

Hartcliffe City Farm Potential Activities

The second phase of the project involves a gradual roll-out and build-up of services and activities identified as both are needed by the community and are financially viable in the space. As we have had no opportunity to access the site, the timing for any of these activities cannot be pinned down. It will depend on the ability to raise funds and any facilities that need putting in place.

Horticulture

The site is ideal place to expand the already-established activities of the partners in growing food, cut flowers and other crops. The gardens are the backbone of the early on-site activity. They will have three main outputs: food; cut flowers; other 'cash' crops (eg herbs, houseplants) in the first instance and in the longer term will provide a venue for education, environmental and social work.

Both the products of the gardens and the manner in which they are produced will contribute to the social purpose of the project. Food will be used both for direct sale and as an ingredient in meal production; it will be produced with the engagement of volunteers, trainees and people in social care placements who will develop independence, skills and gain therapeutic value from their activities. Cut flowers and other cash crops will generate income to support the project as well as the basis for skills development and employment for local people

Public Access (including animals on site)

The Hartcliffe City Farm site has huge potential to become a multi-functional community hub for the area, and to attract visitors from across the city. It is our ambition that it becomes a 7-days-a-week facility offering educational, therapeutic and recreational opportunities for a wide spectrum of the public.

Animals have been highlighted as important component for the visiting public. They also have potential as a means of engagement, education and therapeutic activities. The livestock project will aim to keep a range of farm livestock and other animals for public interest, educational uses and therapeutic interactions.

There will inevitably be a hiatus period where the farm site is closed to the general public as the Phase 1 development work embeds the infrastructure and secures funding for activities.

Education Programme

Hartcliffe City Farm presents a safe and controlled environment in which to offer a wide range of educational activity. The initial focus will be to develop a formal programme for local schools (including nurture sessions for vulnerable groups) and an informal offer for visitors to the site. In the longer-term work with colleges, children with special educational needs and more in-depth work with families will be developed. The purpose of the programme is to educate people about food, farming and the environment so that they can lead healthier, happier lives.

The programme is designed to be self-sustaining and to contribute to overheads through a mixture of earned income (fees paid by schools) and grant income (from charitable sources).

Health and Social Care Programme

Hartcliffe City Farm offers an opportunity to directly improve the lives of people in South Bristol through evidence-based wellbeing programmes. Nature-based programmes work within a two-tier framework focusing on prevention and rehabilitation. The person-centred and inclusive model is successful in both preventing and improving mental ill-health; developing independence for people with learning difficulties; and addressing the needs of older people and those in recovery from addictions.

Our work draws upon many elements of the Social Therapeutic Horticulture to teach people how to care for the environment, and for themselves. Teaching people about sustainable food production, self-care, and techniques to improve and sustain positive wellbeing will have a huge impact on the people that live in Hartcliffe, and the area itself.

Childcare

Hartcliffe City Farm presents an excellent space in which to offer two models of childcare: sessional day care for children; and 'play and stay' sessions that involve parents.

Sessional childcare will be similar to that of the Farm Adventurers service (similar to Forest School experiences) that is provided at Windmill Hill City Farm (WHCF). Booked sessional care would be provided for children aged 3 – 5 years old. We envisage supporting sixteen children at any one time in each session.

The 'stay and play' sessions would allow families with children aged 2 – 5 years to enjoy outdoor learning activities and experiences together with their parents/carers allowing them to really appreciate the opportunities and benefits that the outdoors can bring.

The latest (2018) Bristol's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment shows the Hartcliffe and Withywood Ward currently to have eight childcare provisions. 64% of them are registered to offer free childcare. We aim to offer funded places allowing low income families more choice and opportunities to use their funding in a different and unique service within the community.

Conservation

We see the site as having two distinct elements: the main farm area and the outlying meadows. The activity on the main site will be aligned with a green economy agenda and support diversity of wildlife, an organic approach to horticulture and environmental education value. We anticipate the larger fields associated with the site will remain undeveloped in the first phase of the project. They will be assessed for their value either in terms of a wildlife haven and their capacity to produce hay. If suitable, a contractor will be engaged to undertake the cutting and harvesting of it.

The long-term potential of the meadows of the farm could include residential setting for education work, community power generation schemes or other projects of significant environmental and social value. We have insufficient data at present to make an assessment of the best approach.

Catering

As the development of Hartcliffe Farm continues, provision of snacks and refreshments will evolve, growing with the footfall. A welcoming food offering will add to the destination's appeal for a day out, as well as generating income, and can play an important part in reflecting the mission of the organisation.

For many visitors it may be the first point of contact with staff, and can act as a reception point, sharing information about where to find the various attractions and what activities are running. It will also act as a social space, somewhere visitors meet and get chatting, building social cohesion. Additionally, any food outlet will provide employment opportunities for people who live locally, as well as eventually offering, in a supportive setting, high quality

training and mentoring, increasing skills for employability through a supported volunteering scheme, as well as offering apprenticeships to school leavers.

The local cafes, of which there seem to be relatively few compared to more central areas, mostly serve cooked breakfasts, roast dinners, sandwiches, and jacket potatoes, with price points from £4-£8.

Our food offering will differ from the above by:

- Being on a city farm;
- Having close links to the community organisation, including using its produce;
- Being a haven for families and offering activities;
- Meeting the organisation's sustainability objectives;