

## ***FARM MANAGERS REPORT***

### ***AGM Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2021***

Another unusual year has gone by, keeping the Farm open for our students whilst coming out of lockdown was quite challenging in making sure we stayed virus free.

All staff are back on the farm and have again shown remarkable resilience and a lot of patience working under such difficult circumstances – so Well Done Everybody.

We have nearly reached capacity with our students, leading up to this it gave us the opportunity to catch up with some of the maintenance of the farm, we have welcomed contractors in to help with the fencing and groundwork, all be it a 'waiting game' as they have also been very busy trying to catch up on jobs that were put on hold during the pandemic.

Taking over the management of the Apiary has been a real learning curve, we have five hives on the farm and during the summer months they were all at full capacity with the Bees producing many frames of honey – this led to a total of just over 30 jars of Honey we were able to extract and enabled us to sell to the public, we were also able to take some with us to Frome Cheese Show which was held after a year off.

Our Riding for Disabled sessions are slowly opening up, gradually, we were able to Re- start with a session called 'Quiet Corner' this involved lots of groundwork enabling the riders to re gain confidence around the horses/ponies by grooming and leading their chosen pony who they had been riding before the lockdown. One of our Coach's Tracy Simms led this first session then this led onto Tracy starting the Riding for individual Riders and then pairs, another Coach Roberta now leads the adult's riding session, helping with these sessions we were so pleased to welcome back some of our RDA volunteers, hopefully others will return when we are able to invite the schools back.

This year sees the return of at least one of our Student awards, Student of the Year Award – this has been won this year by a student from Farleigh College who started back with us soon after the first Lockdown, EDDIE BOND, Eddie has shown real commitment towards completing his NVQ Level 2 in Animal Care and currently completing his NVQ Level 3 Animal Care through Hadden Training.

## EDUCATION

This year has been a very uncertain year for all our students and anticipating what would happen to our business model coming into the new academic year was unknown.

With school staff having worked with the typical student profile, we accommodate at the farm, over the initial lockdown, it appeared that schools were even more sure than usual for the need for Alternative Provision.

So the September 2021 start has been quite strong. We are not yet back to pre pandemic figures, but are sure this is set for the coming terms ahead. Many children are now attending without an EHCP, as schools have seen a rise in the need to support many children, who as a result of lockdown are now suffering with anxiety and mental health issues. We continue to be a respected provider to the education system and have established our place in the market as a support to our vulnerable adults.

Again I would like to finish my report with an Enormous Thankyou to all Staff, Volunteers and of course the Trustees for all their support and hard work throughout this year.