

Seasons Greetings from Road Farm Countryways

Like many, this year has certainly been quite different for us at the farm. Thanks to all the delightful people who come to Road Farm Countryways and those who support us. This year we've adapted, learnt new skills ourselves and created new services to help share Road Farm with others. Our Farm Helpers, Countrymen, Volunteers, Directors, Staff, Scout groups, School groups, D of E and work experience students, people and companies who donate their time, resources and give advice, Duncan and our fabulous families and of course Farmer David and all the animals – we thank you all and wish you a happy and healthy new year. It truly is a team effort!

Pre-Covid visits:

- We had regular weekly visits from 10 young adults in the area with a variety of learning and communication special needs.
- We continued working with the wonderful Kiteridge School (for the 5th year running), and with Talkback who support secondary and college students with learning difficulties.
- We employed our first staff member!
- We hosted our fortnightly Countrymen Group. 12 men with a background or interest in farming and the countryside. Thanks to McCarthy & Stone for their donation to support the running of our group.
- Action 4 Youth brought 3 groups of secondary school students here to see the farm, discover more about careers in the countryside and experience hands-on-cooking and even meat preparation!
- Our Farm Helpers helped scatter wild bird seed to encourage farmland birds and bird ringing project in the Chilterns Farm Cluster Group area.

Then the pandemic took it's grasp on the world & care farming turned digital!

- Initially all visits and volunteering stopped! Very quiet. At last no helicopters overhead! But the animals missed everyone.
- Some farm helpers accessed the farm through Zoom.
- Our friends at Effortless Motion Media lent us a Go Pro then edited a little 'Missing You' film for our website and YouTube.
- Steadily, farm helpers returned in Covid-safe numbers to lift their wellbeing, (and ours!) with hygiene and social distancing practices firmly in place.
- We introduced Covid-safety measures to ensure everyone's safety. Our toilet and handwashing facilities have been a vital part of giving confidence in hygiene and Coronavirus safety.

Keep your donkey distance!



Social distancing donkeys



Countrymen building bird box



Make a Difference Award win!



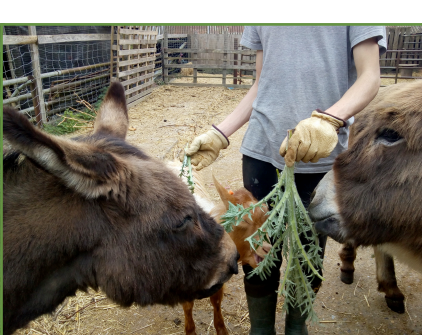
Farm Helper's handywork



Golden Guernsey billy Kid



2 of the 7 Kids



Farm helper feeding donkeys



Tent in the Orchard



Social distanced care farming

- To help keep our Countrymen connected with farm life, we developed an Outreach Initiative, prompted by Countrymen UK thanks to some Lottery funding they had received. We sent out care packs, made keeping in touch calls and provided quizzes, newsletters and farm materials to motivate and stimulate. Funding enabled us to employ amazing Emily part-time.
- In September we had a surprise visit from BBC Three Counties Radio as we were awarded the Make a Difference Award for Social Care, they even had a video message from Charlotte Smith, BBC Radio 4 Countryfile presenter!
- We witnessed the birth of 7 kids in the Spring including a lovely Golden Guernsey billy kid who now lives in Norfolk. Morning, his mother, produced pints and pints of milk which we turned into delicious cheese, ice cream and condensed milk.
- We welcomed a new rafter of turkeys from Peachcroft Farm in August, as we sadly lost our previous flock to the fox. Thanks also to Ridgepoint and Gallagher UK for helping us with some fencing needs.
- Thanks to the wonders of modern technology we were part of the Greatest Online Agricultural Show (May) and Farm Sunday (June).
- To coincide with the Chilterns Celebration and Walking Festival we hosted nature walks across the farm and ran a chutney making workshop.
- We installed special wildlife and habitat signs in our fields, sponsored by the Chalk, Cherries and Chairs project.
- Local Scout groups from Lee Common and Halton enjoyed completing a challenging night orienteering course post-lockdown in small groups of less than 6. Another of Duncan's skills!
- Wendy went back to the classroom and learnt about zoopharmacognosy for animals. Thank you to Joseph Flach & Sons who kindly donated some herbs to help with Shankydd's asthma and our animal staff health!
- Our Tent in the Orchard project re-purposed the army mess tent as a flexible space to help those stressed or affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thank you to the Clare Foundation, The Councillors Fund and Fieldguard for contributing towards this project.
- Recently we became the proud owners of a polytunnel, so more options for activity and learning!
- In addition to animal and land management, our farm helpers sawed, hammered, sanded, polished, turned, split, oiled or painted numerous wooden items, in doing so learning skills and growing in confidence. They even foraged for foliage for 15 Christmas wreaths!

Do please contact us if you'd like any more information or if you have time and skills which you could share with us. Thank you so much for your interest and support, it makes such a difference and enables many local lives to find more purpose, health and happiness.

***Wishing you a wonderful Christmas & New Year
With best wishes from All of us at Countryways***