

## KENWOOD DMR system provides a smooth transition from analogue to digital communications at Folly Farm Adventure Park & Zoo



# NX-1000 Series based DMR digital radio system supports safety and operations at award winning adventure park and zoo in South Wales



**In 35 years, the Williams and Ebsworth families have grown Folly Farm into an award-winning destination attracting 500,000 visitors a year.**

Set in the beautiful Pembrokeshire countryside in south-west Wales, Folly Farm started life in 1998 when third generation dairy farmer Glyndŵr Williams and his wife Anne were looking for opportunities to increase farm revenues in the wake of milk quotas.

One eventful day while walking his cows across the A478, a popular tourist route to Tenby and Saundersfoot beaches to milk them in the parlour, Glyn had his lightbulb moment while chatting to day trippers as the traffic stopped to let the cattle cross. Along with his wife Anne, a headteacher at a local primary school, they saw the opportunity for an educational attraction where visitors could come and watch the cows being milked and learn about farming. And so it was that Folly Farm took its first tentative steps into agri-tourism.

As the business developed, the farm attraction expanded to include an indoor vintage funfair, a zoo with over 200 different animal species, indoor and outdoor adventure play areas, accommodation in luxury lodges, Showman's Wagons, safari tents, touring pitches and a campsite, serviced by restaurants and themed catering outlets. And the site has grown too and now covers some 150-acres (60.7 hectares).

## **A family business built on family values.**

Folly Farm remains very much a family business and celebrates its independence by reinvesting in making the business bigger and better for visitors and staff alike. In 2013 it added a saltwater penguin enclosure followed by a lion reserve in 2014 and a breeding facility for eastern black rhino as part a European Endangered Species Breeding Programme in 2015. In 2020, Folly Farm rehomed 12 Macaroni penguins, making it the only place in the UK where this vulnerable species can be seen. It's a strategy that has clearly paid off, attracting over half a million visitors each year and winning a host of awards including 10th best zoo in the world in the 2017 Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards.

## Sustainability is at the heart of the business

Folly Farm has always championed sustainability in its operations and in addition to its commitment to preserving wildlife, it has harnessed renewables in the form of solar energy which not only powers many of the attractions including the recently upgraded fleet of outdoor electric go karts for its family friendly Follystone racetrack. The karts were ordered during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic to give visitors something to look forward to when operations returned to normal and importantly it allowed staff at the Welsh kart manufacturer to return to work from being furloughed.

The same principles extend to the upgrading of the old analogue radiocommunication system in 2022 to a digital KENWOOD DMR system.



### Royston Badham, operations manager at Folly Farm:

“With the expansion of the site and more buildings in place, the existing analogue ‘Simple License’ compliant analogue radios struggled to provide clear, uninterrupted coverage.

However, some of the existing radios still worked, so while the decision to migrate to digital to provide site-wide coverage, scalability and integration was our end game, we wanted a system that offered a simple to use analogue to digital mixed operation feature so that we could continue to use the analogue radios in the interim - most especially during peak season when the workforce more than doubles with seasonal staff. This not only makes financial sense for us, but also reduces waste in line with our approach to sustainability.

The KENWOOD NX-1000 Series hand-portables are great value and not only meet our requirements, but also allow us to futureproof our radiocommunication capability well into the future”.

## Improved safety and operations efficiency with site-wide coverage



Royston Badham comments: “With such a wide variety of attractions on site, from the zoo to rides, accommodation, food and beverage and retail outlets, full coverage of all key areas with instant, reliable voice communication is vital to both safety and operations efficiency.

We wanted our new radio system to flex around the way we work, support our health, safety and

emergency protocols and give us the scope to add repeaters for trunked operation in the future.

In addition to the paging, lone worker, emergency and man-down features of the NX-1300 DE2 radios currently in use, I envisage that we will be integrating more automated functions to support guarding and fire patrols in the near future”.

The new KENWOOD digital DMR system operates in UHF simplex mode and was supplied and programmed by Communic8 Hire Ltd.

## Orderly, phased migration from analogue to full digital operation

### Callum Goldthorpe, director, Communic8 Hire:



“It was essential that the new digital radio system at Folly Farm could operate in both analogue and digital modes seamlessly. KENWOOD is at the forefront of mixed analogue-digital operation where the function is native to the radios so that the user doesn’t have to do anything to switch from one mode to the other when receiving or making calls.

The integration of the existing analogue radios was painless while the entry-level NX-1300 radios are so feature-rich that everything on Folly Farms’ wish list was met and more; allowing for the phased migration to full digital operation and the basis to build the system out to incorporate more advanced automated functions, integration with AI systems and of course expansion in capacity and coverage when required.

Exceptional audio quality throughout the coverage area, paging and built-in worker safety features were the stand-out features that delivered immediate benefits to Folly Farm”.

## System Highlights

The new KENWOOD DMR digital system provides coverage throughout all key areas of the site, while the eighty NX-1300DE2 hand-portables and two NX-1800DE mobiles are in use by functional teams including:

- Animal Keepers
- Ride staff
- Food, beverage and retail outlets
- Groundskeepers
- Maintenance engineers
- Security staff
- Emergency, first aid and safety personnel
- Management, office and administration staff

## NX-1000 Series for visitor attractions

KENWOOD NX-1000 Series DMR radios offer the flexibility to build scalable systems suitable for covering single or multiple sites for example off-site accommodation, shops, bars and restaurants etc. quickly and economically, while the native analogue/digital mixed operation capability (enabling radios to communicate automatically with existing licensed analogue radios), provides a predictable, economical migration path to digital two-way radio operation and a solid basis from which to build a future-proof radio system.

## Operations Support

In addition to the improved audio clarity in noisy environments and extended coverage of the park, the new radio system will bring a number of other important benefits to operations and safety, including:

- Parking management
- Streamlining visitor arrivals
- Managing queues
- Enabling host services
- Coordinating on-site deliveries
- Supporting Animal Keepers, F&B, Attractions and Accommodation teams
- Managing maintenance inspections and works
- Managing grounds and facilities teams
- First Aid, Security and Safety support
- Operations and Resource Management
- Rapid implementation of emergency and evacuation plans



## Final words

Royston Badham concludes: "The KENWOOD NX-1300 radios have really impressed the whole team who no longer need to work around patchy coverage, poor audio quality and limited features. The radios are surprisingly good value given all the features and extended capabilities built into them and allow our teams to work more safely and efficiently secure in the knowledge that they are only the push of a button away from assistance and help when needed. Both Callum and his senior communications engineer Matthew Beynon at Communic8 Hire have been great in ensuring the existing analogue radios were integrated with the new digital radios and that the system was fully operational at handover – they were also able to provide the coloured ID antenna bands for each of the user groups, a custom built 10-way charger, earpieces and cases so that we were able to introduce the new system to staff fully charged and ready to go".



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