



A Farm fit for the future

Annual Report 2020/21

Chair of Management Committee

Angela Raffle

Management Committee Members

Maddie Dunn
John Christensen
Claire Bloor
David Whittaker
Annie Price
Masuyo Newman
Acomo Oloya
Nicky Spear
Ben Newton
Emily Wilson
Shreyas Janivar (until Jan 2020)
Esther Giles (until Feb 2020)

Key Personnel (March 2020)

Managing Director	Ped Asgarian (until July 2020), Kim Brooks (from August 2020)
Finance & HR Manager	Kim Brooks (until July 2020), Sam Quinlan (from June 2020)
Buyer & Commercial Manager	Jake Cheesman
Head Grower	John English
Communications Manager	Ian Weatherseed (until January 2021), Tom Richardson (from January 2021)
Communities & Partnerships Manager	Hatty Richards
Warehouse Manager	Atanas Sharkov
Community Farmer	Ian Sumpter
Customer Services	Sally Purnell

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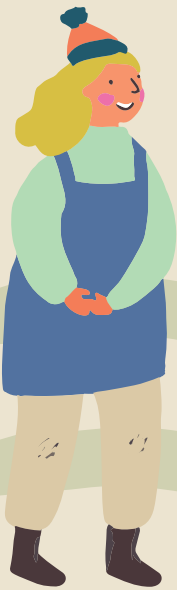
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Please note: The Financial Report provides an overview only. Detailed audited accounts can be found in a separate document within the AGM papers.

In November 2010 a share offer was launched inviting members of the public to invest in The Farm. More than 400 people responded and raised £126,000.

In March 2011, The Community Farm became a reality.

Welcome to The Community Farm's Annual Report for 2020/21



In April 2011 The Community Farm came into being, which means we are now ten years old!

Back then we had worked tirelessly for well over a year to prepare, plan and legally register the organisation. Through our Community Share Offer, we had issued written shares to more than 400 wonderful people who had the kindness and vision to put money in with no expectation of financial return. The 'steering group' of volunteers formed the original Management Committee, and became the official employer of our small group of staff.

Saturday 11 April, 2011 was a special day to celebrate. I wrote in my diary "cycled to farm via route 3, arrived 9.25. Alison [Belshaw], Phil [Haughton], John [English], Dave [Hunter], Andy [Dibben] all there. Helped meet and greet then we all planted broad beans and weeded couch grass. Soup and bread all sat on straw bales, then lots more people arrived, did farm tours, then over to Luke's [Hasell] tipis for tea and cake."

If you had asked me then what I thought The Farm might be like by 2021 I would have struggled to imagine the extent of the activities we deliver, the strength of our staff team, the many thousands of people who have been involved, and the shift we have helped create in enabling people to witness the importance – for social justice, wildlife, health, resilience and the local economy – of how food is produced. I might have thought we would have a bit less couch grass, but that would indeed have been a wildest dream.

It is worth reconfirming why we set up The Farm as a Community Benefit Society and a Community Supported Agriculture project. Primarily it was about connecting people with food and land, and about care of the living earth. The Farm's objectives, as stated in our Rules, are:

- to grow and sell organic produce within the Chew Valley and the surrounding area, including Bristol and Bath;
- to encourage community engagement in growing, consuming and learning about local, seasonal, organic produce;
- to contribute to a sustainable, resilient local economy by producing food for consumption by the local community;
- to treat all members, employees and visitors fairly, adopting the principles of the Ethical Trade Initiative base code or equivalent;
- to share knowledge and expertise to encourage adoption by others of the practices and principles of the society; and
- to provide an opportunity for public spirited people and organisations to contribute financially to the community with the expectation of a social dividend, rather than personal financial reward.

At the end of our tenth year I can honestly say that we have remained true to these objectives, and are strongly placed to do even more during the next ten years.

This report sets out achievements during 2020/21, which has been a year of evolution and strength. We have continued to welcome people safely onto the land despite Covid-19 restrictions, our veg box customer numbers have grown significantly thanks to speedy and flexible changed working patterns in response to the pandemic, our financial performance has been strong, we now pay all our staff at or above National Living Wage Foundation recommendations, our highly productive field operation now includes 30 minimum-till market garden beds – with more on the way, and our wonderful volunteer workforce includes a team devoted to wildlife monitoring and enhancements at The Farm.

As always, there are goodbyes and welcomes. Ped Asgarian, who guided us expertly and resolutely through many difficult times since 2014, moved on in July 2020 to become Director at Feeding Bristol, and Kim Brooks then took on the Managing Director role, bringing her own unique energy and forward direction. Sam Quinlan joined us as Finance Manager, Tom Richardson as Communications Manager, and we welcomed Acomo Oloya, Ben Newton, Annie Price and Emily Wilson to the Management Committee.

We remain immensely grateful to everyone who has helped The Farm during the year: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Quartet, National Lottery, Triodos Bank and our customers who have generously donated to our Covid Fund, have all provided specific grant support to assist with the worst effects of the pandemic. And as always, we thank our customers, staff, volunteers, partners, members and all of our friends.

Dr Angela E Raffle
Chair of the Management Committee

A farm fit for the future

What a year. April 2020 through to March 2021 is not likely to be a year that anybody will forget.

Globally, Covid-19 struck and impacted everyone’s lives for the entirety of the year. Nationally, the long-anticipated Brexit finally came into force in January 2021 creating further disruption for the final quarter. Whilst, at The Farm, we journeyed through even more change, with Ped, our Managing Director, moving on in August. This meant for me personally, it was time to start my first year as Managing Director.

Ped was such a big part of The Farm, stepping into his shoes was both daunting and exciting, but that aside, August 2020 was a very strange time to take over the leadership. Veg box sales had been booming for months due to Covid-19, but the country was still in lockdown, and Farm staff were still having to work from home wherever possible. That was a real challenge for a place-based organisation like The Farm, as keeping the whole team’s connection to the land and each other is vital to keeping hold of the magic and vitality.

We can look back proudly on how we handled that challenge. On average over the year, the number of veg boxes delivered was 58% higher than before Covid-19, and total sales from veg box customers up 92% on the previous financial year. This reflected an influx of more customers, and a change in behaviour as people started buying more of their weekly shop from us. This positive impact of Covid-19 on our veg box sales provided a silver lining for The Farm and those working here by giving us the opportunity to provide food and employment to our local community, at a time when the industrialised global food system broke down.

It wasn’t just our veg boxes that were affected by Covid-19 either. Hatty (our Communities & Partnerships Manager) was forced to manage a very different way of working; responding to the needs of the pandemic by changing our volunteering opportunities and seeking new ways to help others suffering disproportionately. The Covid-19 Fund was set up to allow customers to donate to The Farm, safe in the knowledge that we would use our resources, relationships and skills to provide valuable support to people and projects. We provided food to those in need, but also brought together other organisations to provide community, skills and support to help people through a difficult year. The success of these initiatives was a testament to how The Farm works, and our experience in bringing people together for the benefit of others.

It was a great year in terms of food production on our fields; despite having to work with reduced numbers of volunteers on The Farm, we surpassed the previous year’s production by a third. The Farm’s Field Team, both staff and volunteers, has a core strength of people who have worked and learned together now for several years, and The Farm is benefitting from that. As with all farming, there are of course good and bad seasons, but with each year we are refining and improving our methods to be a productive and increasingly important part of the local food system. Again we welcomed two Seasonal Field Workers to the team and are delighted that both of them have now taken their new found knowledge to other growing projects as it’s important that our fields retain a balance of improving food production, whilst giving people the opportunity to learn and take more from the fields than just the crops.

We turned another financial corner during 2020–2021, as the seven years of funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation came to an end in December 2020. This funding was provided to The Farm to help us grow whilst we found our own financial stability. Much of this funding covered wages, so it was a priority to get to a point where we were generating sufficient income to cover them ourselves. We made it! Our Community Farmer, Communities & Partnerships Manager, Volunteer Co-ordinator and Seasonal Field Workers had all been funded, but tapered from 100% down to nil over the course of the grant. To have all these people being paid for by The Farm in 2021 should not go by without proper celebration.

What struck me most over the year, however, was the strength of our team and the foundations that have been built over the life of The Farm. It was this that put us in a strong position for a tumultuous year. When Covid-19 first hit and our veg box sales soared, it was all the staff and volunteers pulling together that allowed us to meet the new demand. The van donated by two friends of The Farm from the Bath market was also vital to deliver the increased number of veg boxes – thank you, Emma and Becky!

It’s been a strange year. A year when people recognised the fragility of a corporate, global food system. A year when people recognised that community and a connection to nature provides so much more than we’ve been prepared to admit. And a year that highlighted what The Farm is capable of; taking us from struggling to make a surplus, to making a healthy one (I did say it was a strange year!).

The customers that came with the pandemic can’t all be expected to stay. Habits weren’t necessarily formed and supermarkets will be quick to entice people back. There will inevitably be a rebound as people fight for “normality”, holidays and freedom. Nevertheless, with a nation in a health crisis as well as a climate catastrophe on the horizon, more than ever, people are in need of healthy food that’s good for them and the planet. We have proven that we are a farm that is in it for the future, and I’m looking forward to continuing to lead us into that future.

Kim Brooks
Managing Director

Farming

For the 2020 growing season the planted crop area was approximately 4.5 acres (excluding the 4 polytunnels) with the rest of the growing area (another 3.5 acres) in two-year fertility building rotation. Sales of crops from the field totalled £68K (actual), compared with £63K that was predicted in the crop plan at the start of the season. (These values represent our 'internal sales' of produce direct from the field into our box scheme and our wholesale operation at our internal wholesale prices, before adding our veg box and wholesale margins).

Overall the weather was favourable for vegetable growing, with a very warm spring getting us off to a great start. The crops that did particularly well included the winter squash (over 7 tonnes harvested this year), some of the brassica (particularly the kales) and the alliums which yielded better than forecast by a significant margin. There are always some ups and downs with crop yields from year to year, and some things did less well in 2020; spinach and chards, lettuce, beetroot and fennel for example, due to problems with the annual weed burden, pests and issues with soil quality in some parts of the field. We are looking into how we can rectify these issues in future years with fertility-building green manures and better management of weeds by timely cultivation.

Our four polytunnels continue to be very productive throughout the year, contributing about 20% of our sales income.

In March 2020 we set-up a new 'minimum till' market garden area of 30 beds in the Home Field. This uses permanent, short beds of 25m length that are mulched with green waste compost, receive minimal or no cultivation with machinery and are maintained using only hand tools. The density and the succession of the plantings is more intensive and each bed is re-used 2 to 3 times over the season.

The results from the first year were very promising and showed that the system could work well for us as part of our overall field operation. However it is more intensive in terms of inputs (bought-in compost, woodchip and also the extra workload on staff and volunteers for bed preparation, hand planting and weeding), so these factors need to be carefully balanced against the potential benefits to crop yield per unit area. The best of the results from 2020 showed that with salad leaf, for example, we can achieve triple the yields per square metre that we can get from a conventional field-scale planting using the tractor, and the overall quality of the crop is also better. However the minimum till market garden approach is not best suited to all of the types and quantities of crops that we want to grow, so it will never entirely replace all of our field-scale growing and machinery.

We expanded the market garden in 2021, giving us 70 x 25 metre minimum till beds in total. This allowed us to move all of one whole 'rotation block' of crops (leafy greens, beets, legumes) out of the main field planting and entirely into the market garden, freeing up more area for field-scale crops (brassica, allium, squash) and for fertility-building leys.

The Field Team for 2020/21 comprised of Head Grower, John English (four days a week); Community Farmer, Ian Sumpter (three days a week); Giles Atkinson, Volunteer Co-ordinator (two days a week on the field), Will Warin (Field Assistant, three days a week volunteer) and Field Assistant, Atanas Sharkov (one day a week). The Seasonal Field Workers this year (2 posts, 4 days a week from May to October) were Dani Eveleigh and Charly Brouillard.

Highlights from the 2021 season to date (as of August 2021)

- The crop plan sales forecast for 2021 (set at the start of the year) is a 7% increase on what was achieved in 2020.
- The spring conditions in 2021 were far from ideal with long spells of unusually cold, wet and unsettled weather during March, April and May; this delayed and, in some cases, caused losses of our early plantings. The summer so far has been more benign and the bulk of our later crops look to be performing well so far.
- The problem of annual and perennial weeds has been felt even more than usual this year (partly due to the wet summer) and we will be looking at how we can improve our management of the soil, our cultivation and weeding methods to get more on top of this in future years.
- The small polytunnel that we used for propagation and plant-raising had to be rebuilt and extended in size in January 2021; it was at end-of-life and had been damaged by high winds. This meant us deferring our planned construction of a new fifth large polytunnel until winter 2021-22.
- Some extra investment has been needed this year to repair our tractor and our irrigation pump system to keep them operational.

John English
Head Grower

Food

The food we provide our community is important to us, and always has been. It has never just been a way to make a surplus for The Farm. It's important where it comes from, how it is farmed, how it gets to us; that it is organic, nutritious, and doesn't cost the planet unnecessarily in its production or transportation. We prioritise local, not only to reduce food miles but because local food supports local community and small-scale farming that connects people with the Earth through seasonal eating.

This year, those values and the approach of The Farm which we have worked so hard to build and maintain, were suddenly under the spotlight. The year began with rumours of a virus starting in a food market in China. By the start of the financial year, April 2020, that virus had turned into a global pandemic that emptied the supermarket shelves in the UK and sparked panic about access to food.

The fragile, long supply chains of the industrialised, global food system could no longer be relied upon. Within days, panic buying had exhausted the limited stockpile that this system provides. Lockdown and fear meant many people no longer wanted to venture out of their homes to busy supermarkets, with those braving public spaces facing long queues around street corners. Home delivery was the primary solution, but supermarket slots disappeared fast.

As the year went on, people increasingly turned to smaller, local food systems which proved more resilient due to their shorter supply chains and 2020 became the year of the veg box! At the height of the pandemic, we were feeding nearly 1,000 households a week with our veg boxes. At Christmas, we fed a further 186 families thanks to a generous donation from GDS Group.

Despite the incredible increase in demand, we proudly maintained the percentage that we bought from local farmers, increased the amount we bought directly from UK farmers further afield, and reduced our imports. We battled Brexit, working hard to retain our relationship with our small-scale farmers in Europe, assisting them with the new processes and connecting them with each other to navigate the myriad of new forms and red tape.

In amongst the chaos, we built some new relationships too. We started working with some exciting new farmers and producers including The Bristol Fungarium, Avonleigh Organics, Pitney Farm Market Garden and Purton House. And we expanded our extra groceries range, building new relationships with small-scale producers using agroecological farming methods: Fifty Trees Olive Oil, Black Bee Honey and Hodmedod's - all inspirational producers working towards a better food and farming system.

This was a terrible year in so many ways, but there was great positivity in the way the local community came together to feed itself. It is your community who will feed you in times of crisis. So many stories of strength and solidarity emerged that we were inspired to produce a collection of articles from our local food community, *Lessons from Lockdown*, a real timepiece which captured the feeling of the time.

Despite the challenges, we hope this year awakened a new audience to local food, and the opportunity that lies ahead for a better food system based on small-scale, organic farming. As we move into the next year of The Community Farm, we hope to keep feeding more of our community, and to support a wider and stronger network of farmers who are working to look after the land. As we continue to grow, our food will always have the land and organic farming at its heart.

Jake Cheesman
Buyer & Commercial Manager

Kim Brooks
Managing Director

Communities

Having people getting their hands dirty in the soil, learning about growing and making new friends at The Farm has always been central to the work we do. This year challenged our communities programme and its people like no other year in The Farm's history. Gone were shared lunches with friends and in place of normal came cancelled events, caps on numbers, and the obligation to physically distance. Though conditions were less than ideal, the spirit of The Farm shone through as people worked on the field and took part in therapeutic and educational activities in the Learning Area, sharing a joke and a kind word, even if it was without the normal creature comforts.

Overall, there were much fewer activities taking place at The Farm than in previous years, but we are proud that we managed to safely stay open for the duration of the year as a place for volunteering, learning and therapy, given the highly unusual context presented by Covid-19. In total, 242 people spent 1,138 days at The Farm.

The Covid-19 Fund

As we could not invite the number of people we would have liked to take part in The Farm's activities, we adapted our engagement strategy, setting up a customer donation fund in order to support offsite activities working with people experiencing disadvantage. Thanks to the generous donations of our customers, we were able to:

- Help organise and fund the distribution of 100 nature inspired activity boxes for children and adults with mental health problems through our partner organisations;
- Work on a project with a local catering company, Two Trees Catering, who used our roundhouse kitchen and field produce to cook 700 meals for people experiencing disadvantage within Bristol;

Within restrictions we also managed to make some progress towards developing the social, wildlife and learning spaces on our site. We've established a mini forest garden, continued beneficial planting and habitat creation in our marginal areas and, thanks to grant funding, built a large outdoor shelter next to our roundhouse so that larger groups could safely gather at The Farm and stay dry whilst adhering to social distancing guidelines.

- Provide seed funding for a Pakistani women's group to meet together at The Farm;
- Run collaborative projects to help the delivery of £20,000 worth of food hampers to families in need and £1,600 worth of food for people experiencing homelessness;
- Provide funding to another local growing operation, Incredible Edible, who required polytunnel repairs, so that they could keep feeding Bristol.

Thank you to all our customers who generously donated to The Covid-19 Fund, which remains open to support similar projects and new relationships that help us to meet our social and community ambitions, with all donations gratefully received.



Volunteering

Volunteers are at the heart of The Farm, helping us in all areas of our operations, from growing, harvesting and packing our veg, to maintaining and developing the site for the benefit of people and wildlife. As well as the much appreciated help, they are also a key part of our social fabric, bringing warmth, laughter and solidarity to our soils. We were amazed at the resilience and dedication shown by volunteers throughout this year. In 2020/21, 142 people supported our work, spending 867 days on The Farm between them. We were inspired to hear that coming to The Farm offered people valuable respite, a way to connect with friends, learn about farming and be part of our community:

‘The opportunities The Farm presents while we continue to lose other gathering places are vital for mental health and social cohesion.’

Volunteer

‘I am now much more aware of the complexities of organic farming and of fostering a wildlife friendly environment... At the end of a session at The Farm I always leave with a positive frame of mind. I have always felt very welcome at The Farm.’

Volunteer

Grow and Make

With the help of three successful funding bids, our social and therapeutic horticulture project, Grow & Make, continued throughout most of the year, forming a valuable response to the impacts of Covid-19 on people’s mental health. When restrictions allowed, these free sessions have been invaluable for the people who took part. Activities included making outdoor furniture, creating a forest garden, making herbal balms and chatting beside outdoor fires. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and everyone who attended reported a positive change in their mental health and wellbeing, along with an increase in skills and knowledge:

‘I have ongoing health problems but since starting Grow & Make I feel more positive, it fills me with hope I can carry on with similar stuff after the course ends.’

Grow & Make attendee

‘It helped me with feelings of depression and helped Covid feel more manageable.’

Grow & Make attendee

‘I feel completely different from when I arrived which is the magic of Grow & Make really.’

Grow & Make attendee

Groups on The Farm

The environmental sector is the least diverse sector within the UK so, spurred on by the Black Lives Matter movement, this year we made steps towards increasing the diversity of the people we see on our fields in the future:

- We joined a new network of green organisations within the sector, working to increase representation of the BAME community;
- We committed to working on a project bringing refugees and asylum seekers to The Farm;
- Our partner, Ecowild started a project with Pakistani women, who came to The Farm for group and family sessions to reflect, enjoy the space and learn about farming.

Though we were not able to host our normal range of visiting group activity days on the fields, the Bristol Gleaning Network visited our fields 7 times, taking a whopping 1,178kg of veg to be used for projects which supported people experiencing disadvantage.

Events

We want the land we steward to be a place where a variety of interests can be explored. Every year, we work with like-minded organisations and individuals to host a range of activities and events; from fire cooking and sushi making to willow weaving and bird walks. Due to restrictions, this year many of these activities were cancelled. However, we did host a counsellor onsite for much of the year, who held sessions with young people experiencing mental health problems. Other highlights included a local yoga teacher using the site for several outdoor yoga sessions, and a popular willow weaving natural craft event, too.



Our Partners

EcoWild

When restrictions and funding allowed, Ecowild continued to offer free courses in different nature and land-based skills which improve people’s mental health. Sessions included willow weaving, fire-cooking and mindfulness and everyone who gave feedback indicated that their life had been positively affected by taking part in activities.

"I have been feeling really overwhelmed with things in my life & attending the Lakeside Wellbeing course has helped me stop and get a better balance in my life. It has been quite nurturing and supportive."

EcoWild session attendee

"I felt my mind was less busy and I could notice the emotions behind my churning anxiety. I had such a positive experience noticing my anxiety melt away."

EcoWild session attendee

"Having the activity to look forward to each week has kept me going. I know it helps me physically and emotionally, so just knowing I will be going again is an enormous help."

EcoWild session attendee

Earthwise

Earthwise works in partnership with The Community Farm to run children’s activities and family events at The Farm with the aim of re-connecting young people with food, farming and the natural world. Because of restrictions, Earthwise were unable to run onsite activities. However, thanks to The Covid-19 Fund, The Farm were able to support Earthwise to provide educational activity boxes for children in deprived areas.

Hatty Richards
Communities & Partnerships Manager

Ian Sumpter
Community Farmer

Alice Bowley
Grow & Make Coordinator

Giles Atkins
Engagement Leader



Wildlife

The Wildlife Group is a small group of volunteers supported by The Farm's Communities team. In previous years the group had developed the Veg Shed garden and banks by the main entrance gate, contributing pollinator friendly plants from volunteers' own gardens. A monthly BeeWalk was started in 2017 providing regular data to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

In February 2020 the group commissioned an ecological report (Biodiversity Action Plan – "BAP") and this provides a main point of reference for The Farm's wildlife management. The BAP identifies the need to enhance habitat of the grassy margins and hedgerows, species rich grasslands and standing open water. It suggests planting a small area of mixed traditional fruit tree varieties on The Farm as well as wild cherry at it's edge which is good for bats and bees. Species that we wish to encourage and protect include bats; swallows; farmland birds, including barn owls and tawny owls; badgers; reptiles and amphibians; pollinators such as bees and hoverflies and other invertebrates like ground beetles. In 2019 a small mammal survey also showed there may be dormice on The Farm.

This action plan was translated into a work programme for the Wildlife Group as well as the Field Team and community partners, but by March 2020 Covid-19 put much of this voluntary work on hold. From May 2020, we were able to continue the monthly BeeWalks and, luckily, by July regular volunteers were welcomed back on The Farm under Covid safety guidance.

From this point, rather than keep the practical wildlife work on an ad hoc basis as before, the group decided to run practical wildlife volunteering sessions on a weekday morning alongside the field volunteering programme. The aim was to attract new volunteers and to build coordination between wildlife, garden areas and Field Team management. As well as some regular volunteers, the weekday sessions brought in Nature Conservation students as well those interested in developing nature-based work in their careers.

From July 2020 through the autumn and winter and into the following spring the small group of volunteers:

- Planted 200 crocus bulbs under the apple trees to provide springtime pollen and early colour;
- Made and installed bird nesting boxes in collaboration with Ecowild;
- Built nests and shelters for overwintering hedgehogs, insects, invertebrates, reptiles and small mammals;
- Cut back encroaching blackthorn and bramble from field margins, uncovering the rough grass for small mammal corridors and insect habitat;
- Planted wildflower plugs along the west hedge margins;
- Cleared bramble from the embankment near the main entrance to promote flowering plants such as primroses and cowslips;
- Maintained flower beds around the site;
- Carried out monthly BeeWalks between May and October, with 6 bumblebee species identified and 88 bumblebees counted; the data were submitted to the Bumblebee Conservation Trust's national database;
- Took part in the Big Butterfly Count and the Farmland Bird Count.

Hedgerows and field margins are a crucial wildlife habitat in an agricultural setting, so remain a key focus area for the Wildlife Group. In December 2019, in consultation with FWAG (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group), a hedgelayer, an ecologist and one member of The Wildlife Group undertook a Hedgerow and Field Margins Review. It set out a plan for ongoing maintenance of the four boundary hedgerows and margins – north, south, east and west, with a rota for cutting. The east margin hedgerow (elm and hawthorn) is particularly important as it can be seen in existence on a map from 1880! Just before lockdown on 4th March 2020, the elm section was laid, thus ensuring the elm a healthy life into the future. However, lockdown has meant that no cutting of hedgerows has taken place on some sections for 18–24 months. Therefore the Hedgerow and Field Margins Review needs updating as hedgerow growth during lockdown now makes it a challenge for volunteers to manage by hand.

In December 2020 the group also invited The Hawk and Owl Trust to visit The Farm to inspect the owl boxes which they had previously installed. One tawny owl box was due to be re-sited but as there was evidence of occupation this has been delayed. Owls have been spotted and heard on site but we remain uncertain about whether the boxes have been occupied. A good sign is that a kestrel is regularly seen over The Farm, indicating the presence of wild rodents such as field mice and voles.

As we face up to the climate and biodiversity crises, margins, hedgerows, trees, soil and other wild plants are more precious than ever. At The Farm we aim to see an increase in both abundance and range of species year on year with good land management practices. We also hope to develop surveying and monitoring techniques to measure the extent of improvement to biodiversity. This may require technical expertise from outside The Farm.

All in all, this year has continued the drive on the part of The Farm to put work into creating a biodiverse environment for growing crops which values the ecosystems that form the basis of sustainable, organic farming.

Annie Price & Sarah Pitt
on behalf of the Wildlife Group

The Community Farm 2020/21 in numbers

**10 YEARS
OF TRADING!**

4.5 ACRES IN PRODUCTION

**OVER 7 TONNES OF WINTER
SQUASH HARVESTED**

**30 MINIMUM-TILL BEDS IN
OUR NEW MARKET GARDEN**

**£69,836 OF FOOD
GROWN ON OUR FIELDS**

**1,178kg OF VEG
COLLECTED BY BRISTOL
GLEANNING NETWORK**

**43,351 VEG BOXES
SOLD OVER THE YEAR**

**A RECORD
1,104 VEG BOXES
DELIVERED IN ONE WEEK**

**121,104 EGGS SOLD
TO OUR VEG BOX CUSTOMERS,
OUR MOST POPULAR EXTRA**

**186 CHRISTMAS HAMPERS
DONATED TO FAMILIES**

**PROVIDING A ROUTE TO
MARKET FOR 43 OTHER
BRITISH FOOD PRODUCERS**

**242 PEOPLE SPENT
A TOTAL OF 1,138
DAYS ON THE FARM**

**142 VOLUNTEERS
HELPED ON THE FIELDS**

**12 GROW & MAKE
ATTENDEES SPENT 91 DAYS
ON THE FARM**

**200 NEW CROCUS
BULBS PLANTED
UNDER THE APPLE TREES**

**6 BUMBLEBEE
SPECIES IDENTIFIED**



The Covid-19 Fund

- 100 nature inspired activity boxes distributed to children and adults with mental ill health
- 700 meals provided to groups experiencing disadvantage in Bristol
- £20,000 worth of food hampers delivered to families in need
- £1,600 worth of food provided to people without a home

Financial report

As a result of the extraordinary year we have faced, the financial year ended 28th of March 2021 represented a year of financial growth and stability for The Farm, with turnover increasing by 47% to £1,346,000 (2019/2020: £916,000) resulting in a surplus on trading activities of £54,000 (compared to a £46,000 loss in the previous year) and a net surplus (after donations and grants) for the year of £90,000 (2019/2020: £5,000). (All figures have been rounded up to the nearest 1,000.)

The Farm’s underlying financial position has greatly improved in line with the profit made, being a net asset position of £130,000 compared with £39,000 in the previous year.

The silver lining of the cloud of the pandemic means that The Farm is on its way to achieving a financially robust position measured by positive net current assets (Table 4 below), and for the first time in its history has begun to build a reserve.

Summary Financial Statement of Income and Expenditure ^[1]

The final statement of income and expenditure is summarised in Table 1:

Table 1: Key Financial Indicators	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000	Percentage Change
Turnover	1,346	916	+47%
Cost of sales	(696)	(488)	+43%
Gross Profit	649	428	+52%
Gross Profit Margin	48%	47%	
Administrative expenses	(596)	(474)	+26%
Surplus/(loss) on Trading Activities	54	(46)	
Donations	28	13	
Operating profit/(loss)	82	(32)	
Net Grants	9	40	
Interest and similar items	(1)	(2)	
Surplus/(loss)	90	5	

¹ See the Detailed Income Statement on Page 17 of the Accounts

Turnover

Turnover increased by 47% compared with the previous year, largely driven by the rise in veg box sales during the height of the pandemic. Whilst our other revenue streams each experienced declines versus prior year (see table below), those activities were heavily disrupted during the year and as such we feel the results reflect very strong underlying performances.

The analysis of turnover is set out in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Turnover	2020/21 £'000	2019/20 £'000	Percentage Change
Box Sales	964	512	
Other Wholesale	291	305	
Markets/Veg Shed	84	89	
Other Turnover	6	10	
Total Sales	1,346	916	47%

Key Drivers of Financial Performance in 2020/2021

The surplus on trading activities of £54,000 which, compared to the previous year’s loss of £46,000, highlights the financial impact of the pandemic. Despite the sudden hike in demand, the Gross Profit Margin increased to 48% (versus prior year of 47%) delivering a £221,000 positive variance to our financial performance. Administrative expenses grew by 26% to £596,000 (2019/2020: £474,000), creating a £121,000 negative variance year on year. However, administrative expenses fell as a percentage of total turnover versus prior year, reflecting an excellent control of overheads in a very challenging year.

When taking donations and grants into account, the current year’s performance has improved by £85,000 versus 2019/2020.

The overall improvement in the position is analysed in Table 3:

Table 3: Improvement in Financial Performance in 2020/21 compared to previous year



Donations

The Community Farm’s Covid-19 Fund was established during the pandemic. Thanks to the generosity of our customers **£8,000** was raised with **£4,000** donated to organisations to help those affected by the pandemic with £4,000 to be carried into the following year.

Of the £27,000 Crowdfunder money raised in 2018/19, **£6,000** was carried forward into 2020/21 and **£500** was spent.

Included in The Farm’s donation income in Table 1, **£9,000** was invested in assets (the outdoor shelter) and therefore used to purchase assets not charged to expenditure within the same financial period.

Grants



School for Social Entrepreneurs

The £4,000 received was used to pay for salaries and is fully used in-year.



Esmée Fairbairn Community Award

We spent £14,611 granted in the previous financial year. This money was spent on wages for our community engagement programme and seasonal field workers. During the year we received a further sum of £9,813, which was also spent on wages for the community engagement programme and seasonal field workers.



National Lottery

We spent £500 from grants awarded in the previous year on the community garden and wildlife space project (The Learning Area). A further grant of £5,715 was received and £4,975 spent this year on the Grow & Make project, leaving £740 to be spent next year.



Quartet Community Foundation

We received £12,460 from Quartet, and used £5,059 to build the outdoor shelter, leaving a balance of £7,401 to carry into next year for our Grow & Make project.



Triodos Foundation

A £1,000 award will be carried over and used to fund our Grow & Make project next year.



Natural England

A grant of £4,860 was received and used to fund the Grow & Make and Wild Steps projects.

Monica fund

We received a donation from a private legacy of £57,281 of which £3,778 was spent on rebuilding the propagator tunnel leaving a balance of £53,503 to carry into next year.

Overall financial health

A summary Balance Sheet is set out below (Table 4) for the year ended 28th of March 2021 (prior year 29th of March 2020):

Table 4: Balance Sheet	2021 £'000	2020 £'000
Fixed Assets	98	115
Current Assets		
Stock	16	10
Debtors	29	37
Cash at Bank and in hand	183	28
Total Current Assets	228	75
Creditors	(196)	(150)
Net current assets/(liabilities)	32	(76)
Creditors: due after one year	0	0
Net Assets/ (liabilities)	130	39
Capital and Reserves		
Shares	186	185
Profit and Loss	(55)	(146)
Total Members' Funds/(Deficit)	130	39

The net assets of The Farm improved to £130,000, from £39,000 in the prior year. This has been driven principally by an increase in total current assets, offset by increases in creditors and a reduction in fixed assets.

In particular, our closing cash position has benefitted from the financial performance in the year and the receipt of several material grants that remain unspent at the year end and includes a £6,000 reserve. As previously noted, this is the first time in The Farm's history it has been able to create a reserve, and we aim to build this to £89,000 over time. We aim to invest the remaining funds in line with The Farm's strategy of continuing to operate as a resilient producer of wonderful organic produce, and as a place where our communities can come and consciously engage with land, food and wildlife through a working agroecological farm.

It should be noted that the Net Asset position of £130,000 is still less than the total share capital issued of £186,000, and The Farm's net current assets of £32,000 represents The Farm's working capital required to maintain its current operations.

Conclusion

The Farm's net worth has greatly improved in 2020/21 mainly due to the financial impacts of the pandemic. Whilst we will do all we can to continue to maintain the sales levels that drove this improvement, we are already seeing a decrease in sales as the public are encouraged to forget the importance of local, ethical food systems and to again rely on just-in-time supply chains, irrespective of long term consequences for workers, health and planet. As such we view this financial year as a one-off anomaly.

We would like to thank our local donors and those who have given so generously during a time of crisis, and finally we would like to thank our team at The Farm for their incredible hard work during an unprecedented and challenging year.

Sam Quinlan
Finance & HR Manager

Ben Newton
Management Committee member

The Community Farm
Denny Lane
Chew Magna
Bristol
BS40 8SZ

t 01225 913 097
e farming@thecommunityfarm.co.uk
www.thecommunityfarm.com



@TheCommunityFarm



@thecommunityfarm

