

# Cambridge City Farm and Community Garden

## Sustainable education creating sustainable community

### Proposal

Create and operate a vibrant and active City Farm and Community Garden on the currently disused propagation centre site in Cherry Hinton Hall.

### What would it be like?

- A small-scale farm, providing visitors with the chance to observe and interact with animals in a safe environment.
- Demonstration gardens: containers, square-foot gardens, small gardens, allotments, providing examples and inspiration of how food can be grown at home and locally.
- Courses and workshops: Beginners vegetable growing, seed sowing, “plot to plate”, composting, seed saving, chicken rearing and keeping, organic gardening, etc, aimed at all ages.
- Schools, youth groups and other groups visiting and learning about food growing and other environmental issues and helping with the care of the animals and crops.
- A community vegetable garden, for small-scale production of food by local residents.
- Community meals, using produce from the garden.



### Why is Cherry Hinton Hall's old propagation centre an ideal site?

The site is within 10-15 minutes walk of 7 primary schools and 3 secondary schools.

The park is already a popular destination, in a residential area, so there are many passing visitors.

The site has a good boundary fence and is already set apart from the rest of the park.

Most of the ground area is soil and has not been previously concreted or built on.

Cherry Hinton Hall already offers excellent visitor facilities (toilets, play areas, cycle parking, etc) so this would not need separate provision in the City Farm.

### How can this be achieved?

The site could be transformed over the course of a few weekends with 20-30 volunteers, with only a very modest financial outlay. The initial work would involve clearing of weeds and a small amount of stored council equipment, the digging over of the demonstration areas and community garden area, and, depending on the time of year, sowing seeds and planting fruit trees and bushes. During this period we would apply for grants and donations from various sources for the installation of animal fencing and housing, and for developing the educational aspects of the project. Members of the groups proposing this project already have links with local farmers, businesses, youth groups, schools, and potential workshop leaders, and we would expect as this project starts to come to fruition that many individuals and local groups would want to partner with it in different ways.



“The Council should...develop initiatives that provide opportunities for young people in the city to have constructive activities to take part in”  
*Cambridge City Council Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2009-2013*

### The future

In the future (2-3 years from now) we would aim to be working successfully with groups and services such as the education authority, social services, local schools, colleges, and hospitals, etc. to provide a safe work experience and horticultural training to vulnerable members of the community. This would have the potential to be the major funding source for the city farm. We also plan to link this project to the growing number of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) projects in and around Cambridge, both for providing locally-grown food to the CSA schemes, and educating visitors about CSA schemes and linking them up with a CSA scheme near them.



We also aim to educate visitors on other environmental/sustainability issues, such as energy, and would aim to showcase small-scale projects such as solar power generation/heating, rainwater harvesting, and wind energy.

**Case study – Heeley City Farm, Sheffield**

Started in 1981, the City Farm in Sheffield now is a hugely popular free attraction, with a large team of staff and volunteers helping to run farming, growing and environmental projects on 3 sites across the city. Courses run most days. The farm runs a café serving produce grown on site, and particularly focuses on providing training and employment opportunities for marginalised and disadvantaged people, which forms a significant part of their income. [www.heeleyfarm.org.uk](http://www.heeleyfarm.org.uk)

**Case study – People’s community garden, Ipswich**

Started with a Lottery award in 2007, the garden now has 4 part-time members of staff, and inspires people to grow food and engage in healthy outdoor exercise, running courses from growing herbs, to willow weaving! [www.townandbridge.org.uk/garden/](http://www.townandbridge.org.uk/garden/)

**Who are we?**

The project is proposed by the following local groups:

Christians Together in Cherry Hinton is a partnership between Cherry Hinton Baptist Church and St Barnabas Church, running many events and services in the local Cherry Hinton community, such as youth groups, parent and toddler groups, and social action projects such as gardening and decorating.

Transition Cambridge is a group of volunteers dedicated to creating a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future for Cambridge, in the face of the twin challenges of peak oil and climate change.

**Outline budget and sources of funding**

Initial site set-up costs (approx)

internal fencing	£2000
animal housing	£3000
path edging/beds	£2000
secure storage	£2000
seeds/plants	£400
community tools	£400
polytunnel & staging	£800

Ongoing costs /year

Staff	£50000	
Animal feed	£800	
Seeds/plants	£200	
Utilities	£500	
Admin/insurance etc.	£5000	
Site enhancements (eg. fruit “tunnel”, demonstration gardens)		£5000

“Provide a more diverse range of green spaces that cater for people’s social, educational and physical needs and changing lifestyles. This includes city farms and community gardens...”  
*Cambridge City Council Parks and Open Spaces Strategy 2009-2013*

**Funding sources**

- Donations, including optional entry fees and a “friends” scheme.
- Grants: Sustainable City, Lottery, local businesses.
- Partners (eg. Care farming, education authority)
- Volunteers
- Sales of plants and vegetables
- Course fees
- Sponsorship, for example “adopt a goat”!



**Contact**

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