

# Shallowford Farm

*making the difference*

East Shallowford Farm  
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1<sup>st</sup> June 2023

Ms S. Hutchinson  
The Nineveh Charitable Trust  
8 Mill Lane,  
Saffron Walden,  
Essex,  
CB10 2AS

Dear Ms Hutchinson and Trustees,

## **East Shallowford Farm: Transitioning towards full capacity**

I hope this e-mail finds you well as we finally receive some sunshine! The winter this year definitely lingered, combining with miserable news to test everyone's positivity. However, we hosted eight groups almost back to back in the rain, jogging some across the marsh to keep warm, whilst others slapped their sides before taking the challenge over at Broadaford Farm to beat the tractor to open the silage bale for the cows. Positive challenges to keep warm in the cold! Yet with summer looming, hawthorn bursting forth, green alkanet and bluebells tinkling in the breeze, our cuckoos and swallows have returned..... we are smiling again in the sunshine!

It's shearing day, so having taken some photos (and now being considered too old to wool wrap), I say without hesitation that I write again somewhat sheepishly to ask for support. However, we did wonder if there was any chance of a further donation as we move forward in our transition phase from being a small, little known organisation to a farm based resource that can truly impact many lives, way beyond our traditional Youth Group at Providence House London and the schools and local youth groups that visited in 2022. Having said that, I have just checked my records and realise that I have not sent you a copy of the report on last year's building work, for which I can only humbly apologise.

Your support in 2022 of GBP5,000 and of GBP3,000 in 2021 helped us beyond measure to make our budgets meet. As I am sure you will understand, we are still, I would say marketing, but a more accurate term is reaching out and networking to schools and groups that have never heard of us. Perhaps most importantly, as we talk with schools, youth and community groups, clearly the most limiting factor is cost. We have a new website (not quite yet finished) and have discussed at length with several organisations and schools, trying to work out how we can jointly raise funding. We have kept our minimum cost low deliberately to encourage the more disadvantaged whilst providing links to potential donors for holiday and educational support (please see the application and accompanying spread sheets). However, obviously to achieve this minimum cost we have to fundraise ourselves and run AirBnB to subsidise our overheads.

Our gathering of impact data remains crucial and varies between surveys and stories or more often anecdotal evidence. Following the four Bristol schools and two Devon schools that visited between March and April this year, one of the accompanying teachers called specifically on returning, to say that she caught one of the children, telling another child to 'eat all of their meal, because it was proper food that should not be wasted. Eat the vegetables and don't eat sweets.' We could have died laughing as that

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is not exactly our ethos, but pretty close. Our usual question, 'could we feed the planet and reduce carbon emissions if we did not waste food?'

We have also secured a third year of funding from the Ernest Cook Trust to feed into national health and well-being statistics that will collate the value and impact of outdoor programmes such as ours. We all know it has a profound effect on virtually all children. The simple fact that so many older people migrate south to retire to their 'holiday dream' in Devon says it all. However, we need to ensure that the impact is greater than a dream, encouraging young people to make broader life choices and know they have far more opportunities and options than they are aware of before they visit the farm, thereby affecting their overall health and hopefully their social productivity.

The Green Recovery Grant (Heritage Lottery Funding) enabled us to recruit our Conservation Officer to work with eleven farmers on the Marsh Fritillary Butterfly. By combining conservation work with farming the learning has been extended to collect and identify bugs with bug traps, river dipping, gorse slashing and making Swift nesting boxes and bird feeders – the list is endless. All this around our normal farm and moorland programme, integrating pig, poultry, sheep and cow work with environmental imperatives and increased understanding of how humanity fits within the greater world on which we depend. The Green Recovery funding ended in March, so we are also desperately looking at ways to continue Ellie's work as she has a brilliant knack of engaging young people to truly look and understand the tiniest of caterpillars, moths and bats that many would never notice if she did not have such enthusiasm. David is also still with us, forming an essential part of the team whilst our year long residential volunteer will leave us in August. We are desperately seeking a new youth, but have not found anyone yet!

We hope you received the official invitation from Dartmoor National Park to attend the VIP event on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June when we will take the 'Farm to the City' for five days to engage what we hope are more school and youth groups for a week's experience on Dartmoor. Many of the farmers from the Dartmoor Post Bridge Cluster will be joining us to speak directly to the various groups, including VIPs who often talk about farming but know little of the realities and the imperatives of engaging the youngest generations. We are aiming to invite some high profile Ministers and dignitaries to reinforce the value of the 'farm to fork' message, combining farming with conservation and health and wellbeing, which forms critical elements of the work we conduct. Please find enclosed a flyer with the details in case you have not already received an invitation.

I thought you might also be pleased to know that although we have not yet secured the Duchess of Edinburgh as our patron, she is coming on a secrete date, to the Farm to City event. As you can imagine, we are somewhat humbled, given the demands on the royal family and hope that this encourages more groups to visit.

Please find enclosed details of our application and apologies for the repetition and number of documents, however, to ensure clarity and to maintain the overview, hopefully these details will be helpful. If there are any further details I can provide, please just let me know. Mainly, I also just wanted to say a huge thank you for your help over the last few years – it has been truly appreciated.

Very best wishes,

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