued...)



Honeypot sites can attract large numbers of people, and large volumes of traffic. At Tapnell, overflow car parks are created in fields and barns adjacent to the main car park to accommodate additional traffic during busy periods. This, and the long drive up from the road, ensures that traffic does not queue and congest the main road.

Some neighbours requested that Tapnell do not use the farm track in front of their properties to drive down for the cabin and pod accommodation parking. So, instead, they have created wood chip pathways from the main accommodation car park. They have had the occasional noise complaint

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encounter experiences draw people to (and away from) certain places through the day.

For the zoo license for the farm park, Tapnell had to demonstrate they had studied local endangered species in the area. In planning for new buildings we have to show we are sensitive to the local environment by using sustainable resources where possible. The accommodation is as natural as possible; it does not contain TVs, in order to encourage a 'back to nature' feel. All cabins, pods, and the new 'modulogs' (including the furniture in them), has been built out of wood sourced from the farm site where possible. Woodchip is used as a natural material on pathways, and it this is also locally sourced. All cleaning products used to clean all accommodation and public areas on the farm are eco-friendly.



Planning regulations stipulated that Tapnell Farm Park should consider the long-term impact on the local environment at all times. Ongoing conservation practices include hedge and tree planting schemes, such as the 'Jigsaw' scheme to sustain ancient woodlands and a Natural Enterprise Project to sustain the Small Limeleaf. Tapnell Farm Park keeps close tabs on waste; compostable 'Vegware' cutlery and plates are used in the café, and there are 'stations' where paper, plastic, glass, metal and wood can be placed for recycling. Signs inform and encourage visitors about these eco-friendly practices and encourage them to use them. A sewage treatment plant breaks down the sewage from the holiday accommodation and turns it into drinkable water.

(continued...)

POST-VISIT
TASKS



Lastly, efficient and environmentally sustainable resource use is central to their operations. In terms of energy use, a biomass boiler heats the Cow Co. Restaurant, the Manor and some of the other holiday cottages. Maize, oats and grass is grown on the farm and fed into an anaerobic bio-digester in Arreton which creates biogas for Island homes. There are four arrays of Solar panels, providing 500Kw of energy.

In terms of water use, the washing station taps are operated by the knee and so cannot be left running when not in use, and a borehole on site will supply

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Using ALL of the information above, and ALL of the activities and work that you covered both before and during your visit to Tapnell Farm, and your own research, you will now be given one of the following four topics to focus on and produce a presentation for your class:

1. ***A Sense of Place*** – how a variety of different factors (formal and informal representations, and also the age, gender, race, religion etc) can affect a person's mental image of a place, and how this can be affected by a range of experiences.
2. ***Rebranding and reimagining to 'place-make'*** – how a place can rebrand and reimage itself in order to change the mental image and perception of it as a place.
3. ***Placemaking issues and key players.*** The issues, conflicts and problems associated with rebranding and placemaking. Who are the key players and how have they 'acted' to address these?
4. ***Rural rebranding and place-making, and sustainability.*** What is sustainability, and how is social, economic and environmental sustainability being achieved at Tapnell Farm? To what extent is this successful?

