

## Overview

We are looking for a plot to start a working farm community project to offer its resources to local schools, colleges and the local community. The farm is to include a farm shop and environmental, land based and farming education centre to support many aspects of a local community.

From the project we would like to set up a NEETS group to provide positive and enhancing work and learning experiences, provide excellent educational resources with regards to environmental, land based and farming education to school, college and university students as well as to provide a vast array of community and educational resources to the surrounding areas.

The Government believe that:

- \* The average age of people in the land-based sector is older than other sectors, indicating that fewer young people are taking jobs in the industry.
- \* Between 2002 and 2012, 14,000 of those working in skilled agricultural trades (which include jobs in this sector) will have retired and will need to be replaced.
- \* This sector will continue to diversify. The demand for skills in the provision of products and services linked to leisure, tourism, recreation, wildlife tourism and organic foods will be necessary.
- \* There is also expected to be an increased need for skills, knowledge and understanding of environmental management techniques to reduce the effect of CO2 emissions.
- \* The number of volunteers in this sector is expected to continue to increase and will result in some of those employed requiring good volunteer management skills.
- \* It is expected that employment in agriculture will continue to decline, particularly the number of men and self-employed people working in the sector.
- \* However, a report by the Sector Skills Council Lantra forecasts that 34,000 recruits in skilled agricultural trades will be needed by 2012 to replace those who leave the sector through retirement.

We wish to give a greater opportunity to the percentage of the rural population who find themselves with little or no opportunities for employment in local communities. We wish to help develop new skills in young people to secure the need for the future and to stop the over migration of young people from the country to the city. Due to reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy changing the focus of land use and management away from food production and towards maintaining the environment, enabling access and diversifying into leisure and tourism we feel that this is now more important than ever.

What we can offer

From the project we wish to offer an excellent set of resources to local schools and colleges for Environmental, land based and farming education. We wish to achieve this through working with Kingston Maurward College. After initial talks with the college they have agreed to work with us as our creditor for courses to be taught from the project.

Through the Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS) we wish to open our farm up to all schools who wish to visit and take part in educational visits to improve understanding in Environmental, conservation, and farming issues. We would also like to take part in the forest schools initiatives.

We wish to offer Environmental, Land based and Farming departments of colleges and universities the opportunity to use the farms resources for their own educational needs.

In 2006 a total of 804 Year 11 school leavers in Wiltshire and Swindon entered full-time employment or work-based training. Of this number, 60 went into land-based and environmental related work. Also, considering that a report by the Sector Skills Council Lantra, forecasts that 34,000 recruits in skilled agricultural trades will be needed by 2012 to replace those who leave the sector through retirement. We feel that the resources we would offer could help a great deal with regards to the local educational resources, now and in the future.

NEET's (not in Education, Employment or Training)

From the project we would like to set up a NEETS group to provide positive and enhancing work and learning experiences. We will offer an entry to employment scheme which again will work in conjunction with Kingston Maurward College and with Connexions. Young people Not in Education, Employment or Training will be encouraged to work on the farm, and in the farm shop to gain positive and enhancing work and learning experiences within the land based and farming as well as retail sectors for a period of time to help them build up their skills base and to give them the confidence to find work in the future. Part of this scheme will also offer CV writing clinics and help and training for gaining future employment. We will also offer advice and support with regards to managing their money, keeping track of their finances, and to make informed decisions about financial products and stay up to date about financial matters.

The idea is not to give them all a job for life, as our resources would certainly not stretch to this, but to help them to gain skills and experience as well as training and even qualifications and to move on into full time employment. This in turn would make space for others in need of help to take their place. Through this process we believe we can be sustainable with regards to giving opportunities to young adults who are finding it hard to gain employment due to the old catch 22 that to get a job you need experience, and to gain experience you need a job.

One of our project aims is to endeavour to create working relationships with local as well as larger national businesses to try to increase awareness and to create support for ethical staffing policies and to take further consideration into social issues. We would like to in the future offer companies who support our cause by either employing young people after they have gained initial skills at our projects or have offered support either financially or by another means the opportunity to be recognised as a contributing body by our organisation.

## Local Community

From the project we want to support the local community. We want to open the farm up to the public as much as possible. We would like to encourage land based and farming activities in local communities as well as to offer local people the opportunity to gain qualifications and to improve understanding within land based, farming and environmental disciplines. We would also like to support local talent with regards to the arts by offering space, support as well as financial backing.

There is a huge list of things we could offer and we would like the local community to have a say in what they would like the resources used for.

## Sustainability

One of the main objectives of the project is to become sustainable. As well as using Sustainable farming practices, we wish to be sustainable with regards to the help and support we can offer to the surrounding community and probably most importantly we wish to be economically sustainable.

We propose to do this through the working farm. As well as using the farm as a base for community and educational resources we wish to work the farm and produce a very high standard of produce. We are in talks with the Kingston Maurward, the Royal Agricultural College and Cornwall's Duchy College who have said they would be very interested in getting involved with regards to farming consultancy as well as using the resources to promote farming, environmental and land based education to the surrounding community. Through running the farm to these high standards and through employing NEET's and other local people we will be offering excellent training and learning opportunities with regards to moving people on into full time employment and as an educational resource for the local community.

We believe that the higher the standard in terms of modern farming practices at the farm the more the project and the local community can gain.