



Annual Report 2024/25

Chair of Management Committee

Ben Newton

Management Committee Members

Angela Raffle
Jason Craig
Rachel Hammond
Naomi Kent
David Whittaker
Selena Gray (resigned November 2024)
Masuyo Newman (resigned November 2024)
Annie Price (resigned November 2024)
Phoebe Ruxton (resigned November 2024)
Claire Bloor (resigned January 2025)

Senior Staff Members

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|
| Managing Director | Kim Brooks |
| Assistant Managing Director | Tom Richardson |
| Food and Farming Manager | John Miller |
| Finance Manager | Julian Gren |
| Warehouse Manager | Atanas Sharkov |

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Please note: The Financial Summary provides an overview only. Detailed audited accounts are available via our website.

An introduction to The Community Farm from the Managing Director and Chair

These pages are overflowing with the impact The Farm has made this year. More than 3,500 people took part in supported activities, connected with the land, and became part of something bigger.

Looking back, this year has been one of remarkable transformation, with the rhythm of the seasons shaping our story.

Spring brought renewal with Kim's return from maternity leave. In her absence, the staff, management committee, and volunteers held everything together, for which we are deeply grateful.

Summer was, as ever, a time of head-down, hands-on work. The team harvested the land's abundance whilst welcoming thousands of people to work alongside them. Behind the scenes, the senior team began reviewing our long-term plans, planting seeds for the future.

Autumn saw falling leaves, as well as staff leavers. Daisy (Community & Partnership Manager), Emmy (Engagement Leader), and Ian (Community Farmer) all moved on from The Farm, taking with them a combined 21 years of connection to this place. Ian and Emmy had a gift for weaving people and farming together, welcoming others with warmth, helping them discover new skills and friendships. If you listen closely, you might still hear Ian's laugh echoing across the fields.

Autumn also brought fresh perspectives. We invited our community to help shape The Farm's future, and the response was energising with fantastic ideas, engagement, and belief in what we do. It was a powerful reminder of our identity and our importance in the local area. Tom, having returned from parental leave, also stepped into a new role as Assistant Managing Director, further strengthening the team.

Winter was a time to pause and plan. Recruitment slowed as we took time to embed the insights from our consultation into new roles. From this emerged a new structure with two distinct teams: 'Land Based' and 'Food Distribution' and with community at the core of both. Tom now leads the Land Based Team, while Kim heads up Food Distribution. We also welcomed Mhairi, our new Community Farmer, whose energy and connections are already helping diverse groups take root at The Farm.

Amidst all this change, our impact continued to grow. We harvested more produce, worked with more people, and increased our sales. But with that growth came rising costs, especially wages, as we remain committed to paying the Real Living Wage and sustaining projects despite declining grant income.

This presents a real challenge. We must find ways to stabilise our finances. Yet the message from our community is clear: keep going, don't stop, do more.

So we end with heartfelt thanks to all our supporters, financial and otherwise. You are our community. You are the heart of The Farm.

Kim Brooks
Managing Director

Ben Newton
Chair of the Management Committee



Our Impact Highlights

Farming

More than £86,000 of nutritious crops grown for local people.



1,200 volunteer days spent on our fields.



11 different Community Groups brought diverse groups including refugees & asylum seekers; adults not in education, employment or training; and local school children.



More than 3,500 visitors to the farm last year.

Wildlife

90 new trees planted in our hedgerows.



Hundreds of native bulbs planted.



Rare Little Owls heard at The Farm.



Food

Provided a route to market for more than 25 South West food producers.



Organic produce delivered to an average of 589 customers per week.



Our subsidy scheme donated £17,000+ of fresh produce to more than 70 households, with the majority reporting cooking more, eating better, and feeling healthier as a result.



250 free Christmas hampers delivered to households facing food insecurity.



Consulting with our community

This year at The Farm we reviewed our long-term plans, recognising that we need to constantly evolve to meet the changing needs of our community, as well as the needs of the food system to best serve local people, other food producers, wildlife and the climate.

As part of this process, we spoke with many people in our community including staff, volunteers, customers, suppliers, donors, shareholders, community groups, course attendees and friends of The Farm. This work culminated in September, when we welcomed more than 60 people into our warehouse for two half day consultations.



Three key takeaways from our community consultation:

1. Inclusivity

"Our responsibility is to stay broad and funnel people into the movement"

As an organisation set up to welcome people onto the land, we should aim to maintain mass market appeal, as well as actively ensuring that we are as inclusive as possible in what we do.

Whilst we recognise that there are systemic barriers to lots of people getting involved (inc. financial and feeling excluded from spaces like ours), looking to actively address these barriers through working in partnership with other organisations should remain a priority.

Exploring different ways of distributing food to increase accessibility and providing more variety in the length, time and type of activities on the land could help us improve in this area.

2. Food

"We demonstrate a whole alternative food system here, except for the eating, which is the most motivating bit"

There was lots of discussion about how, at The Farm, 'the eating is missing'. Many people spoke about the strength of food in bringing people together and creating a sense of community and belonging. There was also lots of talk about the role that tasting freshly cooked, organic food can have in encouraging people to reconsider the food they buy, based on where and how it was grown.

Finding more opportunities to cook and share food on the land, from what we have grown together, was strongly supported.

3. Relationships

"How can we strengthen the feeling of community? The emotional connection, loyalty, in-this-together, all contributing in different ways, emotionally invested - sense of belonging"

There is (and always will be) more we could do to grow the sense of community around the organisation. Many of our supporters are keen to find new ways to build connections between diverse people in the local area, through the farm. Both for the benefit of the people involved, and as a way of getting more people to support a better food system.

Suggestions included bringing people together around shared meals; providing more ways for people to share recipes and lifts to the farm; and creating more physical spaces on the land for people to interact with each other.

Summarising our long-term thinking

In addition to integrating these ideas into our immediate plans and operations, this input from our community has also resulted in a new mission for The Farm:

We want to get more people enjoying the benefits of a better food system
so that local people and nature nourish each other and flourish together.

And three new core aims:

1. Grow community

Develop long-term relationships with and between people in our local area.

To bring more people together to share the joy of a better food system and all the benefits that it brings. That way we can ensure we lose as few people as possible, by going beyond a financial relationship and encouraging people into our community, long-term.



2. Connect food, farming and wildlife

Encourage cross-pollination between different groups in our community.

To recognise that all of these things are vital to a thriving food system and that we are uniquely placed to demonstrate these connections to our community as an organic, wildlife-friendly farm and retailer that welcomes people onto the land.



3. Enable long-term change

Supporting people in establishing new behaviours around better food.

To recognise that despite good intentions, food is cultural and habits are hard to shift so we need to support people to keep to the changes they choose to make. We can inspire people to make lasting, positive change by sharing joyful time on the land and encouraging them to taste the best fresh, organic produce.



Possible new projects

We are now exploring possible new projects to take on at The Farm. These are just seeds of ideas at this stage but watch this space!

- Building a new community kitchen
- Website redevelopment to encourage more people onto the land, more often
- Getting more food into our community through markets and hubs
- Reaching new people and groups through a stronger focus on wildlife
- Exploring a new farming project which builds strength and diversity into our operations



Farming

We achieved £86,000 in crop sales this year – a 6% increase year-on-year, with weather playing a key role. Conditions were generally mild, with cool weather year-round, and only one notable cold snap in January.

Brassicas thrived, generating £26,500 in sales, a 28% increase. In contrast, squash crops struggled, with just 2.2 tonnes harvested as slugs destroyed 95% of our first sowings, a 70% decrease from the average yield over the past five seasons.

Our new polytunnel, funded by Mendip Hills National Landscape, was a hugely welcome addition, enabling a 35% increase in tunnel crop sales.

Our community contributed an incredible 1,200 volunteer days to our farming operation, with Saturday Community Farm Days regularly drawing 20–30 people to support seasonal harvests and our Volunteer Celebration Day attracting more than 50 people.

A volunteer survey revealed our volunteers' top three motivations:

- 1 Feeling part of a community
- 2 Enjoying the environment
- 3 Using time and skills meaningfully



Volunteers praised The Farm's inclusive, caring culture, its role in sustainable food production and wildlife conservation, and the chance to learn something new with each visit.

“

As an autistic person, I just need this place, as soon as I first came here and felt how relaxed and welcoming it was, I knew I had to keep coming. I am trying to make changes to my work so I can be here more often, I need it, it calms me. It means so much to me already. It's a place where you can come and feel welcomed to just be yourself, whatever is going on for you that day.

– Volunteer

”



“

I was previously isolated and suffering from poor health. I have found a new love for gardening and food growing, and made longterm friendships.

– Volunteer

”

11 different Community Groups joined us for hands-on learning and nature connection on the land. Highlights included Aidbox Community bringing refugees and asylum seekers for multiple sessions and our partnership with Chew Valley School which flourished with a full year of activity, too.

“

[The Farm's] efforts play a significant role in enhancing the mental and physical well-being of our clients. We truly cherish our time spent there.

– Aidbox Community



”

During term-time, Earthwise brought primary school groups for 20 visits, benefiting nearly 100 children with land-based learning and environmental engagement.



“

Its a wonderful place to learn how to grow food while also supporting wildlife and the environment.

– Volunteer

”



Wildlife

This year, our work began at ground level, managing margins on a rotational basis: half were cut twice to encourage wildflowers, and half once to promote tussocks and grasses—key habitats for small mammals and insects. We also planted native bulbs (daffodils and tulips), with plans to expand this initiative for more seasonal colour and ecological value.

Our Community Farmers planted 90 trees to replace elms lost to Dutch elm disease in our hedgerows. Whilst no hedgelaying occurred this year, the benefits of 2023's winter work were clear, with vibrant ecosystems and a thriving badger sett showing how mature hedgerows can flourish without annual cutting. Thanks to Avon Wildlife Trust and FWAG for their support and advice.

Despite our efforts, pollinator species faced enormous challenges due to cold, wet weather from April to June, a critical period in their lifecycle. Queen bumblebees and butterflies struggled, as confirmed by both our monitoring and national data. In August 2024, peak bumblebee counts reached only 40 in one hour, compared to 92 in 2023. Butterfly numbers also declined, with a peak of 75 versus 242 the previous year. This concerning trend was echoed nationally, raising alarms among specialists.



Looking skyward, the changing seasons brought remarkable wildlife activity. Autumn migration saw ospreys stopping at Chew Valley Lake, large numbers of geese passing overhead, and swallows and reed warblers departing south. On The Farm, rare Little Owls were heard during one of our Owl Prowls.

Our programme of wildlife surveying has proven invaluable this year, not only for ecological insight but also for community engagement, attracting new volunteers who often become regular contributors to The Farm.

The Wild Steps wellbeing programme continues to play a central role in caring for wildlife on The Farm, however this year we have made a concerted effort to encourage weekday volunteers and corporate groups into the margins, working to explore the connections between organic farming and wildlife.



I've benefited immensely from being involved in the farm! I have felt connected to nature, to people, to the land and to the growing cycle and I have learnt so much. I am less isolated, more confident, more hopeful about the future and much healthier thanks to TCF. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

– Wild Steps course attendee

Food

14% of the food we sold this year came from our own fields—a 1% decrease from last year. A 5% shift from local to UK wholesalers and imports likely reflects the cold growing season, though we were still able to support more than 25 South West producers.

We delivered fresh, organic produce to an average of 589 customers per week, consistent with last year. Customer retention improved with nearly 50% of new customers staying with us for at least three months, and two-thirds of all customers still ordering after a full year.

Wholesale deliveries made up around a quarter of our food sales income, with 65 restaurants, cafés, retailers, and veg box schemes choosing to support local and organic food through us.

I've loved having this veg box delivery and the element of surprise every time it's on the doorstep! You give me things I'd never have bought myself from the supermarket and I've loved making soups and cooking up new meals with the produce.

— Go Organic customer



Our Go Organic subsidy scheme donated £17,000+ of fresh produce to 72 households, with 40 placing regular orders. Funded by the Household Support Fund and customer contributions, the scheme offered 50% off organic food deliveries.

Go Organic subsidy scheme survey results showed:

- 80% felt organic food was more accessible
- 67% felt they were supporting the environment
- 60% felt their health improved
- 53% cooked more from scratch and ate more fresh produce

In the festive period, with £15,000 from Feeding Bristol, we continued our partnership with Bristol City Council's Families in Focus, delivering 250 free hampers to households facing food insecurity. Customer donations also raised £663 for Caring in Bristol.

Thank you so much for our hamper. We didn't have money... Thanks to you, we had a Christmas dinner.

— Christmas hamper recipient

I wanted to say thank you for the Go Organic scheme - I'm eating so much better and really look forward to my box each week.

— Go Organic customer

As part of our annual veg box campaign, we published research showing that a month of veg boxes:

- Enrich your diet with 26 different organic vegetables
- Help more than 75 people benefit from spending time in nature, growing the food
- Sustain 15 butterfly species which visit our farm
- Support 7 climate and wildlife-friendly, British farms

The campaign appeared in Bristol 24/7, Voice publications, and the national Natural Brands magazine, and trialled a 'Carrot Club' discount scheme, offering 10% off for a year. It attracted 70+ new registrations from a modest spend.



I just wanted to say a huge thank you for my box of vegetables! It's fantastic and I'm so grateful for the 50% off, as I have chronic fatigue syndrome and currently can't work, so having affordable organic food is amazing and exactly what I need as I work on my recovery!

— Go Organic customer



“

Fantastic. It costs more than supermarket veg, but the produce lasts longer and is better for our health. – Go Organic customer

”

Following our autumn community consultation, we also looked to embrace more opportunities to cook and share food on the land. Groups prepared meals using fresh harvests—soups, pizzas, flatbreads, and dips—deepening connections to seasonal eating and organic produce.

Square Food Foundation led popular harvest-and-cook sessions via their How to Be a Chef programme. Trigger Productions hosted a feasting event for 40 people, including refugees, asylum seekers, local residents, and creative facilitators—showcasing the power of shared meals to unite diverse communities.

“

We get really excited each week about receiving the veg box and love thinking creatively about what to cook.

– Go Organic customer

”



“

One of my most valued experiences was the eating together as a group and what that meant to me. I loved the sense of sharing stories round the table and the warmth of the shared experience. To be able to eat socially in a group was so uplifting for me. I have picked up my seasonal cookbook and am walking to my local greengrocers to buy and cook seasonal food with such added confidence. I am experimenting and hope to keep going. This has made such a difference. Thank you to everyone involved in making this course happen.

– Lakeside Wellbeing course attendee

”



Growing Wellbeing

Growing Wellbeing is our programme of free to access wellbeing courses, all of which touch on farming, food and wildlife:



Grow & Make:

Therapeutic horticulture



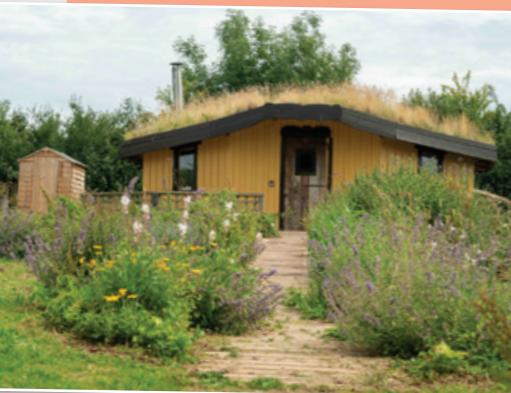
Wild Steps:

Therapeutic wildlife conservation



Lakeside Wellbeing:

Therapeutic mindfulness, movement and creativity (led by our delivery partner, EcoWild)



These courses enable people with mental ill health to visit The Farm regularly over 6-12 weeks, learning and working alongside others in small groups, with support and guidance from experienced facilitators. Woven throughout each course are structured activities to improve wellbeing and cultivate a deeper sense of connection with the land. Participants gain knowledge and practical skills relating to organic food production and sustainable farming, as they carry out meaningful tasks to help care for the plants, wildlife and landscape around The Farm.

This year, 105 people benefitted from our wellbeing programme and all of them said that spending time on The Farm had improved their skills, confidence, sense of community and knowledge.

“

I love it. Such a wonderful thing to do, it's the highlight of my week. A space to reset, socialise and learn new skills. Being in nature is so healing. I have learnt how nature and exercise make me feel better so tried to spend much more time there.

– Grow & Make course attendee

“

I think Wild Steps is invaluable, leaving everyone involved feeling empowered, more connected to nature, learning great skills and feeling like they have contributed something important. I have found it a lifeline for my mental and physical wellbeing.

– Wild Steps course attendee

”



“

Grow and Make days helped me find my feet. Growing food gives me something to make me want to see tomorrow.

– Grow & Make course attendee

”

Financial Summary

Please note a full set of financial statements are available on our website.

The Community Farm combines organic farming, food distribution and an extensive community programme which sits not as a sideline, but fully integrated into the farming and food operations.

Overall, The Farm made a loss in financial year 2024–25 of £43,000 (2023–24: £9000). Financial surplus from any activity is ploughed back into our core mission.

Net Loss split between our land-based activities, “farming and wildlife”, and food distribution:

| £'000 | Farming and Wildlife | Food |
|--------------------|----------------------|------|
| Net Profit/(Loss): | (65) | 22 |

Our sales and their impact

Whilst we do make commercial income, we care about what we sell and the impact it has on our community and planet.

| Turnover | 2023 - 2024 | 2024 - 2025 | Change | Impact |
|------------------|-------------|-------------|--------|---|
| Veg Box | 709 | 760 | 51 | 1562 households enjoying nutritious organic produce. Including 72 receiving subsidised food through our Go Organic scheme |
| Better Food | 104 | 119 | 16 | Serving 4 award-winning organic shops ensuring 1000s of people have access to local organic produce on the high streets in Bristol |
| Wholesale sales | 154 | 162 | 8 | 1760 deliveries creating a web of organic producers and businesses |
| Veg Shed | 15 | 14 | -1 | The only 100% organic shop in the Chew Valley – our little ‘Veg Shed’ allows locals to stand in the fields and buy the freshest of produce! |
| Experience days | 21 | 18 | -3 | 100 groups: small businesses, larger local employers, and self-funded community groups were hosted at The Farm or hired our venues |
| Field Transfers* | 83 | 86 | 4 | This is the food we grow on our farm. 35 crops, split into over 100 varieties. A real working farm allowing visitors and volunteers to genuinely participate in a better food system. <i>Field Transfers are not included in total turnover in the financial statements; they represent an internal transfer of sales from our “farm” operations and cost of sales to our “food” operations.</i> |

Our funders and their impact

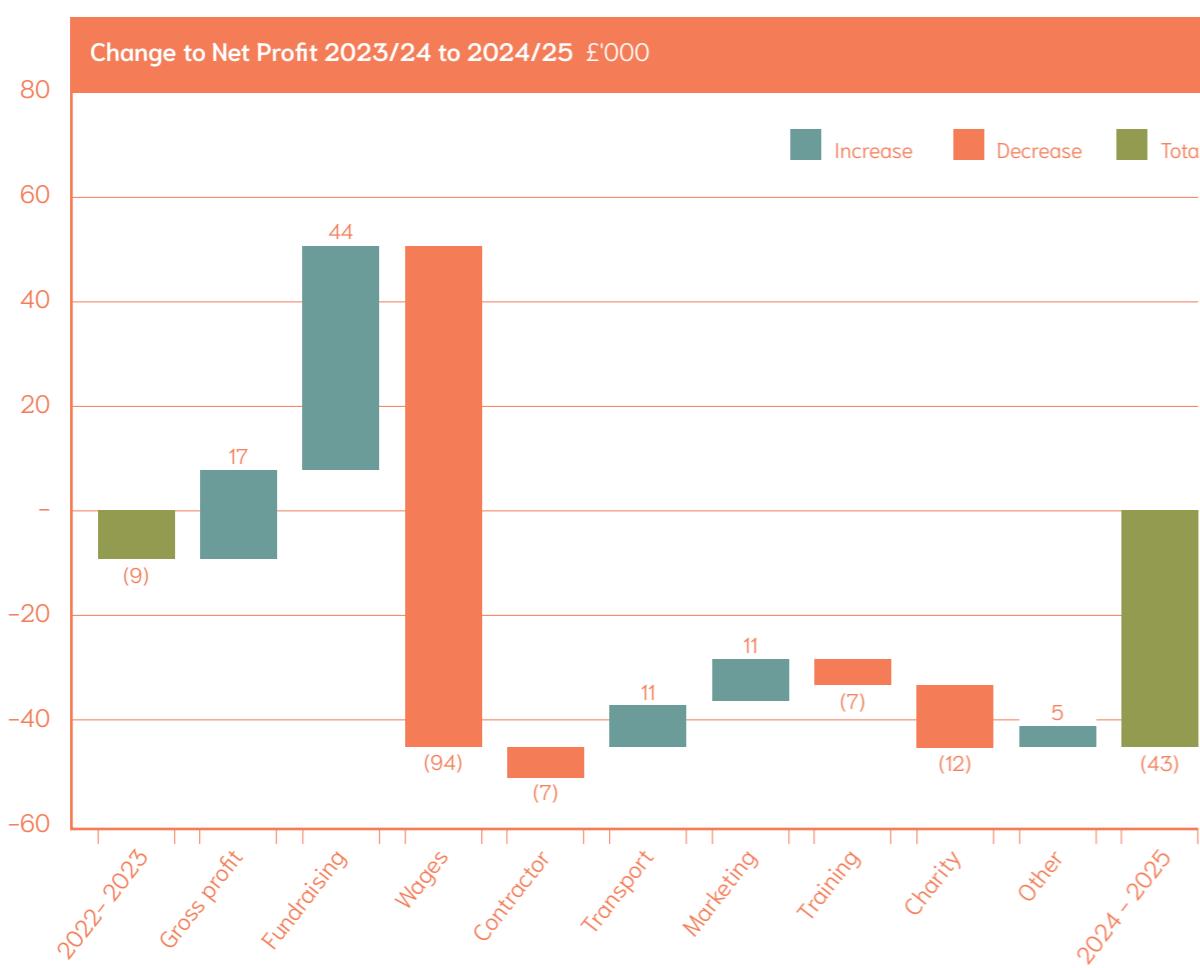
| Funder | Spend £'000 | Impact |
|--|-------------|---|
|  Esmée Fairbairn FOUNDATION | 77 | Over 3000 attendances at The Farm: fully supported activities enabling real engagement with food, farming and wildlife. This funding supports all our community work: volunteering and community partnerships which foster collaborations that empower people to lead the transformational change we need to our food system. Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Support Plus programme also provided funding for staff training from Nick Osborne (Evolving Organisations) and Jenny MacKewn. This training enhanced clarity in roles and responsibilities, decentralises decision making to empower staff and create a more agile organisation, fit for a complex and changing environment. |
|  CLA | 5 | 38 people benefited from 40 days participating in our Growing Wellbeing courses Grow and Make and Wild Steps. For many attendees, Growing Wellbeing opens the door to further participation, with several people going on to volunteer at The Community Farm and in other community settings. |
|  Nineveh Charitable Trust | 2 | Funding for a burst of activity at the beginning of the year to welcome new volunteers onto The Farm, ready for the growing season ahead. We welcomed over 200 people to our Wassail – a traditional event in the farming calendar and excellent introduction to the world of community farming. |
|  FEEDING BRISTOL | 35 | Helping us to feed people in Bristol who would otherwise not have access to nutritious, local, seasonal, organic produce. Our Go Organic scheme provided subsidised veg boxes to 72 families, and we provided hampers to 250 families in the week of Christmas to allow them to participate in the season's celebrations. |
|  The Monica Fund | 12 | Enabling development of our staff and participation in the training funded by Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. |
|  Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs  Farming in Protected Landscapes programme | 41 | This funding forms part of Defra's Agricultural Transition Plan, to enhance nature recovery, mitigate the impacts of climate change, provide opportunities for people to enjoy and understand the landscape. We provided over 70 days of engagement enabling people to truly engage with the land and participate in farming and conservation activities. This included some days as part of our Growing Wellbeing courses which ensure that through additional focus on mental health, people improve their resilience and ability to engage with the landscape, magnifying the impact. |
|  Quartet Community Foundation | 1 | Providing essential transport for people to participate in our community programme |
|  the community farm.co.uk | 50 | This year, we were £50,000 short on fundraising income, as such The Farm has used its own funds to ensure that our long-term projects and full breadth of community programme continued without interruption. |

Financial performance and position

We deliberately tapered our three-year grant from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation (May 2024 – April 2027), to provide more financial support in 2023-2024. This meant we started this financial year with an additional £34,000 (at 2024-2025 pay rate) that needed to be raised as fundraising income. We achieved this, with an increase in other income of £44,000.

Increasing costs across all areas of The Farm including staffing, resulted in an increase in net loss from previous year of £33,854. This is further explained in table below.

Movement from previous financial year:



Our increased sales (see “Our sales and impact” above) provided an increase in gross profit, despite an increase in cost of sales as we continue to pay farmers fair prices, and the difficult growing conditions locally forcing us to go further afield for some produce, with added transportation costs.

Our strategic focus on diversified fundraising ensured we delivered on increasing our fundraising income.

The cost of this increase in productivity for both commercial sales and fundraising is clear to see; our wages needed to increase. The key driver (£44,000) for this increase was a 10% pay rise to all staff, to ensure that our lowest wage continued to meet The Real Living Wage as set by the Living Wage Foundation, and the ratio between lowest and highest wage stayed the same. The remainder (£44,000) related to Government tax increases, and wages related to staff returning from parental leave in the previous year.

We reduced other operational costs by updating our vehicle leases, improving delivery routes, and bringing previously externally provided marketing services in house and improving efficiency in campaign delivery.

Both the additional spend on training and “charity” was funded by grants: Esmée Fairbairn Foundation supported staff development, to strengthen agile decision-making and clarify roles across our senior team, and Feeding Bristol funded various projects to enable us to provide our food to those in need in Bristol.

Our financial position (our balance sheet) deteriorated in the year, primarily due to the overall net loss, but also a slight deterioration in working capital.

| | 2024 | 2025 |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Total Asset | 314 | 222 |
| Total Creditors | (218) | (169) |
| Net Assets/ (Liabilities) | 96 | 53 |
| - | - | - |
| Share capital | 187 | 187 |
| Profit | (91) | (134) |
| Capital & Reserves | 96 | 53 |

Financial Future

The Farm is starting the year with less secured grants than the previous year. Commercially, creating financial surplus from organic food and farming remains incredibly difficult. We will continue to diversify our fundraising strategy, whilst recognising grants remain an important income stream, and seek improvements within our operations to produce and deliver more for every pound we spend.

With thanks to all our funders, past and present, every donation is appreciated and helps us continue the work we do.

You can find out more about supporting our work on our website.



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