



**three-year  
strategic plan  
2022-2024**





# vision and mission



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**Our vision** is to create a healthy community rooted in nature, food, farming and each other.

**Our mission** is that we are a welcoming urban farm using our unique setting and targeted projects to educate, improve wellbeing and transform lives.

# values



Our six values that guide the ethos of the farm are:

## **Inclusive and diverse**

We remain inclusive and our farm community is diverse and drawn from a wide range of different backgrounds. We promote a culture of respect for all.

## **Protecting the natural environment**

We work to increase biodiversity and promote environmental sustainability in all our activities and choices.

## **Valuing individuals**

We believe that each individual has unique gifts and talents, and we constantly look for ways to support people to fulfil their potential.

## **Affordable**

We believe it is essential that the farm remains free for all to access as one of the founding principles of the charity. We will endeavour to provide goods and services that are free or affordable to those within our community.

## **Open and transparent**

We endeavour to share and consult with everyone involved with the farm in the direction of our future.

## **Quality and excellence**

We aim to improve constantly and carry out our work to a high standard.

# setting the scene

Our roots in the local community have never been more important during these uncertain times, as we emerge from the covid-19 pandemic.

Over the past 18 months the farm has adapted its services so that we can support the most vulnerable. This has involved delivering much needed meals, co-ordinating a network of community groups working to manage the impact of the pandemic and maintaining a vital green space where people can continue to connect safely with each other and the natural world during times of significant stress.

The journey in publishing this new three-year strategic plan started before the pandemic and has faced many twists and turns. Staff, volunteers and trustees came together early in 2021 with renewed determination and a real sense of the value the farm has in so many people's lives.

Our new strategic aims and objectives have been developed from the collective wisdom of the crowd and they have been inspired by our vision, mission and values. We not only aim to help address some of the major challenges of our time, such as tackling the climate

emergency, but to ensure the longevity and security of this special place that was created by the local community 25 years ago in the heart of Twerton and Whiteway.

The social inequalities in our city have been laid bare by the pandemic. Anti-social behaviour and food poverty is on the rise locally and loneliness has been further compounded by long term isolation. Increasing numbers of people living alone lack a support network, which has a severe knock-on effect on their mental and physical health. Three times as many young people deal with loneliness compared to older people and lonely people are twice as likely to have a mental health issue. The farm plays a vital part in offering social connection and support.

Our strategy also recognises the role that the farm must play in tackling the huge challenges around the nature and climate emergencies. As custodians of a wildlife rich greenspace, surrounded by ever encroaching developments, we understand the responsibility of our role in protecting the diverse habitats contained within these 37 acres and helping to reverse the loss of species in decline.



Planting out. Bath City Farm grows a wide variety of vegetables, fruit and flowers from seed



# setting the scene



Feeding the animals is a wonderful way to build a deeper connection with nature.

With over 40,000 visitors every year we can play an important role in helping people to make sustainable lifestyle choices and build a deeper connection with nature which is vital to inspire people to care for the environment.

Our work extends well beyond our field boundaries and as an important community hub, we have committed to help build a resilient community that works together to respond quickly to emerging local need. The power of working and coming together as a community has been exemplified by what has been achieved in the last 18 months. We are really passionate about the importance of maintaining this momentum towards a more joined up approach in building social and environmental justice.

There are two golden threads woven through all six of the farm's strategic aims:

1. One around inclusion, diversity and equality of opportunities as we welcome all onto the farm.
2. A second is the contribution of all six aims to the farm's financial wellbeing. With much greater demand and competition for funding we know that it is vitally important for the

farm to become more financially independent and drive the shift in our financial model to becoming less reliant on grant funding. Growing our supporter base and developing links with local businesses is crucial to this approach.

Our new community café will play a key role in helping us diversify our income and will bring new opportunities and increase our operations substantially. The café development is a long-held vision passed on from the farm's founding members and we are extremely proud and excited by the potential of this new community facility to benefit the local area.

As we celebrated our 25th anniversary at the height of the pandemic in 2020, we reflected on our story so far. This strategy provides the focus for the next chapter, over three years. The certainty of change is something that we have embraced as the farm has adapted to the new challenges and opportunities that it faces. The farm is powered by passionate supporters, staff, trustees and volunteers and we can look forward with confidence to helping to nourish our community and connect people to food, farming and the natural world.

# setting the scene

## **CASE STUDY: MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT PARTICIPANT**

Before I came here I was sitting around doing stupid things, drinking way too much and doing lots of drugs. I was on a downward spiral just doing nothing with my life and was getting really depressed. I've suffered with Schizophrenia all my adult life, and due to the heavy anti-psychotic drugs I was on, I'd got to 28 stone before I came here. I lost lots of weight when I stopped the medication and the exercise I get here and working out at home helps me keep it down. I've lost over 10 stone now!!

It's made me much better coming here. I don't drink or take drugs at all now. I'm actually doing things and it gives me something to look forward to every week.

All my life I've never mingled with people very well, I'm always on my own. Now I'm better in myself I'm much more confident and can chat to people. I've got friends now and it's the people here that make it so special.



## **CASE STUDY: ANON. (10 YEARS OLD)**

I love coming to Farm Club so much. I don't get to see friends as much as other people do because I am home schooled. My mum started to teach me at home because I had to leave school because I have very bad eczema and was being bullied badly. I used to go home and cry and wish I could be the same as everyone else.

I was scared when I first came to the farm because I thought I would be bullied by the other children again, but everyone is so friendly and now I have a few best friends. When I'm on the way to the farm I sometimes feel like I'm going to explode because I can't wait to talk to everyone.

During the day I am mostly inside at home but when I come to the farm, I like to feel the wind under my wings. I like to run up and down the hills and talk to new people. I really love looking after the bunnies and singing to them. I have to keep my hands really clean because of my eczema, but at the farm I can put some gloves on and plant seeds and make things grow.

# strategic aim 1

To become a 'centre for wellbeing', where our safe and caring environment will provide everyone in Bath with the opportunity to improve their mental well-being and physical health, reaching out particularly to young and/or vulnerable members of the local community.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

Develop the holistic range of services and programmes that provide people with opportunities to improve mental, physical and emotional health covering four objectives:

- 1** Improve our community's well-being by providing a welcoming place where people can take that vital breath, be active in the landscape and make lasting connections, including:
  - Run a targeted programme specifically aimed at providing safe, accessible, autonomous outdoor space for local young people, working in partnership with community based and city-wide organisations.
  - Strike a healthy balance in preserving the therapeutic farm space (tranquil, not busy) with the need to maximise income generation.

- Provide affordable access to healthy, locally grown food; maximise on the therapeutic opportunities of the animals at the farm; and facilitate the community coming together through a rich programme of community events.
- Offer staff wellbeing sessions for corporate business partners that help financially support our core costs and mental health programmes.

- 2** Continue to offer the evidence-based programmes of activities around learning and mental health and well-being to marginalised people within our communities, including:

- Expand our targeted mental health programme to meet demand within the first year of this three-year plan.
- Develop efficient monitoring and evaluation systems that clearly demonstrate the farm's impact across all of our projects.

- 3** Foster a diverse, happy, well-equipped staff team. In 2022, introduce a workplace wellbeing policy, and implement staff development plans.

- 4** Work closely with local GP practices, health and social care professionals and other local public health organisations to pilot a new green social prescribing offer at the farm.



The farm's targeted projects support over 800 people per year to improve their wellbeing.



## strategic aim 2

To deliver a rich inclusive programme of educational and lifelong learning opportunities that connect people with the story of food, farming and the natural world.

### OUR OBJECTIVES

Provide a wide range of learning and development opportunities for individuals of all ages to access and acquire new knowledge and skills covering five objectives:

**1** Develop the farm as an AQA awards centre providing an important skills pathway for our project participants to receive accreditation for their achievements.

Increase staff trained as AQA co-ordinators and offer a range of subject areas across our projects including catering and retail, conservation, horticulture, animal care and landscaping.

**2** Focus on inequalities in education, supporting young people facing adversity to achieve better outcomes. This includes working with local schools to provide alternative education that compliments the curriculum, as well as providing for those not in employment, education or training.

We will strengthen the farm's youth work in support of valuing the site and animal welfare, and provide work placements and apprenticeships to adults struggling with long-term unemployment.

**3** Maximise the learning and behavioural change opportunities of the new cafe from spring 2022 and its role in providing access to healthy food to diverse users of the farm. Tell the positive story of local food and more sustainable living through visually engaging interpretation and supporting content on the website.

**4** Roll out a programme of informal learning opportunities, broadening the diversity of those taking part, running them in partnership with organisations across the city such as Bath College, the Wellbeing College, the two universities in Bath and the Bath Festival, covering food, farming and the natural world.

**5** Building on the success of our café project, expand our community facilities with a focus on applying for capital funding to build a new community and education centre by the end of 2024.



Mental health groups meet every Monday and Wednesday and support 200 volunteers a year



# strategic aim 3

To protect, restore and promote sustainable use of our 37 acres, becoming a beacon of excellence in the city, tackling the climate and nature emergencies.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

Develop a regenerative strategy for our use of the land, covering three objectives:

- 1** Land use: We will secure the funding to deliver a new site management plan, focusing on biodiversity; food production and educational use, considering access routes and security.
- 2** Partnerships: the site management plan will explore and outline potential new partnership opportunities (financial and in-kind) to deliver positive land use change. This will include working with local universities to research, implement and measure new technologies and strategies for sustainable land management.
- 3** The farm's journey to becoming a beacon of excellence in the city, tackling the climate and nature emergencies:

- Scope out and explore projects to reverse nature loss, such as rewilding, planting woodland, carbon sequestration programmes, managed land for wildlife, wildflower and hay meadows, with the possibility of achieving accreditation for the natural richness of the farm as a designated site of nature conservation or a local nature reserve.
- Implement actions that foster sustainable consumption and minimise pollution, and at the same time reduce the farm's running costs. For example, rain water harvesting, renewable energy production, closed loop waste systems and improved recycling, ethical procurement and green transport..
- Connect people and partners to the natural world and the rich cultural heritage of the farm through experiential learning, so local communities are inspired to care for and protect the site. This includes encouraging positive behaviour change via onsite signage, with clear calls to action, such as: promoting recycling, reducing food waste, and highlighting the importance of sustainable transport..



The rare Wasp Spider – an example of some of the abundant wildlife that can be found on the farm

# strategic aim 4

Produce high quality, affordable and nutritious food with local communities, addressing issues of food security, whilst generating new income streams to be reinvested into the farm's social activities.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

Maximise opportunities for food production at the farm, connecting people with the story of food and farming across these four objectives:

**1** Year one: Secure funding to create a business plan to identify investment and markets to scale up production of foods:

- This will involve the recruitment of staff to deliver this on a commercial model, whilst also providing work experience opportunities for volunteers and AQA trainees.
- Develop the strategy and business model for a new farm shop to sell fresh foods as well as preserved produce made on the farm. Future markets for selling farm produce could include wholesale to local restaurants, via farmer's markets and city shops.

**2** Provide produce for the farm café, reducing the cost of supplies and contributing to the narrative and provision of local, healthy, and seasonal food.

**3** Help address food inequalities by connecting people to healthy, locally produced food, to improve physical health and mental wellbeing. This could be through volunteering, a Community Supported Agriculture model and/or community care packages.

**4** Develop paid and funded courses for people to learn about foraging, seasonal eating, home growing and allotment gardening, nutrition, and healthy meal preparation.



The farm has been generating a healthy income from its pilot shop



# strategic aim 5

Develop the farm as a visitor destination, with a focus on building a strong network of passionate farm advocates.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

Develop deeper conversational relationships with those who visit the farm, fostering different levels of relationships, covering six objectives:

- 1** Build greater public awareness of the charitable status of the farm, helping to grow the income from visitor donations by 50% over the three years.
- 2** Have a better understanding of our visitors: where they are from, what motivates them to visit and how we can develop a rich conversational relationship, helping to convert them into regular supporters. We will recruit visitor experience focused volunteers for Saturdays and busy days in school holidays to grow our supporter base and use our communications to encourage more visitor journeys to the farm on foot, by bike and public transport.

- 3** Improve infrastructure and use behaviour change strategies to encourage more visitors to travel to the farm on foot, by bike and public transport.

- 4** Maximise opportunities for visitors of the farm to experience enjoyment through connection with animals, supporting opportunities for learning, whilst generating income through donations and animal adoption

- 5** Develop the farm as a fun and interactive learning experience, with art installations and educational games and activities located across the site.

- 6** Build our core supporter base to create a powerful network of passionate advocates for the farm. We will aim to recruit 250 individual supporters and 25 corporate supporters by the end of the three years. They will become an important way to expand the profile of the farm and support our fundraising campaigns.



A diverse mix of visitors and groups use the farm for fun and recreation

# strategic aim 6

To grow resilient and sustainable communities by working with existing and new partners across Bath.

## OUR OBJECTIVES

Grow resilient and sustainable communities through five objectives:

- 1** In the first year of the strategic plan, we will carry out an audit of the farm's existing partnerships to evaluate their impact and benefits to the farm. This will help us shape our ways of working with partners and identify gaps.
- 2** Ensure that all of the farm's partnerships are clearly aligned to support the delivery of our strategic aims. These partnerships, which include organisations delivering activities on the farm, will be rooted in strengthening existing communities as well as reaching new ones.
- 3** Work with community organisations across Bath to ensure that the farm is delivering on equality, diversity and inclusion. In 2022, develop the farm's equality, diversity and inclusion action plan. Follow this with joint work with strategic partners to provide stepping stones for a wider diversity of people to access the farm. This includes diversifying access to the allotments, running specific groups and ensuring that our volunteer offer is promoted across the city.
- 4** Establish ongoing conversations with the community through member events, an annual open day and ad-hoc focus groups, aligned to strategic aims.
- 5** Develop our collaborative work within the Twerton and Whiteway community network, supporting residents to tackle local issues; helping to make Twerton and Whiteway a great place to live. This will include recruitment of a coordinator for the network to facilitate the development of a neighbourhood plan with local residents.



Bath City Farm: a hub for collaboration



# creating and delivering the strategy



Volunteers, staff and trustees all came together to contribute thoughts and ideas to our strategy

We started to craft our new strategic plan early in 2021. Our approach for gathering the evidence to generate new and ambitious ideas for the strategy was to form a committee of key stakeholders. This group consisted of farm volunteers, staff and trustees, bringing with them the views of the wider community.

Their ideas and passion for the farm proved invaluable for devising the strategic aims and objectives that will shape the next chapter in the farm's history. As a group they met three times over zoom, reviewing evidence about the challenges faced by local communities, which through discussion, shaped the focus and content of the strategic plan.

This was an inclusive and collective effort tapping into people's creativity, knowledge and experience. Thanks to generous funding from the Lloyds Foundation, the farm benefitted from the support and guidance of Pete Hawkins who helped steer us through the discussions and kept us on track.

Whilst the trustees of the farm have legal responsibility for the organisation, the strategy will be delivered by the wider team of staff and volunteers. Over the lifetime of the strategic plan, more details about the delivery of the objectives will be formulated via our operational planning process. There will be health checks with staff and trustees twice a year to ensure that we are on track to deliver. Individual staff objectives will be informed by the content of this strategic plan to ensure its delivery.

# the farm by numbers

**1086**

**Domesday Book**  
The first recorded  
mention of the farm



**1830**

**when the avenue of  
beech trees was planted**



**1995**

**set up as a charity**



**40,000**

**visitors to the farm**



**1998**

**opened to the public  
for the first time**



**2005**

**DIY SOS**  
the BBC show records  
local people building the  
main office building



**2011**

**Trough Café opens**



**2,500**

**school children**  
access our educational  
programme every year





**850**

the £ amount it costs to run the farm each day



**654**

species found on the farm



**50**

city farms in the UK



**37**

acres in size



**12**

community events held each year



**10**

ongoing projects supporting people living with complex health and social needs



**5**

fields that retain their Anglo-Saxon field names



**3**

Soay sheep the first animals on the farm thanks to the Bath City FC



get in touch



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photographs of the farm:  
[simontaylorvisualartist.co.uk](http://simontaylorvisualartist.co.uk)  
[jenniferkellyphoto.co.uk](http://jenniferkellyphoto.co.uk)

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