

ALDERMOOR COMMUNITY FARM

ANNUAL REPORT TO JANUARY 2015

Nurturing the potential of people and land

DIRECTORS:	David Barclay (Chair) Richard Pitt Kathy Pitt Tony Arthur (from 20 Feb 2014)
SECRETARY	Richard Pitt
REGISTERED OFFICE:	Aldermoor Farm Aldermoor Road Southampton SO16 5NN
REGISTERED NUMBER:	32144R
BANKERS:	Co-operative Bank Plc

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Our first report

This is the first annual report of Alder Moor Community Farm.

We are a co-operative social enterprise. This means we are owned by our members and trading for the benefit of our society. We are a “not-for-profit” business.

We are bringing together members of our local community to produce food in sustainable ways on a smallholding in Lord’s Hill, Southampton. Prior to the beginning of our work, our 1-acre site had lain fallow for at least a decade. It was completely overgrown.

We provide inspiration and education in healthy food production in urban settings. We provide therapeutic volunteering opportunities. We draw together members of the local community with the aim of increasing community cohesion and combating isolation. We are making sure the farm is accessible for wheelchair users.

Our ambition for 2015 is to grow our membership and see the site come to life in terms of food production. We will clear the remaining piles of rubble. We will convert a derelict greenhouse into a polytunnel and grow a wide range of vegetables and salads. We will buy livestock (pigs,

ducks, geese) and start producing eggs and meat for our members. We will dig ponds and create nice places to sit and enjoy the land. We will improve our toilet and hand-wash facilities so that we have capacity for larger groups.

All that you read about in this report has been made possible through the dedication of our members and through the hours of work given by volunteers. So far a total of 34 individuals have contributed a total of 760 hours of volunteering to the farm.

Our thanks to all who have supported this year. It bodes well for the future.

Ethos

We are set up as a cooperative. This means the way we do business is based on the values and principles of co-operative identity as defined by the International Co-operative Alliance¹.

Our business exists to “operate a sustainable community farm, nurturing the potential of people as we nurture the land”². We value people and we value the land. We believe in the potential of both. We want the potential of both to be nurtured as we operate the farm.

Sustainable farm

A sustainable farm means one that doesn't need external inputs to keep it going. It is probably not possible for us to be truly independent of external inputs, but we are always thinking that way. All our decisions will be informed by our **philosophy of farming**:

- environmentally enhancing agriculture
- humane animal husbandry
- biodiversity and soil-building
- seasonal production cycles
- family-friendly agriculture
- open for inspection by customers
- realistic wages for farm staff

Some of these short phrases may need unpacking. What labels can we use to help? The farm is not certified organic but that is our approach - we do not use chemical fertilizers or herbicides and pesticides on our land. We avoid animal inputs too (apart from manure from local stables or our own livestock). This means our fruit and vegetables have been raised in an organic/vegetarian/vegan way.

We are designing the farm using our Permaculture Design Certificate training. Our Project Manager, Richard Pitt, has completed the Permaculture Design Certificate twice. In the spring/summer of 2013 he completed Geoff Lawton's online course³. In October 2013 he attended the 2-week full-time Permaculture Design Certificate taught by Aranya Gardens⁴ at the Sustainability Centre, East Meon⁵.

Our other main influence is Joel Salatin⁶. His blend of care for animals and the environment together with his business sense is very helpful for us. His books and videos give us a good level of detail to learn from and we have added most of his works to our library/knowledgebase.

¹ <http://ica.coop/en/what-co-operative>

² From our Rule 5 of our governing document.

³ <http://geofflawton.com>

⁴ <https://www.linkedin.com/in/aranyagardens>

⁵ <http://www.sustainability-centre.org/>

⁶ <http://www.polyfacefarms.com/>

In time we will try to explain our philosophy more on our website and social media, but if you want to know more, please get in touch.

Social values

Our decisions will also be informed by our **social values**. As a cooperative we have already built our business around the internationally recognised co-operative principles. These values are uppermost in our minds:

- inclusion - making space for people to be involved. We are delighted that through word of mouth 34 different people spent time helping on the farm.
- membership - we have not been actively promoting membership of the farm, but we are delighted that two local people have joined the co-operative this year.
- social enterprise - we aim to be financially self-supporting and are looking to range of income streams to cover the costs of employing staff and running the farm. We will be selling produce from the land. We will provide services to help others produce food in sustainable ways. We could also provide mentoring or coaching on site to people referred to us by other agencies
- local - we believe in the power of the local community to resource itself and we want to see the local economy grow by people choosing to spend locally rather than with private share-holder-focussed companies.
- accessible - a farm does not usually lend itself to being accessible to people with limited mobility, but we are keen that there will be a way for everyone to get on site and get a feel for what is going on.
- co-operation locally - we are taking the time to network with local organisations and individuals who share our values.

Achievements

Volunteer involvement - nurturing the potential of individuals

Despite the very basic nature of the site and the challenge of being completely “off-grid” we have received a steady flow of volunteers who have collectively put in 1542 hours developing the land (see table). Our volunteers often tell us how much they have enjoyed the time on the land and how exciting it is to see the changes they have made, even in one day.

Of the 35 volunteers who have worked the land, 26 have visited once and 9 have been back multiple times. We have a core of 4 volunteers who have made a sustained commitment, volunteering from 30 hours to 330 hours. All volunteers have heard about the farm from personal recommendation. Reasons for volunteering include:

- “being on the farm makes me happy”
- getting fresh air and exercise
- desire for and access to healthy food
- to give meaning and enjoyment whilst unemployed
- as part of a personal drug recovery programme
- to help in recovering from mental illness

	number of volunteers	total (hours)	cumulative total (hours)
Up to a whole day	26	111	111
More than one day	4	61	172
Long term, >5 days	4	589	761
Project manager	1	781	1542

In September 2014 we hosted a Business in the Community volunteer day, with 25 people from a local business working on a wide range of tasks for the whole day. This input of 175 hours work in one day made a huge difference to us.

Library - nurturing the potential of people

We have purchased a number of DVDs and books as a knowledge base. We believe that much of what we need to know is being found out and shared by others. We want to make that knowledge accessible to our members.

Development of the site - nurturing the potential of the land

Clearance

We have made a big difference to the site. When we first gained access it was a haven of wildlife dominated by nettles and brambles. We have been sensitive in clearing it, working on specific areas and observing closely. Over the winter we have been more decisive, with the die back of summer vegetation it is a simpler job and we can now see the lie of the land and make a detailed plan for the next year.

Hedges

We have planted 90m of hedging this year. The idea is to

- create habitat for birds, insects and small animals (to compensate for what we remove as we clear away brambles, nettles and willows)
- provide windbreaks
- screen the adjacent family dwelling
- provide amenity along the pavement that borders the site
- provide food for birds and hedgerow jam - crab apples, cherry plum, hazel nuts, rose hips, wild pear, sea buckthorn.
- look nice!!

Fruit trees

The best time to plant a tree is 10 years ago. So we have prioritised that in the first year and created a toe-hold of orchard in the top corner of the site. A collection of 20 apples, pears, cherries and plums have been planted in a design that maximises water supply and minimizes opportunities for pests. This was made possible by a donation from a private individual at the very beginning of our time on the land.

Spring water

Early on we discovered a spring on the land and have built a retaining wall and pipe to keep the water manageable and clean. The water has been tested and is suitable for irrigation and for drinking water for our livestock. This is a great resource for the site.

Modified access to site

The entrance to the farm involves an adverse camber straight off the pavement. We have modified the access with a removable ramp that makes it easier for anyone with limited mobility to enter the site. It is also safer for us to accept deliveries by pallet.

Plans for the coming year

Our plans for the coming year are focussed on the farm coming alive and looking more like a beautiful place, as well as developing income streams.

We have a considerable root mat of bramble and nettle roots to overcome if we are going to grow the vegetables and fruit we desire. Our main strategy for clearing the land is to have it tilled by

pigs. There are also considerable amounts of rubble to be removed. We will uncover all the remaining land, removing brambles and nettles to allow us to do a proper survey and formulate an overall plan for the site.

We will grow a wide selection of annuals and add to our stock of perennials (fruit trees, soft fruit, herbs and leafy greens) for future harvests.

We have also made a commitment to renovate an allotment run by Chances4Change⁷ and then deliver training for their clients. Our fees for this service will give us a modest weekly income throughout the spring and summer and into the autumn.

We will also generate income from selling produce: pig meat; duck eggs; vegetables and fruits. We are building relationships with potential customers and will sell directly to individuals rather than have a shop or market stall.

We will also explore after school clubs/activity days which will provide a small additional income.

In summary:

- Finish clearing - develop overall plan
- Pigs (6 weaners) - fatten to pork weight; clear/till the land; interest for visitors;
- Ducks (6 Indian Runners or Khaki Campbells) - eggs; slug control
- Polytunnel 1 - convert a derelict greenhouse into a polytunnel for use as our nursery for raising seedlings safe from the ravages of the local slug population
- Polytunnel 2 - install a new polytunnel on land freshly tilled by the pigs for development of produce suited to warmer conditions and also to provide winter food.
- Toilets/handwash - convert roofless outhouse into off-grid composting toilets and handwash facilities.
- Irrigation - install solar powered pump to move spring water to the highest point of our property, providing gravity-fed irrigation.
- Wind-break - some areas of the site remain exposed to prevalent winds and we hope to plant appropriately to provide cover.

Structure, Governance and Management

The farm is a multi-stakeholder co-operative registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and was formed on 22nd July 2013. It is governed by its Rules.

Lease of the land

Our access to the land is secured by a 7-year rent-free Farm Business Tenancy Agreement. A 7-year term was preferred by the landlords as it is the longest term that is exempt from stamp duty under current legislation. The owners of the land are very supportive of the co-operative and have informally indicated that they intend to support the farm for the long-term. They have also been along and volunteered their time and have made financial contributions to help provide materials for the work already done.

Directors

The directors who served throughout the period are listed on page 2. The existing board takes responsibility to recruit and appoint new directors.

⁷ <http://www.chances4change.org.uk/southampton/>

Management/Staffing

The day to day operation of the farm is delegated to Richard Pitt who has taken on the voluntary role of Project Manager. He has been working on farm business for 4 days each week since April 2014.

The four directors are in frequent contact regards the development of the site and the growth of the co-operative.

Members

We have not been focussing on developing our member base this year - the main emphasis has been on clearing the land and making the site amenable for visitors/helpers. Even so, two local residents have seen what we are doing and asked to become members. They have both been a great encouragement to us, bringing enthusiasm, commitment and volunteering their help regularly on the farm.

Social enterprise

The farm has been set up as a social enterprise. This means we are not looking to fund our costs by seeking grants. We are expecting to be economically sustainable by raising income from produce, from offering our services to other agencies and from on-site activities such as holiday clubs.

We understand that it will take some time for our site to be developed and our food production systems to get up to speed. Hence we have relied upon voluntary work and management in this our first year.

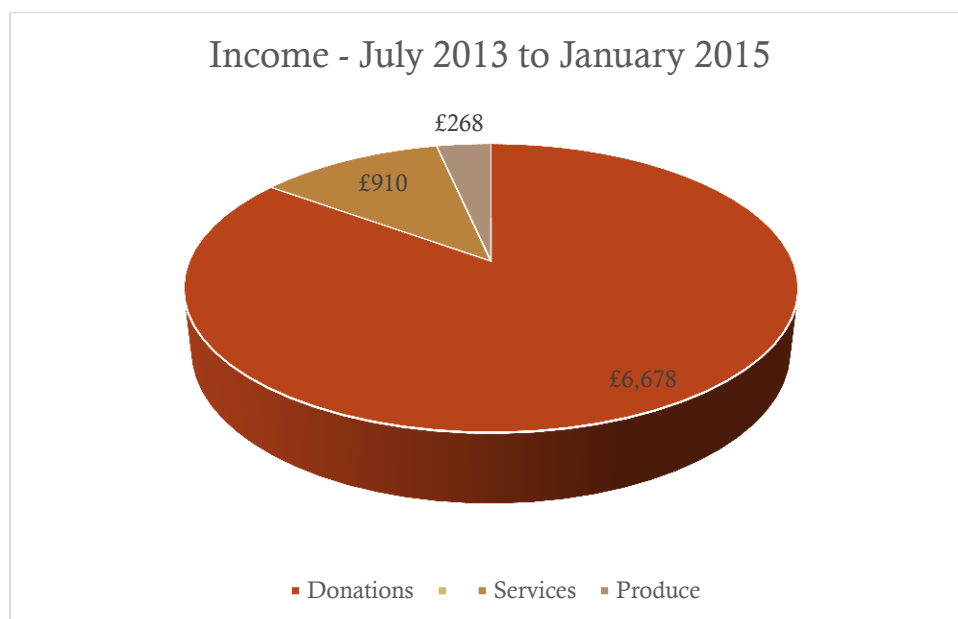
As we enter our second year we are looking to begin developing income streams, even if they are small to begin with.

Finances

Our unaudited financial statements for the period are presented in Appendix 1. Here we explain how we have been funded so far, and what we have invested in.

Income

The distribution of income for our first year was as follows:



The principal funding source for the farm in this first year has been donations from individuals - amounting to 85% of all income.

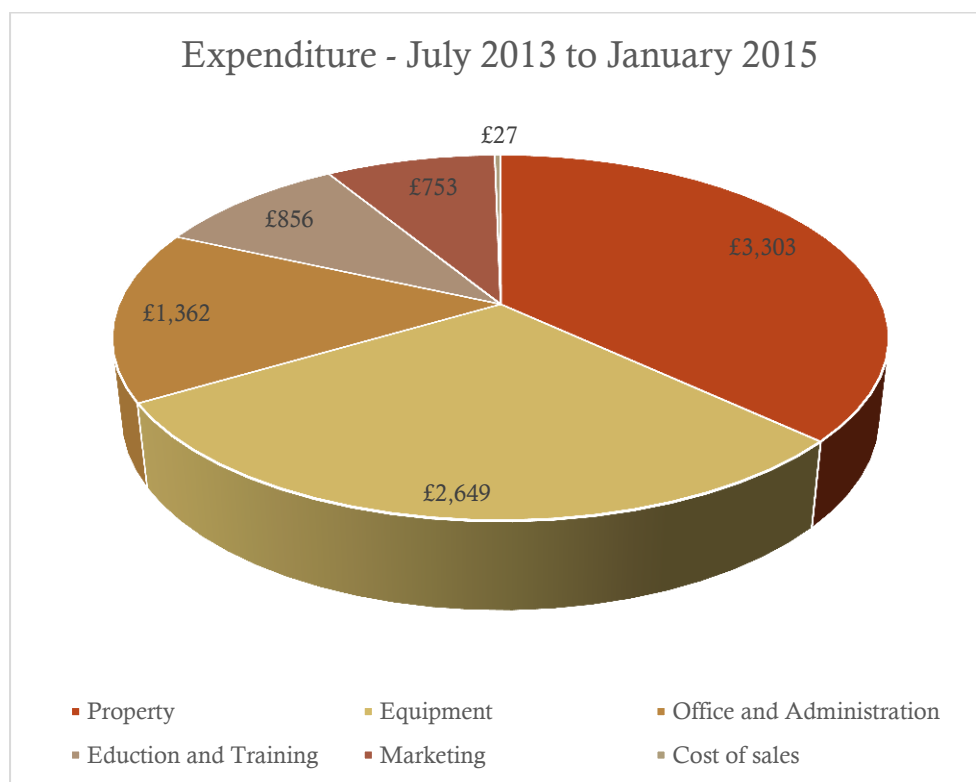
We have also received significant income through providing services. We have been able to use our newly-gained knowledge and skills to design an allotment for a local agency (Chances4Change⁸) who provide healthy activities for members of the community. There is potential for more of this kind of work in the future.

The remaining income (3%) was deposits for pork meat. We are planning to raise 6 weaners for pork meat from February onwards. This has generated considerable interest. Our members and future customers are willing to put down deposits in anticipation. This bodes well for our direct relationship with customers.

We received a further £2,000 in withdrawable share capital⁹. This is not classed as income, but this mechanism inherent in co-operative rules has allowed us to commence working without the need for grant funding or external loans.

Investment

This figure shows our expenditure by category:



We have invested in each category as follows:

- property - making buildings safe; irrigation; planting trees and hedges; removal of asbestos
- equipment - purchasing tools; hiring plant for site clearance tasks
- office and administration - insurance; preparation of accounts;

⁸ <http://www.chances4change.org.uk/southampton/>

⁹ Withdrawable share capital may be withdrawn by Members upon giving three months' notice to the Cooperative. The Board retains sole discretion to return money paid for them and can suspend withdrawal.

- education and training - we are building up a library of books and DVDs; we sent our farm manager on a scything and grassland management course
- marketing- we have a time lapse camera, a wildlife camera and a regular camera to help us tell the story of the development of the farm; we have a web site and social media presence to help us keep connected with our community - 200 followers on Facebook and 30 on Twitter.

Future income streams

This year we are developing a range of income streams:

- produce: vegetables, fruits, pork, duck eggs, chickens eggs, rabbits, geese
- services: running a weekly allotment session
- on-site: clubs and activities

Final words

Thank you for reading this far, and for your support for the farm.

We are very excited as we look ahead to the next year and beyond.

Signed by order of the directors



DAVID BARCLAY

Chair of the Board of Directors

Date: 14.04.15

APPENDIX 1

UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 31ST JANUARY 2015

The directors present the financial statements of the farm set out on pages 11 to 13. They have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 and comply with the governing document and applicable laws and regulations.

Income and Expenditure Account

For the period 22nd July 2013 TO 31st January 2015

	Notes	£
Turnover		1,178
Cost of sales		<u>27</u>
Gross profit		<u>1,151</u>
Overheads		
Property		3,303
Equipment		2,648
Office and administration		1,362
Education and training		856
Marketing		<u>753</u>
		<u>8,922</u>
		(7,771)
Other operating income		<u>6,678</u>
Operating loss	2	<u>(1,093)</u>

There are no other gains or losses apart from those recognised above.

All transactions derive from the continuing activities of the farm.

The notes on page 13 form an integral part of these financial statements

Balance Sheet

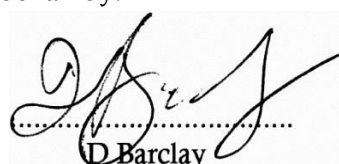
31st January 2015

	Notes	£	£
Current Assets			
Debtors	3	785	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>668</u>	
			1,453
Creditors:			
Amounts falling due within one year	4	<u>(540)</u>	
			<u>913</u>
Net Assets			
Represented by:			
Share Capital	5		
Members shares		6	
Withdrawable share capital		<u>2,000</u>	
			2,006
Reserves			
Profit and loss account	6	<u>(1,093)</u>	
			<u>913</u>

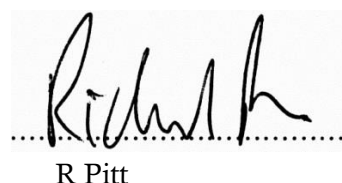
The members have not required the farm to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the period ended 31st January 2015

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Directors on 14th April 2015 and were signed on its behalf by:



D. Barclay



R Pitt

The notes on page 13 form an integral part of these financial statements

Notes to the financial statements for the period 22nd July 2013 to 31st January 2015

1 Accounting policies

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

Turnover

Turnover represents the sale of produce and services.

2 Operating loss

The operating loss is stated after charging:

	2015
	£
Accountant's remuneration	<u>540</u>

3 Debtors

	2015
	£
Operational debtors	<u>785</u>

4 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2015
	£
Other creditors and accruals	<u>540</u>

5 Share capital

			2015
	Nominal Value	Number	£
Members Shares	£1	6	6
Withdrawable share capital	£1	2000	<u>2,000</u>
			<u>2,006</u>

Withdrawable share capital may be withdrawn by Members upon giving three months' notice to the Co-operative. The Board retains sole discretion to return money paid for them and can suspend withdrawal.

6 Reserves

	Profit and loss account
	£
At 22nd July 2013	-
Deficit for the period	<u>(1,093)</u>
At 31st January 2015	<u>(1,093)</u>