

# Shallowford Farm

*making the difference*

## Manager's overview of the year for the AGM 14th May 2018

The last 16 months has been a year of mixed emotions - excitement, frustration, relief, ambition and delight, and at times all thrown in together, but overall the development of the farm infrastructure, activities and client base has been the consistent encouragement, producing the highlights throughout the year and demonstrating the progress towards the vision of the Trust.

### Visiting Groups

The principal user of the farm continues to be Providence House (PH). PH have brought 24 groups of varying numbers and ages to enjoy the farm, staying from 1 day to 2 weeks. The feedback has always been positive, demonstrating and confirming the huge benefits to those that attend.

We have been encouraging other groups to use the farm resulting in 2 new residential youth groups, 4 youth group day visits, 4 school day visits and 1 school residential imminent. This has involved approximately 130 contact days with groups.

**So You Want To Be A Farmer** was a programme developed and promoted to over 20 local schools to coincide with lambing. During 1 week in April we had 4 schools visit the farm. The groups ranged from yr 1 to yr 11. The feedback has been very positive and will be used to promote the next farming experience to schools, planned for the autumn.

**YAZOO – Young Adults Zone of Opportunity**, is a Newton Abbot based organization that supports young people as they leave the care system. One young lad has been joining us twice weekly to develop his obsession with farming, build his sense of worth and purpose as he strives to secure a farming apprenticeship.

**Antony Radford** has again visited the farm for up to 2 weeks at a time. He supported Will during lambing and has been invaluable at Shallowford caring for our animals especially during the school visits week, a time when cleanliness and disinfection was particularly necessary.

**Marketing of the farm** took significant steps forward during the autumn and winter. A Market Research questionnaire has been developed and shared with school staff from 8 different schools. Time has been spent developing and sending promotional material to 28 local schools, visiting many schools locally and further afield, welcoming visiting staff to the farm and developing new programmes. Subsequently more groups are beginning to show interest in the farm and have visited the farm. During the next half term, we will be trialing a new residential programme called S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) with a school from Kent.

### Community Contacts

**Volunteers** have been involved in all parts of the farm, from office support, maintenance, gardening, cleaning and catering.

# Shallowford Farm

*making the difference*

When the groups are at the farm on a **Sunday** we have endeavoured to take them to a variety of worship experiences. We have attended the informal breakfast service at Dunstone chapel, the traditional communion and Rogation service at St Pancras, Widecombe, the contemporary afternoon service at PPT in Bovey and the outdoors creative time of worship that is Moor Church. At each of these the group has taken an active role in the service.

## Events

We have joined the PH team **in London** on four occasions, at the **Falcon Road Festival**, the volunteer's day, the annual dinner and a planning meeting for the Farm 2 City event.

The residential visits have been **occasions to welcome other visitors** who have joined in the activities of the day and witnessed the farm at its best – being the place where memories are made and lives changed. The Bishop of Plymouth and the Braund Society joined on such occasions.

It was during lambing that we were joined by James Norden who spent all week gathering the footage he needed to create the wonderful **promotional video**. This has been an invaluable tool in spreading the message about the work at Shallowford Farm.

The **Widecombe Fair** day was as busy as usual involving many volunteers, a wonderful group from PH and vast amounts of energy, and the café was humming with people all day and the increase in the number of volunteers meant that everyone was able to enjoy the whole event and left wanting to come again in 2018.

The **Grand Draw**, focused on the handmade quilt donated by the Widecombe Sewing Group, was launched at the Family Week and promoted throughout the autumn with the draw being made at the nativity.

The **Christmas Nativity** was small and quite impromptu, prepared and delivered by the group of young people and adults from PH. It was well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

During the coming weeks the **Farm 2 City event** in London will be a primary focus. Following the success of the event we will be developing a condensed version, with the intention of taking it to local schools, delivering a "Farm to School" experience and promoting Shallowford.

## Development

**The new animal barn** is up and running and has transformed the experience for visitors.

**The farmhouse accommodation** has been improved to enable the groups from PH to stay at the farm rather than at the Youth Hostel. This has without doubt enhanced the visitor experience.

**In summary** the year ahead will be centered on providing quality experiences for the visiting groups, marketing the farm to generate new groups, supporting the fundraisers and ensuring that the building project continues to move forward.