



# Windmill Hill City Farm Volunteer Newsletter

Issue 13 March 2018

## In this Issue

**Innovative farming method hits the UK**

Pg 2



**Meeting Notes**

Pg 2



**What's On This Spring**

Pg 4



### Cafe

#### Congratulations!

The café who have been crowned Best Family Friendly eatery in the Bristol Good Food awards for the third year in a row. Many thanks to volunteers who help out in the kitchen and gardens to make this happen!

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:

### time to get serious

You may have seen more and more in the news recently about the overuse of energy and waste by the human population to an unsustainable level. In particular the problematic use of plastic has been highlighted after David Attenborough's stark warning against climate change and pollution in the BBC's Blue Planet II series. Climate change and pollution reduction are back in political and corporate debates, by powerful people whose decisions influence the behaviour of the people. However to make the changes we need to save the planet, it's also down to our individual choices and taking our own responsibility.

In line with this, Windmill Hill City Farm have upped the ante to make the organisation as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible. The educational mission of the Farm is to encourage people to live in a sustainable manner and we must lead by example if this is to have authenticity. Change is happening. Recently we got support from a company called Enomia to improve our recycling facilities— look out for new bins! And at a recent staff training day, each area made pledges for reducing, reusing, and recycling that will be monitored regularly.

We are now looking for some volunteer's pledges, and ambassadors who can help become part of this movement. If you are interested in becoming a green ambassador and want to know more, talk to Lizzie! You can also help out by bringing in empty plastic containers that we can use for seed sowing— see below for the type of container we need, and hand them to Susan!



**A message from Jon on Reception...**

Please claim your expenses before 3.30pm. Thanks!



# Farmers Urged to Bury Pants

Farmers around the world are using an intriguing new method for testing soil fertility; burying their underpants. The 'Soil My Undies' challenge was first launched in the USA and is now being adopted by many agricultural organisations around the world to test the fertility of soil on farming land. The theory is that microbes in organically thriving soil will eat away at cotton briefs, leaving nothing but the elastic waistband. Digging up pants after two months gives a reading of the land's healthiness.

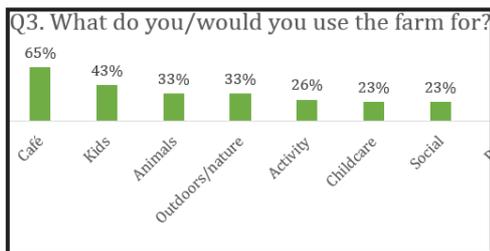


Farmer Ian Green from Scotland described this soil assessment method as 'simple and cheap'. "The cotton is the most important thing, rather than the underpants" he clarified. We have often wondered about the quality of Windmill Hill City Farm's soil... got any spare underpants, anyone?

## Big Listen—what do people think of the farm?



During February we did a 'big listen' exercise asking visitors what they thought the farm was for and what we might do more, or less, of. We had over 80 surveys returned, which is pretty good for a week's worth and found out some fascinating facts – including that 50% of our visitors come here more than once a week and 86% of them come from BS3 or BS4 .



The farm is seen as a real community hub and green space for children and adults. Most people are aware that the farm is a charity. People are concerned by issues such as pollution, traffic, poverty and a lack of inclusion. Thanks to all volunteers for making the farm such a lovely place for visitors to come.

**The Farm's new opening times are  
9am-5pm EVERY DAY of the year!!**

# Volunteer Meeting Notes

## Sports Pitch

We are aiming to resurface the pitch after Easter and we're trying to raise funds (£30,000) at the moment. The surface has a life span of 10 years and it is now 13 years old. Local teams rent out the pitch and we'd like to improve facilities and if it is a better surface it will hopefully be used during the day too.

## Park Lodge

There is a potential project to take over Park Lodge in Victoria Park, a dilapidated Victorian house. We would run a café, therapeutic garden space, volunteering in park maintenance and have holiday accommodation space. The project would need to balance sustainability with community benefit. There are lots of hurdles to jump but the first step is to get funding for a feasibility study. We are also currently talking to Victoria Park Action Group to generate ideas. We've launched a survey to find out what people would like the Park Lodge to be-please add your views: : <https://www.windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk/blog/victoria-park-lodge/>

## Animals/Garden

The lambs have gone for slaughter, more will be born in the spring. The cows will go to market at the end of April. Three old pigs also left us to make way for some new breeding stock. We have some new display beds to the right of the entrance into the community gardens for visitors to learn about what vegetables look like.

## Volunteer issues/ suggestions/ ideas

- Small animals don't like being handled and the space is cramped. We will find a volunteer to handle them so they get used to it for school groups and we are looking into changing the space to improve quality of life for the animals.
- The two wheeled trolleys wheels are never working. Steve suggested that if it is definitely not fixable, get a new one.
- We need to have a briefing on first aid at events.
- Water is pouring onto ground off the chicken pen roof- we will get gutting that leads to a water butt in the orchard.
- How do we respond to criticism from vegans? Meat production is part of our aims to educate about where meat comes from so they can make informed decisions. People need to make a choice about whether they want to visit.

## Staff Profile

**Name:** Chloe **Age:** 23

**From:** Bristol

**Favourite animal:** Calves because I have a good bond with them from feeding them milk as babies and I just love them.

**Random fact:** I love collecting shiny, unusual rocks and fossils- my rock box has so many layers now!

### What do you do at WHCF?

I am the Trainee Farmer and part of the Site Operations team. I look after the animals and deal with room bookings and make sure the site is up to scratch.

### How long have you been working at Windmill Hill City Farm?

I volunteered at the farm for a year and was very lucky to be employed roughly 2 years ago.

### What's the best thing about working here?

I love looking after the animals! I love spring when all the flowers come out, trees start to regain their leaves and of course all the lovely new baby animals.

### What changes have you seen since being here?

There have been lots of changes- the old dairy is now up and running with small animals and workshop space, and of course the new café!

### What are your hopes for the future?

To get Tim's job!



## Volunteer Profile

**Name:** Lynsey **Age:** 27

**From:** Somerset

**Favourite animal:** Somerset

**Random fact:** I got my foot stuck in a bike wheel when I was 3 and I tore the ligament in my ankle... now I have a fear of riding bikes 24 years later!

**What do you do at WHCF?** I support the Friday afternoon group and feed the animals. We grow crops to be sold to the café and help with whatever needs to be done- watering, harvesting. And I listen to Leroy's singing.

### How long have you been volunteering at Windmill Hill City Farm?

**What do you like about volunteering here?** It's a nice change from my day to day- I'm sat in front of a computer normally so it's nice to get outside. I've learned about growing things and met lots of lovely people. I was already thinking about changing career but enjoying it here has helped and I'm doing RHS level 2 horticulture course. It's always a lovely break and I enjoy it whatever we are doing, even if it's just a couple of people, you get to know them well and if there are lots of people there's a nice energy to the group.

**What changes have you seen since being here?** Lots- the animal areas have changed including the chicken bit and the café has got really snazzy. The farm adventurers areas and the adventure playground too- today I was making a living willow fence in there.

**What are your hopes for the future and dreams in life?** I would like my own land- something simple but that I could make pretty and grow food with. I would probably have some pygmy goats- at least 2.



### New babies : )

Congratulations to Shona on the birth of her son Ethan, and Justin on the birth of his daughter.

Welcome to the world from all of us at the farm!



Baby Ethan

### New tenants

We have new tenants renting out spaces on the farm; The old bike workshop is now Mini Potters shed where there are a kiln and pottery classes.

Essential Maintenance is a holistic therapy company and

**volunteers can receive a 10% discount on treatments!**

# Upcoming Events and Opportunities



## Wild Outdoors Day

**Saturday 21st April**

A lovely spring event at the farm with something for everyone; local bands, a bbq, nature crafts, campfire cookery and singalong songs. We need your help to make this a success— can you volunteer?



## Volunteer Hoodies and T-shirts

**Monday 9th April**

Order your hoodies and t-shirts by April 9th— hand your money to Lizzie with your order form.

## Mental Health Awareness Week

**14th to 20th May**

This year's Mental Health Awareness Week focuses on stress and how to cope with it. With improving mental wellbeing as a part of the farm's ethos, and activity we'll be organising some activities— ask Lizzie or Sam for more info.

## Trip to Elm Tree Farm

**Thursday 7th June, 10-2pm**

It's a while away built get the date in your diary....we're going on a trip! We will go to Elm Tree Farm, have a tour and do some activities with Elm Tree volunteers, then have a picnic together. You can officially sign up in a few weeks.

## Small Animal Handler Volunteer Needed!

The rabbits and Guinea pigs need taming. We need a volunteer to regularly hold and stroke the rabbits and guinea pigs to make them comfortable with people and bring them out of their shell. In the holidays the volunteer will let kids hold the small animals and help interactions. Could this be a role for you?

## Mental Health Drop-In Group

**Every Tuesday, 6-8pm, John James Room**

Support and social group for those who have had a mental health challenge.

***For more information on these opportunities, talk to Lizzie.***

**Feedback, issues and questions...just contact...**



**LIZZIE SPENCER**

lizzie.spencer@  
windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk

**0117 947 1194**



**SAM LLOYD-SMITH**

sam.lloydsmith@  
windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk