

MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST

providing opportunities for those with learning difficulties



ANNUAL REVIEW 2005 – 2006

(referring to year April 2005- March 2006)

MFT... advancing “the education of those members of the general public who have learning difficulties/and or learning disabilities by offering opportunities for training, work experience, and work or employment in agriculture, horticulture and related subjects. Also to encourage such persons in the principles of good citizenship so that they can develop their physical , mental and spiritual capacities: enabling growth to full maturity as individuals and members of society and improve their conditions of life in the county of Suffolk and surrounding areas”.

October 2006

Millennium Farm Trust Ltd is the registered name of the limited company - Company No. 03567659 and

Millennium Farm Trust the registered name of the charity - Charity Registration No. 1070145. The charity is more usually known as M.F.T.

The charity trustees are :

David Cook – Company Secretary and volunteer support worker

Pam Cooper retired end of February 2006

Bernadette Shrubshall – Chairwoman and volunteer support worker

The company directors are David Cook, Pam Cooper (retired end of February 2006), and Bernadette Shrubshall .

The Constitution states that there will be no more than ten and no less than three Trustees of Millennium Farm Trust unless otherwise determined by a General Meeting.

Trustees can be appointed by the existing board of Trustees and this appointment can then be ratified at the next General meeting. A nomination for a Trustee can be submitted to the Charity between 14- 35 days before an AGM or an extraordinary general meeting. All candidates must be eligible (re Charity Commission regulations) to be a Trustee and must also be willing. One third of the Trustees must retire at each AGM by rotation ; however if they are willing to stand and there are no other candidates, they can be reappointed at the AGM.

The issue of appointment of further Trustees must be resolved by the AGM meeting on 21st October 2006.

Legal and Administrative Information:

The registered address of Millennium Farm Trust is :

2 Oakey Field Road, Thurston, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 3RX.

The bankers for Millennium Farm Trust are;

Lloyd's TSB, 7 Market Place, Stowmarket , Suffolk IP14 1DY.

And

Britannia Building Society, 58 Abbeygate Street, Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP33 1LB

The solicitors for Millennium Farm Trust are:

Ashton Graham, Electric House, Lloyd's Avenue, Ipswich IP1 3HZ

The payroll service and insurance brokerage is provided by:

Suffolk Acre, 2 Wharfedale House, Ipswich. Suffolk IP1 4JP.

The Treasurer for Millennium Farm This post was vacant. During April _ December 2005. Bernadette Shrubshall maintained the financial records. From January 2006 a Treasurer was appointed.

Rev'd Doug Neupert. Hall Farm, Hall Lane, Troston, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1EZ

The independent examiner of the accounts is

John Matthissen BA ACMA 3 Wash Lane Corner, Gt. Finborough, Stowmarket IP14 3BJ

The senior support worker for Millennium Farm Trust is

Philip Mellor, formerly 16 Mill Road Estate, Shipdham, Thetford, Norfolk IP25 7LR.

From September 2006 2 Masons Drive, Necton, Swaffha, Thetford PE37 8EE.

The position of fundraising and development officer for Millennium Farm Trust remains vacant

Training and advice on running a charity is provided mainly by :

Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations of Dickson House, 43a Woodbridge Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5QN.

OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY

The objects of the charity are to advance the education of those members of the general public who have learning difficulties/and or learning disabilities by offering opportunities for training, work experience, and work or employment in agriculture, horticulture and related subjects. Also to encourage such persons in the principles of good citizenship so that they can develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities: enabling growth to full maturity as individuals and members of society and improve their conditions of life in the county of Suffolk and surrounding areas.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DECISION MAKING PROCESSES:

Monthly Trustee meetings are held to discuss policy, management, personnel and resource deployment, legal issues, health and safety, finance and development issues for the Trust as a whole. Consultation with specialists, umbrella voluntary bodies, other organisations involved with adults with learning disabilities or with supported farming and conservation work is actively undertaken by the Trustees.

The ordinary meetings are held every two months at varying locations in Suffolk. Reports from farmworkers, the senior support worker, and committee members are given. Fundraising, health and safety, transport, practical work, and publicity and marketing issues are discussed. Feedback from the carers of the farmworkers and also our farming/conservation hosts is considered. The farmworkers are actively involved in these meetings. To facilitate participation and decision making, discussion of topics is often encouraged prior to the meeting in small groups at the work place. Use is also made of audio or visual methods of communication for agendas and minutes of meetings.

Only paid up members are entitled to vote at formal meetings of the Charity.

GENERAL DEVELOPMENTS DURING THE YEAR:

FARMWORKERS:

Sam Cook, Kevin Chapman, Jean Stiling, Doreen Lavender, Alex Quinn, Alan Bartrum , Alex George Fejer and Miriam Newell were the farmworkers for this period. Doreen retired in the autumn of 2005 and Alex George took a sabbatical in February 2006. The work sites have been Old Hall, East Bergholt; Rede Hall Farm, Rede and St. Edmundsbury's two country parks at Nowton and Hardwick. The farmworkers and senior support worker Philip Mellor will be enlarging on their experiences during the year up to March 2006 and commenting on subsequent developments, at the AGM. (report attached)

There were many visits from young people with learning disabilities, social workers and carers with a view to future placements with M.F.T. Outcomes were expected late 2006 early 2007.

WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

Further training in tractor driving and the associated use of farm machinery(e.g. plough, cultivator etc) has been given. Brickwork, hand milking cows ,constructing post boxes and boot jacks, workbench construction, willow weaving and a simulated farm accident first aid training day are some of the different opportunities that the farmworkers have experienced. The support workers reports give more details.

Support workers also took part in the practical First Aid training day and two updated their First Aid at work qualifications. A training day of Implementation of Basic Skills in the workplace was held in April for all support workers. In addition support staff liaise with carers, families etc of farmworkers and attend as many external reviews as possible. In house discussions and information sharing on specific topics related to learning disabilities regularly takes place.

RECRUITMENT:

Heather Reid ,from Old Hall at East Bergholt became a part time volunteer support worker on Fridays . Doug Neupert became a part time paid support worker on Tuesdays sometimes with the conservation group and sometimes with the farming group at Rede.

DEPARTURES:

Marisa Davey retired at the end of December 2005. Marisa had been a very enthusiastic and committed volunteer support worker as well as an efficient and enterprising administrative assistant. Her skills in communication, training and practical woodwork were a great asset to the work teams. She also provided invaluable support in transferring all the oral work reports to master tapes, transcribing some of the reports and maintaining statistical records of all the hours worked by volunteers and part time staff.

Allen Watson moved to a new job in Scotland in December 2005. Allen had been a keen volunteer support worker at Rede on Sundays helping to create new vegetable beds, coppicing the hedgerows

and taking a valiant part in the battle against thistles, docks and weeds. Allen was a great help in assisting the farmworkers to design and construct various woodwork projects. He also maintained the MFT website, produced publicity material and helped with many fundraising events. Both Marisa and Allen contributed an enormous amount to MF . They made a huge difference to our progress and they provided inspiration for others.

Pam Cooper retired as Trustee and director at the end of February 2006 . Pam had recently lost her husband after a serious illness . Pam had been an active supporter from the very first meeting in August 1996. Her extensive knowledge of learning disabilities and the various challenges or support needs that individuals might require were invaluable to the management of MFT.

Pam also came from a farming family so had experience and perception of the practical scenarios of creating supported work teams and trying to combine these principles with reasonably productive farming. Pam was a keen fundraiser as well and we thank her heartily for her ten years service to MFT.

OTHER SUPPORT:

The continued progress and development of MFT as a charitable Trust s been maintained by the commitment and dedication of a core group of people. First and foremost the farmworkers themselves who have enthusiasm, hardwork and resilience in plentiful supply.

The hardwork and year in year out commitment of Philip, Ian and David Cook who always do whatever the circumstance requires, the distances to be travelled or the personal hardships they have never once faltered in their delivery of support to the farmworkers, practical work and ensuring the Trust has the best possible chance of thriving.

Equally Chris Storey who has provided much needed and very valuable consultancy advice on business planning, networking, documentation and a host of other matters as well as printing the newsletters free of charge .

John Matthissen has provided consultancy on business and legal matters and each year kindly inspects our accounts.

Brenda Copeman has been dedicated in her role as Minutes Secretary as has Clare Evans in recording and despatching the audio tapes version of the minutes.

Bury and Stowmarket Volunteer Centres have regularly advertised MFT's vacancies and kept us in touch with latest events, funding and training seminars. SAVO also provide a very informative service on latest legal, training and funding news. Suffolk Acre provide regular support with payroll free of charge and advice on a variety of management and insurance topics.

Jenny Chapman, Iris Tucker , Margie Thomson and Alison Stewart have been the stalwarts of the local fundraising events .David Millett provided photocopying free of charge.

Chris Barker initiated and led combined Bury Ramblers Club and MFT rambles helping the farmworkers with map reading skills.

Local businesses supporting MFT included Jewsons, Clarkes of Walsham, ARCO, KPMG, Band Q , Marlows, Sainsbury's and Harveys Nurseries.

Not least the commitment and support of the volunteer car drivers has also helped the Trust function effectively by getting the farmworkers to work and meetings in various localities.

MFT MEMBERS

Membership reduced to 25 paid up members during this year. It proved difficult to recruit new members or encourage peripheral ones to renew.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT:

Doug Neupert will be giving the detailed financial report. The income for the year was approximately £22,000 and the expenditure nearly £26,000 resulting in some of the savings being used. The true costs of providing a three day week farmwork/conservation with at least two support staff per day are far in excess of £22,000 since many expenses from volunteers and supporters are either not claimed or under claimed. To put it another way the basic cost of providing support, protective clothing and a contribution to the workshop facilities per farmworker is £2,500 per 48 week year. MFT provided on average 10 farmworker places per week totalling £25,000 in basic costs and further 12 additional days for 5 farmworkers per day in the year for meetings, visits etc at a cost of £3,120. Hence basic costs would have been £28,120 with further costs for transport to work. Much of this provision was possible through donation of equipment, time or volunteers not claiming for expenses but this could not be a continuous state of affairs. The need to recoup the basic costs had been discussed since October 2004 and farmworkers and carers had been encouraged to investigate Direct Payments other sources of individual funding. This proved a long process for all involved with months of waiting outcomes from external meetings or assessments. When news was received early 2006 that a very large grant application to Esmee Fairbairn Foundation had been refused then the Trustees and management had to look at all known and likely resources very carefully.

A decision was made early March that all new farmworkers could only gain a placement with MFT if they had funding of £52.00 per day (working in a team of 1 support worker to 2 or sometimes three farmworkers). To enable existing farmworkers sufficient time to further liaise with social workers and other key personnel an 8 week window was allowed from 1st April 2006 in the hope they would be able to secure funding.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

A considerable amount of time was invested in researching costs and practicalities and then compiling a three year financial plan in preparation for the Esmee Fairbairn grant application for £210,000 just less than half of the predicted costs of £479,500 it would cost over a three year period to steadily increase from three days to five day provision enabling up to 26 farmworker placements per week.

In addition considerable support was given to families, carers and individuals to assist them with their enquiries with social workers and the local authority to discover all the details about eligibility for Direct Payments and how the system worked. From December 2005 MFT was informed at regular intervals by Suffolk County Council of the cutbacks in central government funding and the proposals changes in county council services and expenditure. Meetings were attended and many discussions held. MFT championed the rights of all learning disabled people in Suffolk to be kept

informed at the same time (and in an appropriate format) as other citizens of Suffolk. The rights of the users of the services to have a direct input in the development/cutback of services was also championed by MFT.

Both David and Bernadette were also volunteer support workers with the Trust regularly working one and often two days per week on the farm or at conservation in addition to Trustee and management duties. Time was also given to help with local fund raising events and attending networking meetings such as Suffolk Trading Partnership project.

Efforts were made to recruit further Trustees and we hosted a visit from Churchill Fellows In July 2005 and then KPMG co-ordinators in November and February in preparation for the KPMG volunteer day at Rede in May 2006.

There was growing concern that there is no separate management officers apart from the Treasurer and senior support worker. Hence administrative and day to day planning and networking tasks all have to be undertaken by the Trustees. Training toolkits obtained from SAVO and the Charity commission reinforced our deep felt frustration that this situation was unsustainable in the long term if the Trust was to grow steadily with a sound infra structure.

Conclusion for April 2005- March 2006.

Despite a shortage of resources MFT sustained farmwork and conservation activities during the year and the work teams flourished. We gained a new support worker towards the end of the year as well as a Treasurer . further progress was achieved with integration though work and social opportunities with members of the public and there were many visits from social workers and Transition team officers plus prospective farmworkers (generally still at school) .

The overwhelming pressure was to secure a steady income to ensure that the farmworkers could continue to receive the high standard of support in farming and conservation to develop their skills and be valued for their work and achievements. It became increasingly unlikely by March 2006 that funding by Direct Payments would be a reality .

Update April 2006- October 2006-

An overwhelming successful day was achieved when 37 staff members from the Ipswich and Cambridge KPMG offices spent the day with MFT at Rede on Tuesday 9th May taking part in a variety of tasks giving MFT a big helping hand. Philip Mellor will details the work undertaken.

MFT had never hosted an event of this size and sincere appreciation is given to Joanne Fahey of KPMG and Mike Harrison of CSV for their valuable help in the planning meetings.

By the end of May none of the farmworkers had received confirmation about Direct Payments or any other funding for their MFT places. To enable MFT to stay in existence all non funded farmworkers were asked to take temporary suspension .This was a very difficult situation MFT had developed on the premise that the farmworkers were totally involved not only in the work and training but also the running of the Trust. Contact was maintained through telephone calls and occasional visits plus some social occasions . Networking with keyworkers , social workers etc continued and efforts put into finding other sources of funding both from grant applications and business sponsorship.

Two new volunteers came to help MFT in June Richard Hopper with committee work and David Axton with marketing and publicity. Their arrival and enthusiastic hardwork has made a significant difference to MFT's progress in recent months. Richard has joined us at MFT meetings and also meetings with Social Services. He attended a Trustee workshop seminar and has helped with several grant applications . David has written letters to local businesses and raised MFT's profile and current situation with the local media. Muntons sent a cheque for £35. an anonymous donor £10 and BT agreed to a onen off donation for £2,500. In October we had an exhibition and awareness raising day at BT Martlesham and there are prospects of returning for one or two occasions next year to sell our produce. Funding surgeries have been attended . We heard in September we had won a national competition within KPMG and the prize was £5,000.

If we can raise another £5,000 in the next few weeks then all the farmworkers could be reinstated to resume attendance one day a week for a year.

Yuk Lun Wong has recently volunteered to maintain the MFT website and Pat Higgins has volunteered to help with practical jobs.

We have also networked with the Care Farming project in north Suffolk and look forward to further collaboration with this project.

The critical needs for MFT are for an increase in volunteers to help with management and Trusteeship. The constitution requires a minimum of three Trustees but we consider five a reasonable number to share the guardianship. We also need volunteers who can help with the administration taks of the Trust. Both David and Bernadette have experience a steep rise in family responsibilities this year and cannot sustain the voluntary hours input of last 18 months.

Social Accounting report;

During April 2005 -March 2006 45.5 days at consnerevation, 43 days at Old Hall and 38 days at Rede were achieved. In addition there were three fundraising days, an extensive visit to Bury Fire Station, participation in Bury St. Edmunds Volunteer Centre Quiz night, joining a Bury Ramblers group walk , networking with local businesses, a visit to local agricultural engineers, networking with Otley College , an exhibition in Clare library , a talk given (by the farmworkers) to a local ladies group and help given on a MFT's supporter's allotment . Only two work days were cancelled due to weather conditions. Horham village hosted a barbeque and vintage machine demonstration solely for MFT in August 2005.

The Treasurer will present the financial report.

The senior support worker and the principal support worker will give their reports in conjunction with the farmworkers

The tenacity of MFT to thrive in difficult circumstances, to still cultivate the land and provide worthwhile training and support, to practice inclsuiveness and develop potential has been proven beyond doubt. The energy and total commitment of the volunteers, staff and the farmworkers is second to none and this has been recognised by businesses, organisations and individuals outside of MFT. We look forward to welcoming new members and supporters to build on our successes .

