

Yorkshire Animal Park owners stay in profit despite challenges of pandemic

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The operators of Yorkshire Wildlife Park have reported robust finance results despite closures and other challenges during the pandemic.

Wild Life Group, which operates the park near [Doncaster](#), has released accounts for the year ending November 30 2020 which show that revenues fell slightly to £11.9m (from £13.5m a year earlier). Over the same period, operating profit dipped marginally from £3.1m to £2.8m.

Directors highlighted the challenges the park had faced during the [pandemic](#), including a four-month total shutdown and the inability to open fully after that.

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And despite those challenges carrying on into the current financial year, they said the business was well set for growth.

The accounts say: "Despite the Covid pandemic, which forced the park's closure for four months in the reported year, the lucrative Easter period and cancelling of the summer concerts,

we still managed to achieve an Earnings before Interest, Tax, Depreciation and Amortisation figure of £5.17m, which almost equalled the previous year.

“Government assistance through the reduction in VAT, the furlough scheme and the business rates relief also made a significant contribution, and we are grateful that this has continued into the current year.

“Visitor numbers reached 568,000 against 759,000 last year, which considering the four-month closure, school visits being decimated and social distancing limiting our capacity, was a real testament to our growing appeal.

“We instigated various social distancing measures in line with Government guidelines, to ensure the safety of our staff and visitors, such as prepaid tickets, maximum visitors per session, one-way systems, signage, increased cleaning and hand sanitisation stations.

“We are still subject to numerous restrictions and have already been closed for over three months this financial year but, despite this, we remain optimistic that this year’s results will show real growth.”

The company highlighted the development of a new entrance and entertainment hub, a number of new animal reserves and new restaurants.

Work on a 200-bed hotel and a 2,000-seat conference centre is continuing, the directors said.

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