

# Tam O'Shanter Times

Autumn 2011

Issue 56

## Fund-raising for the future

We ask for your support this autumn, this popular attraction faces serious challenges. Limited staffing means visitors might see changes in the future. Numbers of young volunteers and those needing support have already had to be cut. The farm is usually open every day, but hours might have to be reduced.

2011 is the farm's 25th anniversary. People have been enjoying it, with free admission, since the 1980s. Now is the time to rally round and raise money for future staffing. We need to increase the farm's income to support additional staffing, so it can fulfil its objectives to provide education and recreation. Most grants fund specific activities eg storytelling; they don't support general staffing. Without that, the farm can't function properly and achieve its full potential.

Admission to the farm has always been free and we would like this to continue, but funds for increased future staffing must be raised somehow. People put money in the donation boxes, for which we are very grateful, and the gift shop opens when volunteers are available, but we need to increase our fund-raising efforts considerably and develop a long-term strategy to keep the farm open. Trustees, Friends and other helpers are working on ways to steer the farm safely into the future. We hope supporters throughout Wirral will rally round and help it to flourish in the years ahead.

Holding large 'fun day' events at the farm is enjoyable for visitors, but causes problems. The events create extra work for staff; parking can be an issue, and events held in grazing fields damage the grass, which is in short supply on such a small farm. This is why we are using this issue to suggest fund-raising ideas that can be carried out anywhere, for the good of the farm but not necessarily on the farm.

Read on for ideas of all sizes; every little helps. Why not have a go!



Individuals can:

- Take part in events eg the Wirral Coastal Walk, in aid of the farm.
- Volunteer to staff the farm gift shop for a couple of hours a week.
- Make cakes or other snacks to sell to friends/workmates.
- Knit or sew small craft items to sell in farm gift shop.
- Sell plants or crafts in aid of the farm.
- Run a coffee morning social/ bring and buy sale in your local area.
- Take a table at an attic/car boot sale if you are having a clear-out.
- Sell things on eBay and share the proceeds with the farm

Groups/clubs/pubs can:

- Hold an event in aid of the farm - race night, themed fancy dress, bingo, quiz, raffle, hotpot supper, soup 'n sandwich lunch, strawberry tea, treasure hunt etc.

*continued over*

- A club could donate use of a venue with parking facilities for the Friends of the Farm to hold an event, to protect the farm's scarce grazing land.
- Hold a 'knit-a-thon'/'sew-a-thon' and make small animals/craft items to sell
- Run an attic sale, jumble sale, book sale, plant stall, tombola etc.
- School/nursery classes could have a '£1 dress-up' day as for Red Nose Day.
- Collect a lot of stuff together (someone with space in a garage would be needed!) and book to run the charity shop in Seaview Road, Wallasey for a week.
- Schools could adopt the farm as their chosen charity for a month, a term or a year.

This is not an exhaustive list, we hope it will give you some ideas to start you off.

Some of the ideas are quick and simple, some need advance organisation and are more suited to a group approach. There is no deadline for this fund-raising initiative; the farm will need steady support from the

communities it serves for the foreseeable future.

If you would like a poster template to show your support for the farm when publicising your event, email: [jan\\_greasby@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:jan_greasby@yahoo.co.uk) or ask at the farm for copies. Any funds raised should be delivered to John Jakeman, Farm Manager, at the farm: Boundary Road, Bidston, Wirral, CH43 7PD (Tel: 653 9332). Open 9.30-4.30 daily. Cheques payable to Wirral Urban Farm Association, please.

We are looking into registering for Gift Aid, so we can increase the value of any donations made by claiming back tax. If all goes well, April's Friends of the Farm membership renewal form will have a Gift Aid form attached; if you make a donation as well as paying your annual subscription, as many members do, please fill in the form. That will help us raise more funds for the farm.

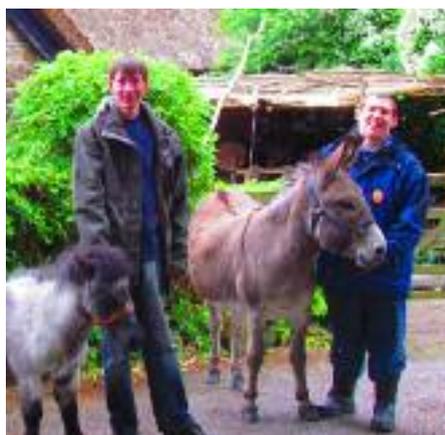
Many thanks, in advance, for anything you are able to do to help your urban farm!

**Janet Thorning**  
*Chair, Friends of the Farm*

## Volunteers at the Farm

We have always had a policy of trying to accommodate as many volunteers as possible on the farm from age 12 years upwards. As we are one of the few places on Wirral to do this, we get a lot of applications from people wanting to work outdoors doing practical work preferably with the animals. In 2010 over 220 volunteers completed over 6,600 hours of voluntary work on the farm and in past years many have received awards for their service from the Wirral Council for Voluntary service. Since January 2011 we have received over 140 applications from volunteers. We have accommodated 114 but have recently stopped taking on new volunteers and have 27 applications still pending. Our records show that approximately two thirds want to be a volunteer because they liked animals and wanted something to do. Approximately a third volunteer for experience (to further their career or education).

However, with greater demands placed on fewer staff it is increasingly difficult to maintain this policy and we are considering a



number of options to make the situation more manageable, including raising the minimum age limit to 15 years. If you have completed an application form but not heard from us yet, please bear with us.

Having lots of applications is also helpful in fundraising. Proving that there is a demand for the farm to provide these opportunities shows that there is a great need and that people really benefit by volunteering here, so if you are interested please ask for an application form.

Other ways for volunteers to help: **Staff the gift shop:** We are very grateful to Pat and ladies from the Soroptimists who work a rota manning the counter in the café but are always looking for more people to help.

*Requirements:* A friendly face and

willingness to spare a few hours now and then but particularly in the school holidays. Ability to add up a few items would be useful.

**Guide School Visits:** Most of our school groups are from 4 – 6 year olds and occur in the summer term.

*Requirements:* A friendly face and willingness to spare a few hours with a few weeks notice. A limited knowledge of the farm and farm animals is useful.

**Run incubation projects:** From February to July we run incubation projects in schools hatching out chicks and ducklings.

*Requirements:* Organisational skills required and a knowledge of chickens and preferably hatching eggs would be desirable. Teaching skills an advantage but not essential

**Become a Trustee:** The farm is run by the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust with up to 15 trustees. We are always looking for people willing to take on the responsibilities of being a Trustee and taking an active role in the management of the farm.

*Requirements:* An understanding or a willingness to learn, the role of Trustees and responsibilities under Charity Law. Business, fund raising or other professional skills would be desirable.

# Animal update

We now have an additional field for our chickens as well as the bottom field. The new field is between the two pig fields and has a spacious house which was built by Andy and his gang. The chickens are settling in well.

A silky bantam hen has successfully reared three guinea fowl chicks from eggs. The chicks will join our three adult guinea fowl and hopefully provide us with more small guinea fowl eggs for us to sell.

Farm volunteer Megan incubated one of our goose eggs which hatched on 26th May 2011 into a gosling which she has called Gareth. He is now a fine young



white and grey goose who can be seen in the duck and goose field.

Our sow Snuffles gave birth to two piglets this year, they are both black like their father Cecil who was a temporary resident at Tam O'Shanter in the spring. They were joined by four white piglets from Acorn Venture City Farm.

They are all now in the large field below the new chicken house.

Interestingly the black piglets have their ears facing downwards while the white piglets have their ears pointing up!

We have had eight Manx Loughtan lambs this year. Two have white tips to their feet, faces and tails. Unfortunately one lamb was rejected by its mother and has been successfully hand reared in Parkgate. The lambs' four mothers (or ewes) are being kept in a small holding in Eastham in order to



relieve pressure on the pastureland on the Farm.

The two Golden Guernsey goats, Mona and Marigold, continue to enjoy the holly and sycamore branches we give them in addition to their hay and goat mix.

On most Sunday afternoons between 2.30pm and 3.30pm we gather round the straw bales in the farm yard, or in the bad weather in the animal house, and stroke some rabbits and chickens. These "Pat-a-Pet" sessions continue to be popular with young and old alike.

Do come and join us!!

## Stars of TV

Earlier this year we were approached by BBC Northwest about filming a short piece on volunteering. After sounding out several of our regular volunteers about how they would feel being on TV we arranged for a day of filming with Radio Manchester's Allan Beswick. All our volunteers – Tom, Simon, Rory, Becca, and Davina were real stars for the day helping to promote the farm whilst showing the value of doing voluntary work. Fame at last, but fortunately they did not become too star struck and were quite happy to go back to mucking out Arnie, Jacko and the pigs – after signing a few autographs of course.



## National Apple Day

Once again, Wirral Wildlife and Wirral Tree Wardens joined forces on the farm on October 9th to celebrate National Apple Day, a festival launched by the charity Common Ground [www.commonground.org.uk](http://www.commonground.org.uk) in 1990. The original aim was to create a calendar custom, to highlight all the old unusual varieties of apple that were under threat from the small number of modern varieties sold in supermarkets. The festival has developed into a celebration of all things apple-related; drinks, foods, storytelling, orchards etc.

This year Wirral Wildlife's traditional apple press produced tasty juice to sample, and numerous unusual varieties of apple were on display - apples you'll never find in the supermarkets these days. If you're interested in finding out more about the different apple varieties, [www.orangepeppin.com](http://www.orangepeppin.com) lists over 600! It's important to remember how many wonderful fruits are still grown; perhaps if you have room for a fruit tree you can find something a little unusual to enjoy, and help to keep an old tradition going.

# Events and activities

## Storytelling at the Farm

Wednesday 26th October and Friday 28th October. 1.00-2.00pm and 3-4pm

Fiona Angwin tells her spell binding stories, an enticing mix of air, fire and water stories, Manx stories, native American tales, creepy tales, myths and monsters. All illustrated with the aid of puppets, they are designed for 4-11 year olds but suitable for anyone young at heart. *No need to book just turn up.*

## Carousel Ride

Tuesday October 25th and Thursday October 27th, weather permitting  
Small fairground ride suitable for young children. 80p per ride



## Halloween Head Hunt

Saturday 29th October. 2-4pm

Come if you dare, and have a go at the Tam O'Shanter Head Hunt. A short trail around the farm suitable for the whole family. *Free*

## Halloween Crafts

Sunday October 30th 1.30-4pm

Come and join in making spooky crafty things. Suitable for 5-12 year

olds. Under 8's must be accompanied. *Free*

## History Ramble

Saturday 5th November  
10 - 12.30pm (ish)

Why not come for a walk over the hill with the Ranger and learn all about its unique place in history. Due to bat hibernation there will be no access into the windmill on this walk. *Free. Sorry, no dogs please*

## Santa visits the Farm

Sunday 11th December  
12.30 - 4pm

Visit Santa in his decorated Grotto and receive a present. See Jacko in his stable with a Nativity Scene. Hot refreshments available. Supported by Port Sunlight Workplace Trust. *Numbers limited to 250 but to guarantee a present from Santa please purchase a ticket for £3.50 in advance from the Gift Shop or Rangers Office, though some should be available on the day. Tickets on sale from 1st December*

## New Year Stroll

Wednesday 4th January  
12 - 1.30pm

A gentle stroll and chat with the Ranger to work off some of the Christmas excesses blow away those cobwebs and gear up for a new year. *Free*

## Feed the birds

Saturday 11th February.  
1.00-2.00pm and 3-4pm

Come and create some recycled bird feeders using found materials mixed with lard and seed. *Free*

## Thanks to:

Officers from Laird Street Police who gamely went into the stocks at the Community Roadshow here in July, duly raising £21.80 for the farm whilst 'enjoying' having wet sponges thrown at them.

All the ladies from the Soroptimist International Club Wallasey for their continued support with the Gift Shop on Sundays and school holidays

Bryan Jackson ACMA (CEJ Accounts Ltd) for his accountancy work

Linda Passey for carrying on where she left off

Generous donations from Mr Horrocks and Patrick Downey

Eve, Ged & family, and Mrs Cullen for their generous donations in memory of Edith Orrell

**Friends of the Farm** is the working name of the Wirral Urban Farm Association (Charity number 515789) based at: Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm Boundary Road Bidston, Wirral CH43 7PD Tel: 0151 653 9332 Fax: 0151 652 4236 Email: [tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk)

For further information about the farm and past history look at our

old newsletters on the website. [www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk](http://www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk)

## Membership

£5/address/year due on the 1st April. New members joining after January 1st will not be due for renewal until April the following year. If a membership form has been included with your newsletter then you are due for renewal. Please make cheques payable to: Wirral Urban Farm Association. You will

receive 3 newsletters per year, an invitation to the AGM and the opportunity to become more involved by joining the committee. We do appreciate donations either through the box in the Animal House or with your subscription.

