

Invitation to Tender: Café Concession at Lunt Meadows Learning Centre

Lancashire Wildlife Trust invites experienced caterers to express interest in operating a new café within the Learning Centre at **Lunt Meadows Nature Reserve**, near Liverpool. This is a unique opportunity to manage a café in a stunning natural setting, with plans for significant growth in visitor footfall over the coming years.

About the Opportunity

Location

Lunt Meadows Nature Reserve
The Learning Centre, Lunt Road, Thornton, Liverpool, Merseyside, L29 8YA

What we are looking for;

We want an established experienced caterer to take up the concession for a brand new café inside a beautiful bespoke timber built building. This caterer will need to already be operating from either a café, mobile unit or similar and have a proven track record of providing fantastic food and service.

This is a brand new café and as such we understand that footfall will need to be developed over the coming years, we are not expecting the operator to open 7 days a week from day one, we expect to start with weekends to begin with and a minimum opening of 10am-4pm Saturday and Sunday + bank holidays.

As such, this would be an ideal opportunity for someone with a small static business or mobile unit that has a reliable turnover mid-week on another pitch but might want to start to move into a bricks and mortar environment. Or, for an established café elsewhere that wants to start to expand slowly and start with weekends only, and grow into mid-week.

We would be interested in all kinds of caterers, so would be happy to entertain any offers such as people that focus more on traditional café food, bakers that might want to get more into coffee and hot food and people who offer carbon neutral, ethical, sustainable choices.

The Café and Facilities

The café, housed in a newly built Learning Centre, features:

- An open café kitchen (16sqm) will come with basic table and sinks with other equipment to be provided by the successful candidate. The kitchen has ample electrical sockets including 32A, water, and drainage facilities. Ventless cooking equipment is required such as Merrychef or TurboChef ovens unless additional extraction is arranged at the operator's expense.
 - If the operator would like extraction to allow for example deep fryers, we can arrange a installation of extraction hood and required extinguishing system + interlock at the expense of the caterer.
- Indoor seating for 30+ guests, with the potential with prior agreement for overflow into an adjoining event space, increasing total capacity to over 80. Some indoor tables and chairs are provided to get you started, as are front of house storage cupboards and counters suitable for retail or self service coffee machines.
- Beautiful nature reserve setting, outdoor seating and a sensory garden, a.
- Excellent amenities, including high-speed internet, EV charging points, and accessible facilities.

The operator will also have opportunities to:

- On request - Cater for our education and engagement teams events for school visits and public events.
- Utilise the space for private events (e.g., kids parties) with prior approval.
- Use the kitchen for prep / storage of off-site catering or preparation (subject to conditions).

Please note: We aim for the café to open by **Easter 2025**.

What We Are Looking For

We are seeking an **established caterer** with a proven track record in providing exceptional food and service. This opportunity may suit:

- A small café or mobile unit looking to expand into a bricks-and-mortar site.
- An established café seeking to extend operations gradually, starting with weekends and growing as visitor numbers increase.
- A person who understands and has a passion for good quality, ethical, sustainable and quality produce and procedures that align with our organisational goals as a conservation charity and will work to incorporate this understanding into their menu's and procurement

The operator will be expected to:

- Open weekends and bank holidays initially (10am–4pm), with weekday openings as visitor footfall grows, with a trial of week day openings in the school summer holidays of 2025
 - Provide a diverse, inclusive menu with vegan, gluten-free, and halal options, focusing on homemade, quality, and locally sourced food.
 - Support site activities by catering for school groups, private bookings, and events.
 - Maintain the cleanliness of the café and shared spaces, including stocking public facilities.
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Catering and Retail Flexibility

Operators may sell:

- A wide range of food items aligned with the site's demographic, options must include or have available on request vegan, halal and other allergy and dietary requirements. Our most popular items at other sites similar are hot drinks, cakes, breakfast baps, toasties and other such "traditional" café food.
 - Non-food retail items (e.g., local crafts, kids toys, sustainable products etc) with prior approval.
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Expected Turnover, contract length and Fee

- Based on insights from similar sites within our organisation and those of our partners, the anticipated turnover for a small site like this is projected to exceed £80K NET annually for a five-day operation by the second year, once established. However, the actual performance will depend significantly on the successful candidate's efforts to build and sustain a loyal customer base. The operator's initiative and engagement will be key factors in achieving and surpassing this target
 - This opportunity is offered as an initial 48-month agreement, with the option for periodic reviews. While our goal is to establish a successful and mutually beneficial partnership, this agreement will include break clauses and provide flexibility for both parties. We are open to extending the arrangement beyond the initial term, subject to performance reviews and further negotiation, with the potential for a longer-term agreement if both parties are satisfied.
 - The operator will bid for an annual rent and we expect these bids to range from £5-7K and the operator will also pay a monthly service charge to cover utilities, rates, waste, and building upkeep. These costs will be transparent and this will be a fixed monthly fee generated from the budget over 11 months of the year, with the 12th month forming an adjustment payment that will be more or less depending on what was incurred over said period.
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Application Process

Step 1: Express your interest by emailing ebailey@lancswt.org.uk with:

- Your contact details.
- A short statement no more than 1000 words about your current catering business and why you're suited to this opportunity and why you would be a good match for our charity.

Step 2: An application form will be sent to suitable businesses once an initial meeting has taken place.

About Lunt Meadows

Lunt Meadows is a thriving wetland nature reserve and archaeological site in North Merseyside. Its rich wildlife, including waders, owls, and water voles, attracts visitors year-round. Supported by partnerships and dedicated volunteers, the reserve is a hub for conservation, education, and community engagement.



For more information:

[Visit Lunt Meadows Nature Reserve](#)
[Watch our YouTube series](#)

We look forward to hearing from you!

