

## Marsh Farm Community Farm

We are in the process of taking over the lease of Wiltshire Council owned farmland to support and encourage agricultural and horticultural courses for children and young people and for community groups to participate in a Rural Learning Centre.

The project proposed for this farm is the regeneration of the buildings and land at an underused tenancy farm. The time and funds invested by the team will ensure the sustainable market value of the property for the current owners. It will also keep all areas of the project at a high level showing investment and development successes.

The buildings will be returned to use after 11 years lying vacant, by updating and installing training and support facilities, office space and a studio area with toilets and wash-room on site.

The farmland will be returned to a sustainable and eco-friendly facility. There will be an area set aside and prepared for food growing which will link in with the needs of the local community and schools.

The farm will be run as a business which offers opportunities but manages and sustains itself as a working farm. Food will be produced for the livestock giving as much back to the farm as can be successfully managed. There will be food for sale in various ways – including links to a nearby farm shop.

The farm will be constituted as a Community Interest Company (CIC) – to enable the development of the project as a business for the community.

The farm will offer positive work and support through:

Food production -

Learning and skills sharing

Reconnecting with food sources

Taking part in the whole Community Farm project

Owned / sponsored orchard trees

Recreational ideas

Identifying wildlife and birds

Animal sponsorship scheme

Memorial trees in the woodland

We are presently setting up work and positive links with the police, probation service, SWITCH, Rowdeford School, Downlands School and other interested parties.

The project meets targets for many key areas from Natural England, local targets through the Wiltshire Core Strategy and hits targets from the Government White Paper also:-

The Department for Education [Council for Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge](#) ;

FACE (Farming and Countryside Education) links work delivered to the national curriculum;

It also supports 'Why Farming Matters' projects – from the NFU.

It is cost effective – community use of under utilised buildings creating an income to run the project.

It is also a model of delivery which can be replicated by others to support the day to day life of the rural learning centre.

The work, funds and effort put into making this farm work will benefit all involved - and keep the value of the land for the Wiltshire Council with little investment on their part.