

## **Chair of Trustees Report**

**19 October 2023**

Before I move onto my report, I would just like to introduce the Board of Trustees and thank them all for the support they have given me and the farm throughout the year. They work tirelessly behind the scenes ensuring the farms future and that we continue with the support from our wonderful staff proved an excellent prevision that is right for our students and stakeholders.

Jane Wallis: Vice Chair to the Trustees and Safeguarding and Insurance.

Paul Simms: Treasurer.

Alison Rasey: Secretary.

Cathy Kavanagh: Chair of the RDA.

Sarah Creed: HR and RDA.

Richard Green: Business Development.

It's been another busy year with the recruitment of new staff, audits plus putting systems in place, so we are in line with the strategy outlined by the Government in the Green Paper.

Firstly, recruitment.

We recruited a new Business Operations Manager Lucy Allen to replace Ashley who decided to hang up her wellies and retire to travel the world and spend more time with her family. Lucy comes to us from a teaching background and lives on a farm so has a great knowledge of the education system plus farming and as already made an impact on the way we operate at the farm plus she is looking at other activities we can introduce for the students when at the farm.

We have also recruited a new Education and Business Development Officer Natasha Sawyer who replaced Amanda Paines who left us in the April. Natasha comes to us from the care sector with a vast knowledge of administration in recruitment, HR, staff training and development. Natasha as already but in place new process for our new students ensuring the placement is right for both the student and the farm plus systems to report back to our stakeholders on the progress students are making.

Unfortunately, not only for the farm but for me Suzanne our Administration, Health & Safety Officer will be leaving us at the end of this month to spend more time with her family and visiting family on the other side of the world we all wish Suzanne good luck for the future and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you for all the support you have given me and the farm throughout the years. Suzanne will be replaced by Sara Weeden who comes to us from Wiltshire Council as a public protection officer – dealing with animal health and welfare, Sara is the process of taking over the role from Suzanne and completing her training in Health and Safety, welcome Sara.

In February we will sadly be losing Alan our Accounts Officer, who is retiring to spend more time relaxing in France and enjoying life to the full. Alan thank you for all your hard work sorting out the accounts over these past years, putting budgets in place with cost centres so we have controls in place for the budget plus ensuring we remain within budget and most importantly our stakeholders are paying us on time. We still need to recruit for Alans post which we will be looking at over the coming weeks.

We are now part of the Community Payback Scheme, a scheme where offenders work on projects to pay back the community for their crimes and allows them to make amends in their local communities. Before they attend the farm, they are screened to ensure they are suitable to be at the farm they are always supervised by one of their supervising officers and given projects by Lucy to complete, to date they have treated all the outdoor shelters, built raised beds, and cleared the old garden. I hope you agree with us the trustees everyone should be given a second chance, and we hope the time they spend with us at the farm goes some way towards their rehabilitation.

In March 2023 the government announced the Green Paper that laid out a national strategy for providing consistent alternative provision that meets the need of every child's journey across education, health and care. As a result of this, schools are expected to provide alternative provisions with a set of outcomes that can be achieved within an agreed time frame in order to help student re-engage with mainstream education. Larkrise Community Farm now has three audits from Wiltshire Council as part of their quality assurance. One for child provision, one for safeguarding and one for adult provision. We had our

child provision quality assurance audit on the 13th of October and the council were impressed with the quality of the provision we provide.

Currently we have 25 adult students on roll compared to 19 for Oct 2022, School aged children we have 18 on roll compared to 22 for Oct 2022. A total of 43 students compared to 41 for Oct 2022. We are still getting plenty of enquiries come through and have also begun working with 2 new schools this year who we have not worked with previously which is exciting.

In the new year we will start the Assessment and Qualification Alliance (AQA) Unit Awards Scheme. These are certificates of achievement to acknowledge the progress our students make as well as the new skills and knowledge that they learn with us. Students will build up a portfolio of certificates to support them in their future endeavours whether that be a volunteering placement or college. Our staff have worked hard this autumn to create the resources required to run the scheme.

In summary the future of the farm is bright, we are currently financially secure, have a small increase in student numbers from October 2022, we continue to be one the preferred alternate provisions for the Local Authority, we plan to grow the farm and activities and aim to continue to provide an excellent provision for our students to help them reach their full potential.

Any questions.