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## **CHILD'S PLAY FOR CANNON HALL FARM WITH NEW £1.4M INDOOR PLAY AREA**

- **35 jobs to be created by new leisure and educational facilities**

Cannon Hall Farm has secured a £1 million finance facility from HSBC to support the £1.4 million development of a new indoor play area, 300-seater restaurant and classroom facilities at the popular Yorkshire tourist attraction.

Construction on the 825m<sup>2</sup>, 800-capacity indoor play area and classroom facility is due to commence in April and will be complete by October. It is expected the new developments will create 35 new jobs at the farm, bringing total employee numbers up to 185.

The move is designed to attract more visitors to the Barnsley-based farm during the colder winter and spring months and during periods of wet weather. The attraction, which boasts a children's farm, farm shop, gift shop, delicatessen, tea room and adventure playground, currently receives 290,000 visitors a year and the company is expecting this number to rise to 420,000 with the new facilities.

The company has switched its full business banking to HSBC's South Yorkshire Commercial team in a deal led by Senior Commercial Manager Chris Alsop. The £1 million funding for the new development has been supported by a £280,000 grant from the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership's Business Growth Programme, which is supported by the Government's Regional Growth Fund, taking the farm's total investment to over £3 million pounds in the last 2 years.

The indoor play area will feature a farm theme throughout and state of the art play apparatus, whilst the classrooms will be used to teach school children about food production from field to fork.

Cannon Hall Farm is a family managed business that was acquired by Charles Nicholson in 1958. The business is now run by Charles' son Roger and his sons Richard, Robert and David. The family diversified the farm's activities in the 1980s, opening a tearoom in 1981 and the farm as it is today in 1989. The farm raises livestock, sheep, cattle and pigs. Fodder crops such as grass, kale, fodder beat and whole-crop silage are produced to feed the animals.

Managing director Robert Nicholson said: "The farm is already one of the top tourist attractions in Yorkshire and this move is designed to weatherproof the attraction. We want people to come to Cannon Hall Farm and know that there will be something for them to do whatever the weather. Obviously our key months are from March to October and this investment will help to attract customers during the traditionally quieter months."

He added: "HSBC's support of the project has been excellent; Chris and his team have recognised we are a profitable and long-established business that is trying to help the local economy by creating new jobs."

Chris Alsop, HSBC Senior Commercial Manager, added: "Cannon Hall Farm attracts visitors from all over the UK and these new facilities will be yet another reason to make the trip to the farm. We are delighted to welcome this well-known family business to HSBC."

Roger Marsh, Chair of the Leeds City Region Local Enterprise Partnership outlines why the LEP has supported this project: "By investing in businesses such as Canon Hall Farm, the Leeds City Region LEP not only facilitates growth for the business, creating new jobs and opportunities, but it also has a vital impact on the economy of the local area.

"I am delighted that through support from the LEP, this project has created 35 new jobs in Barnsley and will continue to be an attractive visitor destination for those in and around the Leeds City Region."

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