

MILLENNIUM FARM TRUST

providing opportunities for those with learning difficulties



ANNUAL REVIEW 2006 – 2007

(referring to year April 2006- March 2007)

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 2007

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

Pat Higgins appointed January 2007 and volunteer support worker

Bernadette Shrubshall – Chairwoman and volunteer support worker

The company directors are David Cook, Pat Higgins 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 (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.

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 , Suffol 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

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

The independent examiner of the accounts is :

Mr. L. A. Barnard . F.C.C.A., 4 Paddock Way, Troston, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP31 1ES.

The senior support worker for Millennium Farm Trust is
Philip Mellor, 2 Masons Drive, Necton, Swaffham, Thetford PE37 8EE.

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

The publicity and marketing Officer is David Axton 142 Westley Road, Bury St. Edmunds
IP33 3SD

Training and advice on running the charity is provided mainly by:
Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations of Dickson House, 43a Woodbridge Road,
Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5QN.
Business Link East, EEIDB Ltd Zenith Court, 4 Bishops Square Business Park, Hatfield, Herts,
AL10 9NE.

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.

M.F.T. came into existence and was co founded by adults with learning disabilities seeking work and training opportunities in farming and conservation in Suffolk with the appropriate support to their needs. There was no provision and apart from M.F.T. there is still no other provider of supported work and training opportunities in farming.

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 and committee members

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, Alex Quinn, Alan Bartrum, Miriam Newell and David Armsby were the farmworkers. The work sites have been Old Hall, East Bergholt; Rede Hall Farm, Rede and with the St. Edmundsbury public conservation group at Nowton and Hardwick Parks, Ram Meadow and Mayfield Road (all in Bury St. Edmunds). The farmworkers, senior support worker Philip Mellor and Old Hall team manager, Ian Coles, will be enlarging on their experiences during the year up to March 2007 and commenting on subsequent developments, at the AGM.(report attached)

WORK EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

Fencing the field at Rede, tractor driving and ploughing and cultivating, planting and harvesting potatoes and celeriac, brickwork, moving livestock, observing sheep shearing, coppicing and ditching were some of the tasks undertaken.

RECRUITMENT:

Pat Higgins joined as a volunteer in October 2006 and in January 2007 became a Trustee.
Richard Reid, from Old Hall at East Bergholt became a volunteer support worker on the Friday team in January 2007

David Axton joined in May 2006 taking up the post of marketing and publicity officer

Richard Hopper joined in May 2006 taking on committee work including helping with grant applications.

Felicity Driver joined as a volunteer support worker in March 2007.

DEPARTURES:

John Mathissen as inspector of the accounts though he remains a supporter.

Brenda Copeman as Minutes Secretary

OTHER SUPPORT:

In May 2006 37 volunteers from the KPMG offices of at Ipswich and Cambridge spent a day with MFT helping with a variety of projects including putting up fencing around the MFT field, devising an irrigation system, designing an understanding money poster and making a work bench. The support ideas and hard work boosted MFT's progress at Rede significantly.

Later in the year MFT won £5,000 in a KPMG competition.

BT One hosted a MFT visit at Martlesham in October 2006 and subsequently awarded £2,500 to enable a non funded farmworker to attend MFT for one year.

SB Surveyors have been generous in their support of sponsoring the twice yearly newsletter for MFT for the last four years.

Suffolk Single Gateway have continued their support for MFT over recent years with the award of a £10,000 grant payable in two instalments over 2006-7. Their support has meant that the valuable

training and work experience that MFT provides enabling the farmworkers to constantly increase their skills and confidence has been able to continue.

In February 2007 Claas Uk gave MFT an excellent visit and presentation on their combines and agricultural machinery. Claas understand the farmworkers' fascination with agricultural machinery.

The visit was very informative and educational for all.

The South Suffolk Show Committee continued their long standing support by providing a prime site for MFT stand free of charge. We always gain a wide variety of visitors at this show.

The CRBN regiment at RAF Honington and The 3rd Anglian Regiment at Bury St. Edmunds Loaned and erected tents for MFT at shows and events during the course of the year enabling us to have spacious stands and displays with all weather protection.

Many individuals have willingly given their many hours of their time over the course of the year.

The Suffolk Community Car Service provide transport for several of our farmworkers. Particular thanks are given to Mr. Burrows who has undertaken numerous journeys, sometimes at short notice, in all weathers. The dedication and commitment of the two MFT volunteer car drivers Mr. Emeny and Mr Pearl is also highly valued. Our farm work sites cannot be reached by public transport so reliable transport is essential to our operation Bury Volunteer Centre has provided much needed advice and help with the recruitment of volunteers over the years. Their excellent service and support has been tremendously beneficial. Suffolk Acre are also long term supporters in the provision of an efficient payroll service for us for the last seven years. Chris Storey has given large amounts of time for consultation on management, legal and development topics.

MFT MEMBERS 30 up to March 2007.

FINANCIAL MANANGEMENT:

Doug Neupert will be giving the detailed financial report .

Income was approximately £30,000 (this includes restricted income Of £13,000) and expenditure was approximately £22,000.

Guidance was sought from Business Link in January 2007 to assist the Trust in compiling a new Business Plan and to consider more effective ways of increasing our income. Developing specific goods or services of high value and exploring contract work were two important recommendations. Clearer definition of our services and purpose was also recommended.

In depth analysis of the last three years costs was carried out by the committee and research into current and forecast costs. Five committee members attended a Business Planning workshop and by July 2007 a detailed business plan was produced and a commitment to track actual progress every 4 months was made. The day to day accounts were fully transferred to the Excel spreadsheet format by Doug Neupert.

GENERAL MANAGEMENT:

During 2006 various meetings were held with officers of Suffolk County Council Adult Care and Community Services to assist with the assessment of support needs for the farmworkers who

wanted to apply for Direct Payments. By June 2006 MFT had to temporarily restrict provision of regular supported farmworker opportunities to those farmworkers who had funding to pay for their fees. All the farmworkers had been involved in the discussion and meetings and understood the dilemma. They supported the decision to minimise expenditure until further monies became available rather than see the Trust close. Kevin Chapman (farmworker) sold his entire model tractor collection in June 2006 in an attempt to boost the Trust's finances. Thanks to the enthusiastic help of David Axton and Richard Hopper MFT was able to increase its publicity and marketing drive. Pat Higgins also became a committee member and volunteer support worker and the overwhelming workload on the original committee members gradually lessened allowing time for forward planning and constructive thinking.

We kept in touch with the farmworkers by phone or visiting. A get together was organised in September 2006 visiting local farms and some of their other places of work. Alex and Miriam were a tremendous help at the BT One exhibition and presentation. Kevin, Sam and Alan participated on some of the practice walks held in preparation for the 5 mile joint Ramblers Club-MFT walk in October 2006.

During the winter of 2006-7 the local media were profiling MFT's need with the result that several people came forward to enquire about Trusteeship/ committee work in January 2007. So far only one has joined the committee and none became Trustees.

Alongside publicity and marketing various members have visited other projects to ascertain best practice and several committee members have attended fund raising workshops.

Update April 2007- October 2007

Thomson and Morgan supported MFT by a generous discount on our seed order this year.

Glenn Gutteridge participated as a volunteer support worker from late spring –early autumn 2007

David Chappell joined as a committee member. Yuk Lun Wong became website manager.

Pat Higgins gave additional help as a volunteer support worker and local events fundraiser .

Richard Hopper took on role as membership secretary. David Axton takes on role as temporary

Minutes secretary . Wendy Barker provides some art tuition to Kevin Chapman

Carly Beddow has helped with watering the vegetables and fruits on days when MFT not at Rede.

Mr and Mrs Storey senior and Alison Stewart have all kindly donated various vegetable and fruit plants all of which are thriving.

We hosted about 7 casual visitors interested in MFT.

Gryff Rolands Health and Safety Trainer has visited to assess MFT's health and safety training needs.

We have hosted a visit by a specialist occupational therapist and await his report.

Contract work of fencing and renovating plough has been completed this summer.

Occasional art classes (painting farming scenes) for Kevin Chapman who is not yet able to attend MFT on a regular basis have been arranged.

Bag packing took place at Asda, Stowmarket in April 2007

South Suffolk Show saw the launch of Daisy, the artificial milking cow with great thanks to Chris Storey. MFT had a stall at Euston Rural Pastimes in June with Daisy again. Car boot sales and selling of vegetables during late spring and summer brought in additional income. Pat Higgins has been responsible for much of the produce sales and many of the local fund raising events.

Sheep training days and trip NCFI (National Care Farming Initiative)Open Day postponed due foot and mouth restrictions

MFT –Bury Ramblers joint walk at Redgrave and Lopham Fen in September was well supported. There has been increased activity and enquiries on MFT website.

M.F.T. has purchased a second hand trailer (East of England Co-op grant)

Work – MFT field fencing completed. Range of crops grown and general productivity increased.

Donations of loganberries, courgette and pumpkin plants and Cape gooseberry plants

Philip had the innovative idea of raised beds using straw bales.

Construction and donation of metal boot scraper for use at Rede by volunteer car driver George Emeny.

Cow poster for shows drawn, painted and donated by Felicity Driver.

Prototype expandable wire cloche by Roy and David Armsby.

David Cook regrets that he intends to retire as a Trustee at the end of 2007. However he continues to support the Trust and will continue being a volunteer support worker.

Social Accounting report;

From April 2006 until March 2007 MFT provided 95.5 work days plus 12 other event days (these included visits to farming events, MFT having stalls at country fairs and going on rambles)

Our aim is to be operational for 48 weeks of the year and at two days per week this would provide 96 work days. From June to December there was typically only one funded farmworker able to attend. We put on three work days between October and end of December for the non funded farmworkers and also provided transport and support for occasional social/recreational outings with MFT personnel. Typically there would be 3 farmworkers attending on Tuesdays and four on Fridays resulting in an average of 336 individual farmworker work days during the year. Between April 2006 and March 2007 there were 88 individual farmworker work days this figure being low due to the temporary suspension of services for those non funded farmworkers between June and December.

Despite an extremely difficult year with depleted financial and personnel resources we still managed to provide a skeleton service and maintain the land at Rede.

The hard work and energy of the new volunteers both on the committee and in practical work has resulted in a huge improvement in 2007 in work and training undertaken.

One farmworker decide not to return in 2007 but a new one joined.

We have established good links with the Suffolk County Councils' Transitions Team. We will be hosting a visit from Otley College in November 2007. We plan to do some presentations and exhibitions with the senior special schools to ensure young adults who want to be involved in farming and conservation know about the opportunities M.F.T. can offer.

Links with the Rambling club continue with a successful walk attended by 20 people in September at Redgrave and Lopham Fen. In June ten MFT team members attended a FWAG farm walk in South Suffolk. Integration and equal opportunities are actioned by events such as these.

Future plans:

There is an urgent need to recruit more Trustees and another support worker to enable MFT to operate for a third and fourth day. We also need to encourage more volunteers to join the Trust to help ensure the Trust's long term future.

We want to encourage more customers locally for our produce especially pubs and restaurants. To improve profitability we need to freeze soft fruit and provide cool dry storage facilities for vegetables. Funds permitting we plan to have a computer at Rede to encourage those farmworkers who prefer this medium to handwriting. We want to attract people with woodworking skills to provide specialist tuition on a sessional basis.

M.F.T. recognises that investment in learning and skill acquisition is pivotal to the long term success of the project.

The teams are led and managed by a highly skilled and knowledgeable senior and deputy support worker. These posts have three main responsibilities:

- To manage the farmwork and needs of the land and livestock.
- To teach farming, conservation and rural skills to all team members.
- To understand the difficulties encountered in work, learning and everyday life by people with a variety of learning disabilities and to empower the individuals and team members to overcome/ minimise these difficulties whenever possible

We aim to have work teams which have a diverse mix of skills and knowledge from animal husbandry skills, machinery maintenance, coppicing and conservation skills, woodwork, teaching literacy and numeracy, horticultural skills etc.

We have been informed of the Suffolk VCS Learning Consortium and the qualification requirements in September 2007 Preparing to teach in Lifelong Learning. We envisage some of the support workers gaining accreditation in teaching basic skills in a vocational environment.

MFT team members gain real work experiences albeit with support available when necessary. Self organisation skills, sequencing and prioritising of tasks, teamwork, communicating information and working as a team member are some of the experiences our team members gain on a regular basis.

One farmworker already has a part time job elsewhere. Some will eventually reach this level of independent work others will always require support. MFT has the scope to offer a range of opportunities to people with varying support needs. We are in touch with the National Care Farming Initiative.

If the foot and mouth situation remains stable we plan to have two sheep training days this autumn /winter. These have been funded by Ipswich Building Society.

The trustees thank all the volunteers, members, supporting organisations, host farmers and the farmworkers for their continued support and commitment. There has been significant progress and we look forward to an enterprising year ahead.

The Treasurer will present the financial report.

The senior support worker and Old hall team leader will give their reports in conjunction with the farmworkers .