

# Windmill Hill City Farm Strategy 2023-2026

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March 2023

## Introduction

Windmill Hill City Farm was founded in 1976 as the first city farm outside London. In the years since, it has grown to offer a range of activities that involve people from across Bristol and has become a key provider of services and spaces to its local community.

This strategy has been created by the staff and trustees of the organisation drawing on the knowledge of members, volunteers, and service users. It sets out ambitions for the organisation on a 3-year time frame and outlines both the 'why & what' of its aims as well as some of the 'how'. It aims to strike a balance between setting a path that is clear and prescient and being responsive and adaptable in the face of an uncertain world.

It comes at a time of considerable change at many levels.

- Globally, we are dealing with the after-effects of a worldwide pandemic and growing effects of climate change.
- Nationally, withdrawal from the EU and political turmoil has exacerbated a challenging economic forecast.
- Locally, changing systems of city governance and massive residential development projects in our neighbourhood.
- Organisationally, our growth into delivering activities beyond the original farm site is stretching both the concept of what the organisation is and our capacity to deliver our ambitions.

This strategy aims to provide a navigational framework that will enable us to steer successfully through all the changes coming and to continue to bring some joy into people's lives.

As we have grown, we need increasingly to distinguish between speaking of Windmill Hill City Farm as a place (occupying four acres of Bedminster) and as seeing it as an organisation (running services and activities in other places, for example at Hartcliffe City Farm). This strategy references both aspects.

Thank you for your interest in, and input to, Windmill Hill City Farm.

Steve Sayers, Chief Executive, March 2023

## Vision, Mission, and Values

Our **vision** is for all local people to live active, healthy, and fulfilled lives in a friendly, sustainable neighbourhood. They have fair access to services, to outdoor spaces and nature, to places to meet each other and celebrate as a community, and to resources that enrich their understanding of food, farming, and the environment.

Our **mission** is to improve people's lives by curating community spaces and services.

This year we have distilled our approach into a set of **values** on the basis of meeting five parameters: Distinctive for the farm (as an organisation as well as a place); Recognisable for our current practice; Aspirational for our future direction; Motivating for the team; Useful in guiding what we do and how we do it.

On this basis, our values are:

- Welcoming to all.
- Focused on nature.
- Where people grow.
- Bringing people together.
- For the long term.

This is a new articulation of what we aim for our organisation to be and to do. We intend to review how this is working after the first year of the strategy.

## Windmill Hill City Farm is...

### An organisation

- ◆ That delivers its mission in several places.
- ◆ Responsive to, and a leader within, its community.
- ◆ Ambitious to grow its reach, influence, and impact.
- ◆ Mindful to operate within its values.
- ◆ Engaged in issues that local people care about.
- ◆ Aiming for excellence in the quality of services and spaces it provides.
- ◆ Financially robust and sustainable providing secure and meaningful employment.

### A place

- ◆ A farm for the local community to share.
- ◆ A place that inspires, and reaches out to, all people in our community.
- ◆ A beacon for sustainable living, where people can experience and learn about animals and plants, their environment, and food production.
- ◆ A space for people to visit, enjoy, play, relax and to meet people.
- ◆ A place that is safe and accessible to all in our community
- ◆ A sanctuary for people and nature.

## Realising our aims

The difference we want to make is derived from the charitable objects that underpin the company. We aim to make an impact across five areas, which all inter-relate.

### Education

#### The difference we'll make

People will have greater knowledge, opportunities, skills, and experience through their engagement with us increasing their capacity to lead a fulfilled life.

#### How we'll achieve it

- ◆ Provide an early-years setting that gives a high-quality experience to pre-school children and their families.
- ◆ Provide outstanding outdoor educational resources and services to a broad spectrum of learners.
- ◆ Use our farm and garden spaces to connect people to the environment and to help them find their role in addressing climate change.

### Developing Wellbeing

#### The difference we'll make

People will be able to live happier, healthier lives, and fulfil their potential through a connection to other people and nature in the city.

#### How we'll achieve it

- ◆ Use our spaces to deliver services that promote good health, recovery, and independence.
- ◆ Improve our understanding of local needs and curate accessible, inclusive services that respond to them.
- ◆ Provide places with universal appeal and benefit for the wellbeing of local people.

### Community Spaces

#### The difference we'll make

More people will access our spaces and services on them, gaining a greater sense of belonging and pride, making our neighbourhood a better place to live for all.

#### How we'll achieve it

- ◆ Reduce barriers to inclusion, further diversifying the mix of people who benefit from our multiple activities and spaces.
- ◆ Balance green space and built environment as we develop the spaces to create a great experience for people, good animal welfare and a good environment for wildlife.
- ◆ Offer a range of our own, and partner-led, services and spaces that meet local need.

### Community Leadership

#### The difference we'll make

People will have greater engagement and power in their community improving the neighbourhood as a place to live and work.

## **How we'll achieve it**

- ◆ Help people of all abilities to gain the skills, capacity, and confidence to play an active role in their communities.
- ◆ Take action to mitigate climate change in our own practice (to be carbon-neutral by 2030) and by promoting community action.
- ◆ Take targeted action on equality, equity, diversity and inclusion in our organisation and community.
- ◆ Engage in initiatives to influence policy and practice in areas of relevance to our aims.

## **Stronger organisation**

### **The difference we'll make**

The organisation will be more resilient, better able to achieve its goals, and be a greater contributor to a wider agenda for change.

### **How we'll achieve it**

- ◆ Invest in the development and wellbeing of our trustees and staff; and continue as a 'living wage' employer.
- ◆ Develop our agility and resilience by building partnerships and diversifying our income.
- ◆ Measure, learn from, and show the farm's impact, strengthening support for our cause.