

**8 November 2011**

## **Landfill tax funds renovations at River Bourne Community Farm**

River Bourne Community Farm has carried out major renovations thanks to a £15,600 donation from waste treatment and recycling company Hills Waste Solutions Limited.

The money has come from the Landfill Communities Fund, administered by Community First, which allows waste operators to divert some of the Landfill Tax due on waste sent to landfill to community and environmental projects.

The renovations, which include the refurbishment of a traditional Dutch hay barn and the construction of new animal pens, were officially launched at the farm today (Tuesday November 8<sup>th</sup>). They mean that River Bourne Community Farm CIC is well on the way to its dream of opening more of its facilities to the public.



The farm, the brainchild of founder and chairman Benjamin A Parker, is a community-based project to recreate a 1950s/ 1960s-based farm for the Salisbury area. It is sited on land adjacent to Cow Lane in the village of Laverstock, Salisbury.

With 63 acres adjoining the River Bourne and further acreage around the Parish available to the farm for crop growing, the farm originally consisted of derelict and overgrown buildings, which are gradually being cleared and transformed. There is already a shop on site, selling the farm's own meat, eggs and honey, and there are plans to build a cafe in future. There's a classroom where schoolchildren learn about sustainable farming and ten students from local secondary schools are already attending the farm once a week as part of their BTEC in land-based studies.

Animals on the farm include Wiltshire Horn sheep, Cattle, Oxford Sandy and Black pigs, chickens, bees and two Golden Guernsey goats named Clara and Andrew.

Eventually the farm will be a self-sustaining resource for the local community, offering educational and craft activities and local produce as well as a venue for community functions. 2000 local people and 1700 schoolchildren have already visited the farm this year and cream tea events run fortnightly through the summer months by local Women's Institute members have been very popular.

Mr Parker said the farm's staff and 100 volunteers were extremely grateful for the funding.

"This has enabled us to complete several major projects ahead of time and to help make the farm more accessible for people from the local community.

"All villages used to have farms at the centre of their community, but that tradition is dying out. Children don't know where their food comes from nowadays and they never get to see how the countryside works in practice. Doing practical tasks such as composting, clearing out the animals pens and looking after the animals builds resilience and young people's knowledge and skills.

"Our aim is for the farm to be both an educational and a community resource, and for it to make enough revenue to be self supporting in the future. We couldn't have achieved as much as we have so far without the hard work of our volunteers and donations such as this."

Monique Hayes, Group Communications Officer for Hills, said she was impressed with progress at the farm.

"We are very keen to work with local communities and to give something back to local people," she said. "The farm enables children to get closer to nature and to learn about sustainable farming practices and will also be a focal point for local community activities in future. We are very pleased to help with the development of such worthwhile projects."

Lynn Gibson, Assistant Chief Executive of Community First, urged more local groups to apply for funding.

"The Landfill Communities Fund supports community, built heritage and environmental projects in the vicinity of landfill areas or depots. The majority of Wiltshire and Swindon is covered by eligible catchment areas, so we would encourage other community groups to find out more about the grant on our website, and to apply."

#### **Notes to editors:**

**Hills Waste Solutions** offers a range of specialist waste management and recycling services to both the public and private sector. It is a dynamic regional business which, while centred on Wiltshire, has stretched its boundaries into neighbouring areas to become one of the region's largest providers of waste solutions. Hills Waste Solutions is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Hills Group Limited, a privately owned family company established in 1900. [www.hills-group.co.uk](http://www.hills-group.co.uk)

Media contact : Monique Hayes on 01672 518941 or email [monique.hayes@hills-group.co.uk](mailto:monique.hayes@hills-group.co.uk)

**Community First** is a charity working to improve the quality of life and the economic well-being of people throughout Wiltshire and Swindon. With the aim of empowering people and strengthening local communities, Community First provides technical advice, practical support and grant aid for a wide range of community-based projects meeting local needs locally. Working in close partnership with voluntary organisations, statutory agencies and private funders, Community First develops and manages countywide programmes bringing social, economic and environmental benefits to local people. [www.communityfirst.org.uk](http://www.communityfirst.org.uk)

For further information from Community First, contact Lindsey Darking on 07775 891715, email [lindseydarking@btconnect.com](mailto:lindseydarking@btconnect.com), or Helen Cotter on 01380 732823 or email [hcotter@communityfirst.org.uk](mailto:hcotter@communityfirst.org.uk)

**River Bourne Community Farm** is a community-based project to recreate a 1950s/1960s-based farm for the Salisbury area. The farm is based on land adjacent to Cow Lane in the village of Laverstock, Salisbury. Initially on 58 acres of land adjoining the River Bourne, the farm is a sustainable working farm staffed by full-time staff and by volunteers. The farm is managed by The River Bourne Community Farm C.I.C. Education is one of the farm's main aims. Local educational establishments can access the day-to-day work of the farm whilst learning about the sustainability and ecologically-sound practices employed.

For more information on River Bourne Community Farm CIC, contact Jane Wilkinson on 01722 330667 or email [JaneWilkinson@riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk](mailto:JaneWilkinson@riverbournecommunityfarm.org.uk)