

Millennium Farm Trust
Annual General Meeting
16th July 2024 2pm Depden Care Farm

Present

Tim Freathy	Kevin Chapman	Mark Leadbeater
Alf Percival	Dianah Kawhura	Tina France
Janice Percival	Catherine Mathe	Lorraine Juniper
Chris Robinson	Mitchell Doughty	Carol Owens
Alex Percival	Rachel Hall	Gill Edmonds
Pat & David Webb	Billy Dolton	Nicky Hunter
Paula Morley	Phoebe Higginbotham	Adrian Bridges
Tony Carter	Natalie Rowe	Andrew Hunter
Kathleen Leadbeater	Brett Cowell	Jerry Massey
Ellie Bridges	Haydon Gannaway	Helen Wilson
Jade Underhill	Jayne Mansfield	Michael Morgan
Nic King	Peter Turnbull	Jo Proctor
Tom Chapman	Catherine Mather	Darren Lloyd
	Dave Gorham	Jane Williamson
		Catherine Wallace

Apologies

Lou Wells, Amanda O'Neil

1. Welcome and Chairman's Report

A very warm welcome to the Annual General Meeting of the Millennium Farm Trust or MFT for short. Formed in 1998 MFT is a limited company and a charity. It has provided 25 years of service to the community, and we are currently celebrating the fact that for 10 years we have been the very proud tenants of Depden Care Farm. This is our home, and we look forward to many more years of running a care farm in Depden.

From humble beginnings the Trust is now a major provider of training and education in horticulture, agriculture and related activities for those with specific needs. This

success is down to the work of the Trustees, Staff, Volunteers and, of course, most importantly, the Farm Helpers. The AGM is an opportunity to say thank you to everyone involved.

The purpose of this meeting is to celebrate another year of achievement over the period April 2023 to March 2024. This report is made on behalf of all the 10 members of the Board. I am pleased to introduce two new Trustees, **Claire and Gylfa**. Also joining us are **Helen, Nicky, Peter, Andy and Brett**. Sadly, **Lou and Amanda** are working. As a team, the Board work well together, and MFT is very fortunate to have such a broad range of skills available. So, a very big thank you to all the Trustees for their hard work. As a farm, we grow crops and nurture animals. But as a Care Farm we help people to grow and develop. To do this we have an excellent group of staff who encourage and support farm helpers to reach their true potential. Staff are well managed and directed by Tim. Attendance at the farm is growing and the nature of our work is also expanding and becoming more complex. This is reflected in our recent appointment of **Tom** as our Farm Manager to assist with daily management tasks. On behalf of the Board, can I thank Tim and all the staff for what they bring to the Farm.

Working alongside staff members are a dedicated group of 11 volunteers who commit a significant amount of time to attending the farm during the working day. The farm could not operate without their contribution so a very big thank you for your dedication. A special note of appreciation to **Ann**, our longest serving volunteer.

The work of the Trust is also enhanced by another band of volunteers who form a monthly 'working party' to carry out important tasks around the farm. All the volunteers are very generous with their time, and both individually and together they make a real difference. Seeing farm helpers grow and develop during their time with us is a source of great pride for the Board. Later **Tim** will give an overview of their achievements. Tim will explain that we have adopted a learning and training programme (known as AQAs) to encourage and measure individual progress. This is working well and there are so many examples of Farm Helpers taking on new tasks and exploring new areas of learning.

For instance, **Billy** decided to improve his knowledge of Health & Safety. **Nicky** our trustee lead on this matter, was impressed when **Billy** joined Dave and her for a safety inspection. **Nicky** reported to the Board that **Billy** showed an impressive understanding of what you must look for in a safety inspection. This is just one of many examples so well done to all farm helpers who take up the chance to explore new areas for learning. We have had more than our fair share of rain this year but staff, farm helpers and volunteers continue to ensure that no matter how poor the weather, the daily routine of caring for animals and growing food is achieved. Alongside the daily tasks there is always something new and exciting happening at Depden. Some of the highlights for the past year include...

The spectacular performances of a Living Nativity. Staff and farm helpers worked hard to transform the care farm to a setting that enabled the story of the birth of Jesus to be told. For those that attended I am sure you agree that the farm setting and animals

provided an excellent setting, and we all remember the wonderful sight of Angel Gabriel floating high in the night's sky as well as our own little Heavenly hosts **Jade** and **Rachel**. We have also completed several building projects including replacing our Pig building and a new Aviary and since it is proving to be very popular, we propose to expand it this year. It is pleasing to note farm helpers were involved in these works and given the chance to experience and new skills.

Alongside building work we have also broadened our stock of animals including Parrots and other feathered friends in the Aviary, Bodger the Shetland pony, pigmy goats and the popular Alpacas.

Finally, as we all know, the Millennium Farm Trust is a well-managed and financially sound charity that provides a service to the community that is respected and sought after. To get to this position has involved a lot of hard work, dedication and faith. Sadly, two of the people who helped steer MFT on this journey will be leaving us today. Trustees **Nicky and Andy Hunter** have made a massive contribution to MFT, and it is true to say we would not be where we are today without them. I would like to hand over to Tim to say a few words of appreciation.

2. Vote of thanks to Nicky and Andy Hunter

As you know Andy and Nicky are leaving the board of MFT this year. And I would like us, to celebrate and honour two remarkable individuals who have dedicated 14 years of their lives to our organization's mission.

Reflecting on their time with us, it's clear that Andy and Nicky have left an indelible mark on this institution. Their strategic insights, thoughtful guidance, and unwavering commitment have steered us through both challenges and successes, shaping the course of our journey. Their contributions extend far beyond their official roles; they have been my mentors, our advocates, and our friends. I, along with many of you I know, will be very sorry to see them go.

As they step down from the Board of Trustees, we acknowledge with immense gratitude the countless hours they have dedicated, and the wisdom they have imparted. Their legacy will endure in the initiatives they championed, the policies they shaped, and the lives they have touched. And of course, the tractor that they bought for us!

Andy, Nicky - we wanted to mark your amazing 14 years with us with something that would resonate with you and with our farm helpers for many years to come. So we decided to get a bench in your honour. Every time someone rests on this bench they will be reminded of the great debt this organization owes to both of you.

On behalf of all of us, thank you for your service, steadfast leadership, and your unwavering belief in our mission. We wish you both the very best in your next chapter.

Please join me in giving Andy and Nicky Hunter a heartfelt round of applause as we express our appreciation for their extraordinary contributions.

Thank you.

3. Treasurers report (Helen. Trustee to present)

Simplified accounts were circulated. Full accounts were available. Helen Wilsson, Trustee presented the accounts.

This continues to be a very important function of our charity and our financial position is carefully monitored and managed through our Finance committee who meet on a regular basis.

Income

Total income for the year was just over £322k and the majority of this, some £290k comes from the attendance fees. These fees cover all day-to-day operational running costs of the farm. Donations and grants account for £14k worth of income and include monies from Rotary, a sizeable Private Donation and the Charity Governance Prize used to partly fund the lorry. We continue to be very grateful for any grant or donation we receive and these are generally used for non-day to day operational spend or projects. Contract work generated just over £3k worth of income and we are delighted with the expansion and success of this work stream. Many of you like to get involved and really enjoy doing the off-site work and your experience has been enhanced by the purchase of our lorry which has been a great investment.

Produce sales contributed just under £13.5k worth of income and includes eggs, salad, fruit and veg which is grown, produced and sold at the farm along with our Christmas trees, bird boxes and other items of woodwork.

Expenses

Total spend for the year was just over £270k. The biggest single spend continues to be salary costs for our staff and director which accounts for some £164k and enables the farm to operate day to day. The cost of looking after the animals was just over £11k and covers feed, bedding, vet fees and general animal care. Farm consumables, fencing, new tools etc accounted for nearly £18k worth of spend. Utilities, primarily water and electricity accounted for around £11.5k. The only other area of spend I'd like to pull out is the £28k investment into the projects and this includes the aviary, new animal shelters, the lorry, laptop, marketing video, our wonderful Willow Horse, and the Suffolk Show outing enjoyed by so many of you.

So in summary, our total income was £322k and total spend just over £270k. We continue to have a healthy cash position and this will help support the completion of the pigsty, and

our projects for the year end March 2025. These includes additional animal shelters, our 10-year anniversary spend and a number of new projects yet to be started - an aviary extension, new breeder pens, new pathways in the Orchard and a new pole barn.

Helen then proposed that we re-appoint our accountants, Anthony Brice, for another year. Peter Turner seconded the proposal. Anthony Brice was duly appointed.

4. Election of officers (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer)

The meeting was required to appoint a chairman, secretary and treasurer for the forthcoming year. Jerry had agreed to remain the Chair and Lou had agreed to remain the treasurer. There being no other nominations, they were both duly elected.

Nicky had resigned from the board so we need to elect a new secretary. Helen Wilson had agreed to take the role. Jerry Massey proposed and Peter Turner seconded the proposal. Helen Wilson was elected secretary.

5. AOB

There being no other business the meeting concluded at 2.35pm.

Depden Care Farm Achievement Awards 2024

Tim Freathy, Director, presented the awards as follows.

Thank you all for coming and for being here today. I've been told to keep it short! So I will try.

This part of the proceedings where celebrate the achievements of our farm helpers. It has been a bumper year. More people have achieved more certificates than ever before.

People have excelled in a range of skills from animal care to first aid, from Landscaping to hedge trimming. Everyone has been doing such a lot.

I would however like to take a moment to reflect on a concept that often gets overshadowed by all the doing and the frenzy of accomplishments and accolades, important though they are: That is the need to consider our being as opposed to merely doing.

In our fast-paced world, where success is often measured by the number of tasks completed and goals achieved, we sometimes forget a fundamental truth: we are human beings, not human doings. We are more than the labels assigned to us by our jobs, titles, and roles.

Today, I want to emphasize the importance of embracing our humanity, of valuing who we truly are at our core over what we do.

Achievements are undoubtedly important. They provide us with milestones, a sense of direction, and the motivation to push ourselves. However, they do not define our worth. Our true value lies in our character, in our ability to empathize, to show kindness, and to connect with one another on a deeper level.

Consider the people you admire most in your life. It is likely not just their accomplishments that you respect, but their integrity, their compassion, their love for you, their ability to listen and to understand. These qualities are not about doing; they are about being. They reflect an inner richness that cannot be quantified or measured by any external standard.

In our journey, it is easy to become so focused on our goals that we lose sight of who we are. We may become engrossed in fulfilling roles and meeting expectations that we forget to nurture our inner selves. Yet, it is this inner self that forms the foundation of our true identity and we need to accept our true identity whatever that is and be comfortable with it. We are all different and have different abilities and dis-abilities, but they are all of equal worth.

When we focus on being – on cultivating our values, our sense of purpose, and our connections with others – we become more resilient, more authentic, and more fulfilled. In short, we are then better equipped to deal with what life has to throw at us.

Being is about presence. It is about living in the moment and appreciating the beauty of life as it unfolds. It is about recognizing the inherent worth in ourselves and others, not because of what we can achieve, but simply because of who we are.

When we understand this, we can begin to see beyond labels and titles, and appreciate the richness of human diversity so magnificently and beautifully on show here at Depden Care Farm.

37 farm helpers have between them been awarded an amazing 68 certificates of achievements, or AQA Unit Awards since our last AGM. And they haven't stopped there – this year they are all collectively working on a staggering 124 goals.

So many people have achieved so much more this year that we had to do things slightly differently and have been making awards to people throughout the year.

Very impressive achievements – a great deal of doing has been done!

I would now like to announce one last award and that is person who this year is deserving of the Directors award and it won't surprise you to learn that this year, the award is focussed on someone's being rather than their doing.

Today, I would like us to celebrate the extraordinary qualities of a truly remarkable individual. In a world where achievements are often measured by tangible

accomplishments, he reminds us that true greatness lies not just in what we do, but in who we are.

His kindness is a beacon of light in our community. Whether it's a comforting word to a friend in need or a simple act help and support to someone when they stumble, his compassion radiates through these little actions.

His empathy allows him to connect with others to understand their struggles and joys as if they were his own. He probably doesn't recognise this, but this deep-seated care for others is a rare and beautiful and he should value it.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Directors Award for 2024 goes to.... Billy Dolton. [Make award]

Moreover, Billy's work ethic is second to none. He approaches every task with a sense of responsibility and dedication that is truly inspiring for is colleagues. In developing the contract work, Billy is a real leader and Depden Care Farm would be all the poorer without him.

These qualities—kindness, empathy, and an unparalleled work ethic—are the cornerstones of true leadership. Billy demonstrates that leadership is not about commanding others, but about inspiring them. His example encourages us to be better versions of ourselves, to reach out to those in need, and to strive for excellence with humility and grace.

Billy, your presence strengthens our community in ways that words can scarcely capture. You remind us that the greatest impact often comes from the simplest acts of kindness and the quietest moments of understanding.

Thank you for being a shining example of what it means to lead with heart and integrity. Our community is stronger, more compassionate, and more united because of you.

Thank you.

In conclusion, I would like to say this to all our farm helpers. Strive to be human beings who are present, compassionate, and authentic. Celebrate not just what you do, but who you are. For in the end, it is our being – our true essence – that leaves a lasting impact on the world.