

Investing in Leaders in Business

Ian Russell heads up a team that delivers a year-round family destination through strategic leadership and continuous evolution



Under Ian Russell's visionary leadership, Wroxham Barns has grown from a derelict farm purchased in 1982 into one of Norfolk's leading year-round family attractions. Across 44 years of dynamic leadership, Ian has shown strategic foresight by continually adapting to customer preferences - adding a children's farm and fun park in the early 1990s, and most recently developing a campsite.

The organisation demonstrates its ongoing commitment to growth through continual innovation, celebrating seasonal milestones such as spring lambing, summer cultivation, autumn pumpkins, and Christmas destination events. This approach ensures year-round interest while preserving a core retail offering at the heart of the attraction. Ian's leadership is also reflected in a people-centric recruitment strategy that values attitude and mindset above solely technical skills.

Ian understands that, while he and his team can teach practical tasks, what truly matters is creating positive, joyful interactions with customers. His approach to leadership is focused on building a workplace where employees enjoy their roles, which leads to strong staff loyalty and outstanding customer service. Continuous improvement is part of the company's culture; with the belief that learning and refining processes is an ongoing activity. When issues arise, Ian sees them as chances to exceed customer expectations by responding quickly and demonstrating integrity, always putting the customer's needs first - qualities that shape how the business operates.

Ian demonstrates significant community engagement, working closely with other attractions and businesses to position Wroxham Barns within a broader destination context. As Chairman of 'Where to Go in North Norfolk', he plays an active role in supporting the regional economy by leading the local attractions network.

Ian's extensive career has been marked by his collaborative leadership style and his belief that greater contributions lead to greater value. Working closely with the Council's visitor marketing partner, Visit North Norfolk, he has supported initiatives for destination marketing that promote the interests of all local businesses, and he has expressed a sincere appreciation for the continued support received.

"I've learned over 44 years that the more you give, the more you get. We're part of a big machine. If you think you're on your own, you're missing something."

Ian Russell,
Wroxham Barns

