

# **Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm**

## **Management Plan**

### **2007 – 2012**



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## 1) Introduction and vision

This plan is intended to provide a framework for the development and improvement of the farm over the next five-year period up to 2011. The plan is intended to be a working document, which is open to new ideas at any time. We welcome your suggestions and comments for incorporation into this plan, whether you are a local resident, user or organisation. Your input will help us to develop a farm that meets everyone's needs and aspirations.

If you wish to find out further information about this document or submit any suggestions please contact the farm's Manager **John Jakeman** on 0151 653 9332 or by email at [tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:tamoshan@wirral.gov.uk).

Alternatively, you can contact John Jakeman by writing to:

**Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm**, Boundary Road, Bidston, Wirral, CH43 7PD

### **Vision:**

- To create an urban farm for educational, recreational and community use based at Tam O'Shanter Cottage, Bidston, Wirral.
- To enhance Bidston Hill as a site for countryside recreation

## 2) Site Description

**Name:** Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm

**Grid Reference:** 329148, 389401

**Address:** Boundary Road, Bidston, Wirral, Merseyside, CH43 7PD

**Size:** 2 Hectares

**Existing facilities and features:**

- ❖ Range of farm animals
- ❖ Toddlers play area
- ❖ Informal play area
- ❖ Picnic area
- ❖ Picnic tables with games boards
- ❖ Café
- ❖ Nature trail
- ❖ 'Eco' building
- ❖ Car parking
- ❖ Activity room
- ❖ Direct access onto Bidston Hill
- ❖ Souvenir counter

**Tenure:**

The cottage and land are leased by The Trustees for the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust from Wirral Borough Council; the farm buildings are owned by the Trust. The Trust is a registered charity (Reg. Charity number 505444). The farm was leased in 1998 for a period of 21 years, the yearly rent being one Bidston pine cone (if demanded).

The Trust is made up of Trustees from the Birkenhead History Society, the Wirral Urban Farm Association and local Councillors. With support from the Parks and Countryside Service of Wirral Borough Council, the Trust maintains the farm with grants, donations, fund-raising events, sales income and the support of many volunteers.

### **Summary of main uses:**

- As an educational, recreational and community resource
- A place for public enjoyment
- To involve volunteers in outdoor farm and conservation activities
- To rear animals as a means of meeting the educational, recreational and community involvement objectives
- As a focal point for visitors to Bidston Hill, providing information, refreshment, toilets and associated facilities

### **Partner organisations:**

The Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

The Friends of Bidston Hill

Merseyside Police

Wirral Council Community Safety Team

Wirral schools groups

Greater Merseyside Connexions

Various training agencies

Working Life Project, Department of Social Services

Wirral Autistic Society

Wirral Alternative School Programme

Wirral Voluntary and Community Sectors Network

Wirral Council for Voluntary Services

Wirral LA21 Network

Wirral Play Council

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

### **Access:**

The farm is served by public transport with a bus stop on the 437 route from Birkenhead bus station; a stop is situated close by on Upton Road. The farm is located approximately 2.6 km from Birkenhead Town Centre.

The nearest rail station is Birkenhead North located 1km away.

The farm is close to Junction 1 of the M53 mid-Wirral motorway.

The farm is open every day from 9:30am until 4:30pm. A free car park is provided for visitors to both the farm and Bidston Hill; vehicles are also parked along the access lane to the farm. A small car parking area is provided for visitors who are less able.

Groups and schools wishing to visit are requested to fill out the school booking form and return it to the farm at least two weeks prior to the visit. Contact the farm to request a form.

Directions to the site are available on the farm's internet website

[www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk](http://www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk)

A brown highway 'heritage' sign is positioned on Boundary Road and directs visitors to the farm.

Information signs are prominent in the car park and at the farm's entrance.

A small, gated entrance is situated on Boundary Road, opposite Flaybrick Cemetery and leads through the picnic area into the farm.

The farm's entrances and footpaths are all suitable for wheelchair access.

## History:

Tam O'Shanter Cottage was probably built about 300 years ago by a heath squatter and is situated at the edge of Bidston Hill near to the entrance to Flaybrick Cemetery. As far as is known it had no particular claim to fame until 1837 when Richard Lea the occupier at that time embellished the building with a carved stone slab depicting a scene from the Burns poem "Tam O'Shanter" (see photo) in which Tam, pursued by witches, sought to reach the bridge in the belief that the witches would not dare to cross running water. Tam indeed escaped but his mare poor Maggie lost her tail.



In 'Auld Lang Syne', by Harry B Neilson, printed in 1935, mention is made that the date 1837 can be seen on a stone garden wall of the cottage. It is stated that Richard Lea cut the date on the wall and carved the Tam O'Shanter stone and also the weather vane with its animal heads, lion, dog etc. It is said he made them in his spare time to decorate his cottage.

Part of the cottage, seen in the foreground of the photo below, is roofed with thick, stone flags, which in past times was a common method of covering buildings in Bidston, where stone was plentiful.

The list of farms which were on the Bidston Hill heath land in the year 1840 includes the Tam O'Shanter farm, and tells us that the size of the farm was 6 acres.



We know that Richard Lea was a master stonemason. At that time, there was a great deal of building going on in Birkenhead. Hamilton Square, the Town Hall, Cammell Lairds, Bidston Observatory, Bidston Lighthouse and many churches were being built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and there would have been plenty of work for Richard Lea in Birkenhead. So we might imagine Richard Lea shaping stone for these buildings, as well as working on the Tam O'Shanter farm, looking after hens, pigs, cows and growing crops.

Thus the cottage became known as the Tam O'Shanter Cottage and became a subject for artists and visitors alike.

In 1950 the then Minister of Town & Country Planning graded the building as one of special interest, which warranted every effort being made to preserve it.

Sadly most of the building was destroyed by fire in 1954. The Council considered demolishing it, but it was saved by public protest. In 'Wirral Peninsula' by Norman Ellison printed in 1955; he states that Tam O'Shanter cottage was being re-thatched after a recent fire. The carved stone set in the gable of an outhouse had not been damaged. In 1965 the corporation re-thatched the roof at a cost of £600 as vermin had attacked it, and the damp was also feared to be endangering it.

In December 1970 the property was advertised for sale and considerable interest was shown.

It was again destroyed by fire in 1975, and was subsequently vandalised. The council then decided to demolish the building completely. The Birkenhead



History Society stepped in to try and save the building, because it represented a period before the area became industrialised. In June 1975 they were given 30 days to submit their suggestions.

In August 1975, the Birkenhead History Society won permission from Wirral Borough Council for the cottage to be rebuilt and restored to its former glory. Rather than return the cottage to residential use the Society felt the townspeople would be better served by having a field study centre, which could be used by local school children. A Charitable Trust was formed in conjunction with Wirral District Council and a grant was obtained from the Manpower Services Commission, under the Job Creation Programme.

In December 1976 a historic package containing a copy of "News", "Times" and some coins, a history of Birkenhead and in particular the restoration project was laid behind stones at the cottage by the Mayor of Wirral, Councillor John Evans and his wife the Mayoress.

The cottage was open for schools from May 1977.

In 1986 a voluntary organisation called the Wirral Urban Farm Association together with the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Trust began to develop the 4 acres around the cottage as a city farm.

The construction of farm buildings, paths and fencing was soon followed by a collection of farm animals.

## **Resources:**

### **Personnel:**

- The Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust
- The many volunteers (50 – 100)
- The farm staff
- Management team of the Parks & Countryside section
- Parks Development Officer
- Wirral Council Community Safety Team
- Merseyside Police

### **Financial:**

- Grant funding
- Product sales
- Donations
- Café rental
- Souvenir sales

### **Machinery:**

- A range of machinery
- Mini tractor/excavator

### **Other:**

- Internet web site – [www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk](http://www.tamoshanterfarm.org.uk)
- Wirral Council web site page – [www.wirral.gov.uk](http://www.wirral.gov.uk)

## **Summary of limiting factors:**

- Lack of office space
- Storage space
- Land availability
- Security considerations
- Financial considerations

### **Staff and their functions:**

The Farm Manager / Senior Ranger – Employed by Wirral Council

Rangers x 3 – Employed by Wirral Borough Council

The Farm Warden – Employed by the Trust

Community Liaison Officer – Employed by the Trust (3 year fixed term post until November 2008))

The Rangers also have responsibilities for Bidston Hill, Flaybrick Memorial Gardens and Bidston Moss Local Nature Reserve

### **Stakeholders**

- The Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust
- The farm's staff
- The farm's volunteers including Wirral Urban Farm Association (WUFA) or the Friends of the Farm
- Educational groups
- Wirral Council Parks and Countryside Service
- Merseyside Police
- Wirral Council Community Safety

### **What standards are management trying to achieve?**

The intention is for the farm to achieve the standards as defined by the Green Pennant Award Scheme, and to retain the award annually that was first won in 2006 and achieved again in 2007.

### **What are the current aims and objectives, what level of success has been achieved?**

During the period 2005 – 2006 the following objectives were achieved:

- ✓ Maintained our level of visitors (approximately 80,000 / year) and volunteer support (1700 man days / year)
- ✓ Maintained our level of school visits (75 educational groups totalling over 2000 children)
- ✓ Achieved the Green Pennant Award in 2006, 2007

Objectives identified for 2006 – 2011 include:

- ❖ Maintain the level of visitor and volunteer support
- ❖ Maintain the current level of staffing
- ❖ Maintain the level of school visits
- ❖ Extend the café to provide more seating area and a larger kitchen
- ❖ Maintain the Green Pennant / Green Flag Award status

### **3) Analysis and assessment**

The farm has been assessed using the following 7 criteria as defined by the Civic Trust's Green Pennant Award scheme. The Farm gained the Green Pennant Award in 2006, gaining a score bandwidth of 80+; the recommendations made in the judging feedback report have also been incorporated into the plan's objectives.

- i) A welcoming place
- ii) Healthy, safe and secure
- iii) Clean and well maintained
- iv) Sustainability
- v) Conservation and heritage
- vi) Community involvement
- vii) Marketing
- viii) Management

#### **i) A welcoming place**

The farm is indicated from Boundary Road by a brown heritage site sign.

The lane leading to the farm has 'sleeping policemen' humps to moderate traffic speed on approach to the farm.

There is no separate footpath provided for pedestrians along the lane and the potential for conflict exists.

A free car park is located at the end of the lane approaching the farm.

A prominent layout plan of the site displaying the larger surrounding area of Bidston Hill is situated in the car park to enable visitors to orientate themselves on arrival.

The following signs are prominently positioned on arrival at the farm's main entrance point:



A 5-bar field gate denotes the main entrance to the farm; both vehicles and pedestrians share this entrance point.

A large notice board is positioned on the right hand side of the farm's driveway and provides visitors with information and details of local events etc.



The farm maintains a policy of free admission for all visitors.

A leaflet is available to visitors and contains information on opening times, a brief history of the farm, what's on offer and a foldout plan to enable visitors to navigate their way around the site.

The farm provides a café and toilet facilities for visitors' use; a small reception desk/counter selling a range of souvenirs is located in the café area adjacent to the farm's office accommodation. Volunteers staff the counter during busy periods.

## ii) Healthy, safe and secure

A security audit of the farm was undertaken during January 2006 (see appendix 8) the results of which are incorporated into the actions identified in this plan. The audit used the Merseyside Police buildings checklist and the WBC parks checklist, which considered the farm under the following criteria:

Park's checklist:

- a) Sight-line visibility
- b) What evidence is apparent of anti-social behaviour or undesirable activity occurring in the site?
- c) Motor vehicles
- d) The site at night
- e) Pathways, pedestrian routes
- f) Boundaries
- g) Buildings
- h) Is the site well cared for?

Merseyside police checklist:

- a) Security of buildings
- b) Locking up
- c) Keys
- d) During working hours
- e) Outside working hours
- f) Preventing theft
- g) Lights and alarms
- h) CCTV

The audit made the following recommendations:

- Regularly audit the stock of keys to highlight the exact location of every key and identify any that are missing
- Security mark equipment with an ultra-violet marker or other marking system to identify ownership and to deter theft; display signs indicating equipment is security marked
- Keep cash on the premises to a minimum (check any insurance implications) and keep it secured in a safe or strongbox; bank all takings as soon as minimum amount is exceeded
- Empty donation box regularly to a specified frequency i.e. daily in summer, weekly during the winter
- Check conditions of insurance coverage regarding alarm provision

- Consider available options regarding the provision of separate entrance points for pedestrians and vehicles
- Consider available options re. the delivery of goods to the farm to better ensure public and staff safety, meanwhile carry out risk assessment specific to this issue
- Check play equipment daily and carry out an annual, independent inspection
- Improve the perimeter security with planting and / or fencing to deter unauthorised access
- Upgrade the CCTV system to link in with Wirral Council's Community Safety Team's network

### iii) Clean and well maintained

Comments recorded for the period 2005 – 2006 indicate a high level of customer satisfaction with the maintenance of the farm.

The maintenance condition of the farm has been assessed using the 13 headings of the parks maintenance checklist. The facilities and features are simply categorised as good, fair or poor and can only represent findings at the time of writing.

### Maintenance checklist

<b>Park</b>	Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm
<b>Date</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> May 2006

<b>Grass</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Fine Sport	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Playing Fields	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Ornamental	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
General	√		
Rough	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Wild Flower Area	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>

<b>Planting</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Annual	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Herbaceous	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Roses	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Shrubs	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Hedges	√		



Young staked trees	√		
Mature Trees	√		
Woodland	√		

<b>Hard Surfaces</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Tarmac Sport	N/a	N/a	N/a
Hard Porous	N/a	N/a	N/a
Footpaths	√		
Drives	√		
Car Parks		√	
ACW / ATP	N/a	N/a	N/a
Steps	N/a	N/a	N/a

<b>Play Areas</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	√		

<b>Litter</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Collection	√		
Bins	√		

<b>Buildings</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	√		
Graffiti	√		

<b>Fencing</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	√		

<b>Walling</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	√		
Graffiti	√		

<b>Drainage</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Ditches	√		
Inspection Chambers / Covers	√		
Gully pots	√		

<b>Furniture / Memorials</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	√		
Graffiti	√		

<b>Signage</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	√		
Graffiti	√		

<b>Lighting</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
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Maintenance	√		
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<b>Water</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Poor</b>
Maintenance	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>
Safety	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>	<i>N/a</i>

The farm's facilities are currently presented to a high standard, this is achieved due to maintaining a staff of five full-time employees, this level should be continued in order to ensure standards remain consistently high for the Farm's users and visitors.

#### **iv) Sustainability**

A main objective of the farm is to manage the land using sound ecological principles.

The Trust is committed to protecting and improving the environment at the farm and, where possible, in the wider community, in order to improve quality of life and promote sustainable development.

The farm utilises organic methods whenever possible. The farm produces ample quantities of manure and well-rotted compost, which is used to improve the quality of the land. Alternative methods of pest control are used in order to avoid the use of expensive and environmentally damaging chemical pesticides.

Health and Safety guidelines (see information sheet 23) should be followed when storing and handling animal waste, to reduce any risk of infections.

The farm has its own 'Eco-building' which was grant funded and which features the latest design in environment technology in its construction. The building's external elevations are made from straw bales; the building also features a 'green' roof.

The waste at the farm is currently disposed of in rubbish skips provided by W Technical Services. This is due to be replaced by 1500Lt lockable carts for compactable waste only.

## **v) Conservation and Heritage**

The farm and Bidston Hill have significant local historical interest with features that include the thatched Tam O'Shanter Cottage, a 19<sup>th</sup> century disused windmill, rock carvings, a disused lighthouse and observatory. There is a heritage trail, with marker posts and descriptive leaflet; this starts at the farm and leads over Bidston Hill. There is also an information board about the cottage and several information leaflets about the local area. Bidston Hill is also designated as a Site of Biological Interest (SBI) with areas of lowland heath and mixed woodland. The farm itself has a variety of trees and shrubs including some mature oaks, which provide habitat for woodpeckers and interesting fungi, among other things. There is a small pond, some dense holly hedges and a substantial bed of herbs. The herbs and the sedum roof on the Ecobuilding are particularly good habitats for bees and other insects. The farm promotes nature conservation through a variety of activities including bat walks and talks, a bird feeding station and bird nestboxes, one of which has a camera to relay live pictures of nesting wild birds. Other interactive games in the Activity Room have nature conservation themes.

## **vi) Community involvement**

The farm provides opportunities for volunteers from the age of 12 years upwards to work on and around the farm, carrying out a variety of tasks from animal husbandry, estate work, fund raising and general maintenance. Trained staff supervise all the volunteers.

Fact sheets on becoming a volunteer giving health and safety information, staff names etc together with a reply slip asking for name and address etc are used to give and gather information. Some volunteers from certain organisations bring a supervisor or support worker with them. On average the farm is supported by 1700 volunteer man-days / year.

The Department of Social Services regularly brings adults with learning difficulties, whilst students from Reaseheath College, North Wales College of Horticulture and pupils on work experience from local schools also do voluntary work at the farm.

The farm receives many requests for places for volunteers with difficulties that exclude them from the regular opportunities provided by education or employment e.g. pupils excluded from secondary schools, long-term unemployed or people with various health problems. These volunteers are placed from organisations such as Greater Merseyside Connexions, Employment Training Groups (Action for Employment, Standguide etc), 'Working Life' project (Department of Social Services), Wirral Autistic Society and the Wirral Alternative School Programme of the Department of Education. The farm provides a venue for groups from Sure Start, Birkenhead and the Woodcraft Folk Group for parents and pre-school children. With games, arts and crafts and the farm's facilities the sessions have been very popular.

The farm also work with other local voluntary groups such as the Friends of Bidston Hill and the Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens, providing a site for their meetings, a base for the MBW's Ranger staff and volunteers for these sites. These organisations have similar aims to the farm, to improve the environment for local people.

The farm endeavours to share information and resources in order to further common aims, and to support others' efforts to attract grants to improve the area.

The judging feedback report for the 2006 Green Pennant Award recommends that consideration could be given to providing facilities that would attract older children and young adults, possibly combining with the adjacent Bidston Hill.

## **vii) Marketing**

The farm has an internet web site, which can be linked from the Wirral Borough Council web site. The site contains information on the farm's history, the animal stock, events and contact details. A leaflet is available free of charge, which provides information about the farm, directions, opening times and a foldout plan of the site. A farm newsletter, produced termly, provides an animal update, café news, farm staff news and general developments.

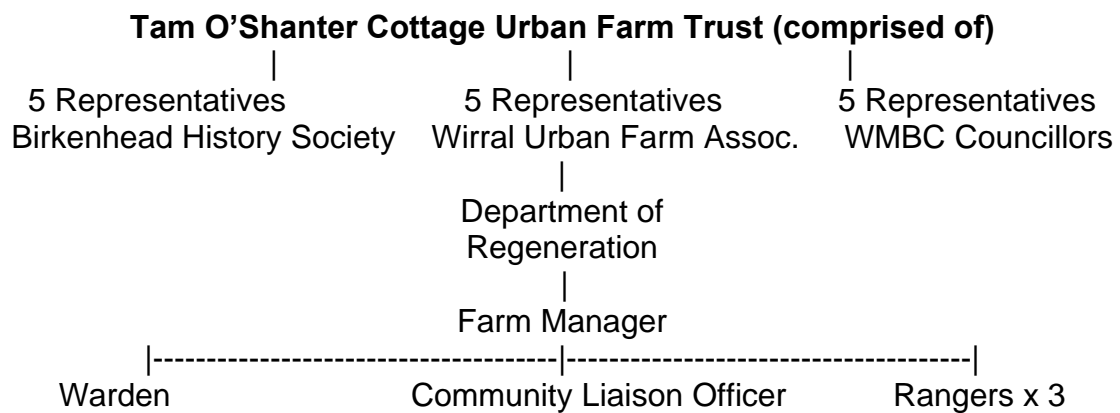
The farm is also promoted through occasional articles in the local free press, the Parks and Countryside Events programme and through 'word of mouth' of satisfied visitors.

## viii) Management

Following re-organisation of The Parks & Countryside Service in 2004 the following management structure was put in place.



The Farm has the following Management Structure:



The Warden for the Cottage and the Community Liaison Officer are employed by the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust but are responsible to the Farm Manager.

The three Rangers are employed by Wirral Borough Council's Department of Regeneration.

## 4) Strategic Aims and Objectives

### 1. To maintain a small, varied collection of farm animals with their welfare a high priority

#### i) Keep stocking levels low

This will allow adequate space and fresh pasture per animal, reduce stress, help prevent build-up of disease and reduce costs of bought-in feed. It is preferable to keep a few animals in good conditions rather than overstock, which would lead to intensive farming conditions. The aim should be to promote 'free range', extensive farming methods rather than intensive farming. Inevitably, this policy will be constrained by the amount of land available.

See appendix 1 – Animal Welfare Policy, appendix 3 - Farm Plan,  
Appendix 5 – Stocking Level

#### ii) Keep a wide variety of animals

A wide variety of animals increases the interest to visitors and enables optimum use of the land. Using rare breeds again increases the attraction, interest and potential educational value. Although initial costs of the stock may be higher, return from sales may also be higher.

The temptation to become a petting zoo or animal rescue centre should be resisted. Where possible, the animals should be productive farm livestock rather than pets. Whilst maintaining some credibility as a 'farm' producing food for sale it also aids the educational objectives of the Farm.

Consideration should be given to both the welfare of the animals concerned and the health and safety of staff, visitors and volunteers. Cattle would be an obvious additional attraction on the Farm but the question of sufficient grazing, housing and the risks of cattle carrying *E. coli* 0157 need to be addressed (see HSE Information Sheet No 23 revised, and no 2 revised).

From a welfare angle cattle, like many animals, should not be kept singly. There would need to be sufficient grazing land for more than one!

### iii) Provide basic needs for all stock

As the farm is open to the public and providing an educational facility for schools, it is very important that the animals are seen to be correctly cared for at all times. Staff/volunteers must be instructed accurately, proper working practices established to enable all animals to be fed, watered and housed correctly and ailments and problems diagnosed quickly. Security of the stock is important particularly in an urban area such as Birkenhead. Incidents in the past have highlighted the need to be vigilant at all times to protect the animals from stray dogs and vandalism. The intruder alarm system together with the role of the Warden are important measures needed to guard against these hazards, though improvements to the perimeter fencing and CCTV system can be made.

### iv) Grazing

Animals should have access to fresh pasture as much as possible. Therefore, all grazing areas need to be properly fenced with access for moving stock and provision made for visitors to view the animals. Paddocks need to be kept free of rubbish and litter, which may injure the animals - an extra problem due to public access. Grazing rotations should be established to make best use of grass, prevent the land being over grazed and help prevent build up of parasites. Grazing the picnic area, as practiced in previous years, is not advised under HSE guidelines.

### v) Feeding

Good quality hay should be provided where necessary. It is not possible to make and store at the farm due to lack of land, storage and equipment. Buying in small quantities is the only feasible alternative. Some fresh herbage could be cut and carried from Bidston Hill, while waste vegetables and bakery products can be collected, although great care must be exercised to ensure that the animals receive a correct diet. Correct concentrates need to be bought in and represent the main cost of keeping the animals. It is important that these are used in the correct quantities and not wasted.

#### vi) Housing

All the animals require access to housing all year round (except the sheep) for security purposes as well as animal welfare reasons. The existing buildings are adequate for the stock at present although they should be checked regularly for routine maintenance.

#### **Appropriate Risk Assessments**

1. Contact with Farm Animals 1
2. Contact with Farm animals including handling, feeding, cleaning out, veterinary care and general management.



## **2.To use the farm as an educational facility**

### **i) Provide guided tours for schools and other groups.**

School groups often combine visits to Bidston Hill and the farm and need a guide for each area to gain maximum benefit.

Booking forms and information sheets must be updated as necessary, particularly Health & Safety issues (Agriculture Information Sheet 23 revised and Teachers' Supplement) and the services we can offer to groups.

### **ii) Provide up-to-date information**

The 'current stock' list on the blackboard in the yard is easily accessible and must be updated when changes to stock occur. Additional information about breeds and the uses of the animals is situated on fences and stable doors and should be regularly reviewed. The opportunity of bringing large numbers of visitors into contact with farm livestock should be used to raise consumer awareness of animal welfare issues, high quality food production by less intensive means and rare breeds of farm livestock etc. The farm has the means to inform and educate many people by giving a balanced view of modern food production methods. Posters, leaflets, videos, pictorial displays and verbal methods can all be used to allow visitors / consumers to understand the implications of their choices. Advantage can be taken of organisations such as Compassion in World Farming and the National Farmers Union for promotional literature but care should be taken to give a balanced viewpoint and not to show bias. The aim should be to inform not preach, and allow visitors to make their own decisions. The link between animals and food (meat in particular) should be clearly made in any imaginative way possible and whilst this may promote vegetarianism in some people this should not be used as an excuse to hide the reality.

Opportunities should also be taken to inform and educate visitors on a range of topics including composting / recycling, land husbandry and less intensive farming methods. Newsletters are an excellent medium to use to meet this aim.

### iii) Work in schools.

For the last 10 years the farm has successfully organized hatching projects in schools during the spring and summer terms. Through the loan of incubators and related equipment, provision of advice, fertile eggs, food and a home for the chicks, it is a popular service that is very much in demand. The educational benefits are enormous when young schoolchildren see chicks appearing out of eggs after 3 weeks incubation. This is a service that should be continued.

### **Appropriate Risk Assessments**

1. Egg incubation projects in schools
2. Contact with farm animals 1

### **3.To preserve and enhance the farm's heritage**

#### **i) Maintain the Heritage Trail**

This starts at the cottage and continues over Bidston Hill, with 15 numbered posts and associated self-guided trail booklet. The booklet describes the various features of the hill including the historic thatched cottage. An information board alongside the cottage also describes its history.

#### **ii) Organise guided walks**

Raising awareness of the farm and hill's heritage through guided walks is a good method of aiding in its preservation. The more people who are aware of the local history, the more it is valued and protected. The walks are arranged in collaboration with the Friends of Bidston Hill and as a free service they are popular with visitors and should be continued.

#### **iii) Maintain Tam O'Shanter Cottage**

With the thatched roof being one of its attractive features, the cottage requires substantial regular investment to maintain its condition. Funds have been set aside to ensure it is maintained to a high standard and this practice should be continued.

#### **4. To maintain the farm as a healthy, safe and secure recreational facility on Bidston Hill.**

##### **i) Maintain safe access to farm animals**

The farm has been laid out for practical management of livestock and to provide maximum access for visitors. For health and safety reasons HSE guidelines should be followed (Agriculture Information Sheet 23 and 2 revised). The farm should be kept as clean as possible, notices displayed regarding hand washing and path surfaces maintained to a suitable standard for pushchairs. Free admission and opening hours of 9.30 – 4.30 allow maximum access to visitors.

##### **ii) Maintain a range of facilities for visitors**

- information by way of leaflets, posters, notice board, photographic display, face-to-face contact with staff or volunteers, termly newsletter
- refreshments by way of a café
- picnic benches and picnic area
- toilets and hand washing facilities
- telephone for emergency use
- car parking

The present facilities would be improved with more café seating space, larger kitchen, better souvenir / information counter as highlighted by customer comments over recent years.

The small amount of play equipment is adequate, and at present levels does not form the main feature of the farm but an added attraction for youngsters once they arrive. Regular daily inspection is essential to maintain safety standards and an annual professional inspection required for insurance purposes. The static old tractors are extremely popular but difficult to assess from a safety viewpoint, as they are not strictly an item of play equipment. Their use in this capacity should be monitored.

##### **iii) Hold regular events and children's activities**

Ranging from craft activities for children to larger events such as Fairs, the

aim should be to promote the farm and its facilities. Visitors should leave the event having had value for money, enjoyed the event and consequently promote the farm on our behalf by word of mouth. Raising funds, although important, should be a secondary benefit. The aim should be to have a mix of educational and recreational events; however, due to restrictions of car parking (50 spaces), mixed pedestrian and vehicular access and the generally restricted nature of the farm, it is not a suitable venue for large events (see relevant Risk Assessment). The farm is often at full capacity for visitors in the school holidays if the weather is good, even without the attraction of an event! Great care should be exercised in planning events with consideration given to the timing and amount of promotion to ensure that the event remains within safe and manageable boundaries. More frequent small events and activities would be preferable to a few larger events.

Children's activities have included sessions organized by 'Woodchips' (part of Birkenhead Woodcraft Folk) for pre school age children and parents, a 4 week summer playscheme with staff from the Wirral Play Council (in association with the Claughton Community Group) and one-off craft sessions arranged by individuals. All prove popular and should be encouraged whenever opportunities arise.

Ongoing children's activities include Scavenger Hunts, Treasure Hunts, Nature Trails and interactive displays in the Activity Room. These should be maintained and improved upon when appropriate.

iv) Follow the recommendations of the security audit

The security audit (January 2006) and Green Pennant Award assessment (June 2006) recognized that the farm was clean, free of litter, vandalism and graffiti. Continued efforts need to be made to ensure that this standard is perpetuated and that the Green Pennant / Flag award is maintained. Occasional incidents of anti-social behaviour by unsupervised youngsters, or criminal activity, should be reported to the Community Patrol / Merseyside Police / Anti-social behaviour team as outlined in the Emergency Procedure document – see appendix 4.

The security audit also highlighted possible improvements needed to the perimeter fencing / hedging and the CCTV system. When funds are available these improvements will aid the Warden in maintaining a secure site.

#### Appropriate Risk Assessments

Contact with Farm Animals 1  
Events

## **5.To maintain or improve the environmental sustainability of the farm.**

### **i) Use organic methods on crops and grassland.**

The soils on the farm are basically sandy, free draining and consequently poor in nutrients. This typically heathland type soil dries out fairly quickly and does not produce good crops of grass, which is the prime requirement. Without building up the humus content of the soil any additions of inorganic fertilizer are likely to be leached out.

Use of manure instead of inorganic fertilisers is cheaper (the farm produces ample quantities of manure) and more effective. It also enhances the value of the farm for nature conservation. Similarly, using organic methods of pest control (e.g. hand weeding or biological control) instead of chemical pesticides is cheaper and safer for people and the environment. Using these methods is certainly more labour-intensive, but should not be a problem considering the volume of volunteer labour available. The farm is able to produce good quantities of well-rotted compost. This valuable material should not be sold or given away but used to improve the fertility of the land. HSE guidelines (information sheet no 23) should be followed when storing and handling animal waste, to reduce any risk of infections.

### **ii) Manage non-agricultural land for nature conservation.**

The hedgerows around the Farm continue to need further work to restore their value for wildlife and as a stock proof barrier. Much coppicing, laying, re-planting and removal of Sycamores has taken place in the last ten years, but this programme of work needs to be continued before sound hedges are re-established.

Small areas of land unused for stock should be identified and retained or enhanced for wildlife where possible e.g. ponds, wetland and areas of scrub.

### iii) Promote nature conservation through education

The opportunity of using the farm as a base for introducing visitors, particularly youngsters, to nature conservation and the natural environment of Bidston Hill should be taken in as many forms as possible. Attracting wild birds by feeding, nest boxes (with cameras), nature trails, public talks on bats, displays and interactive games in the Activity Room are all methods that have been successful and should be maintained as funds allow.

### iv) Promote recycling through good practice

All green and animal waste is recycled as compost and used on the pasture. Cans, paper, cardboard and timber are also recycled and this practice should be encouraged. Volunteers from Heswall Centre also make craft items from recycled materials, which are then sold on the souvenir counter.

### v) Promote energy conservation and green building techniques

With the construction of the Ecobuilding in 2004 the farm already illustrates several 'green building' techniques including green roofs, straw bale wall insulation, grey water recycling and electricity production through a photovoltaic system. With the associated information board the building attracts a lot of interest from visitors. Future building work should also use any opportunity to incorporate similar features that would stimulate interest and discussion.



## **6. To create opportunities for public participation in a community project**

### **i) Coordinate the role of volunteers**

Perhaps the most important objective of the farm is to provide opportunities for volunteers to get involved in the project from management to fund raising and practical day to day tasks. The role of the farm staff is to coordinate and enable as many volunteers as possible to take part in whatever capacity, whilst maintaining the farm's other objectives and observing relevant policies and procedures.

As the abilities and needs of all volunteers are different it can be a difficult and onerous job to accommodate and coordinate the many people who volunteer their help. The farm currently takes volunteers from age 12 years upwards who can be split into the following groups.

Who	When	Why
Schoolchildren 12 – 18 years old	Weekends	Like animals / Duke of Edinburgh Award service / enhance job prospects
Schoolchildren 15 years +	Term time	Work experience
Adults	Anytime	Improve job prospects / something to do
Adults	Anytime	Placement from college / training agency
Friends of the Farm	Anytime	Support the farm
Groups with learning difficulties such as Wirral Autistic Society, Heswall Centre, Working Life Project, Wirral Alternative Schools Programme	Weekdays	Life enrichment / alternative to academic learning

Many volunteers have learning difficulties and / or behavioural problems and although most come to the farm on their own, some of the less able ones may have a support worker for assistance. A volunteer policy, information sheet and application form (see appendix 2) together with a booking system are used to manage and coordinate volunteers to best effect. This system should be constantly reviewed and amended when necessary.

## ii) Maintain the 'Friends' Group

The Friends of the Farm (Wirral Urban Farm Association) is open to anyone by subscription and averages around 50 members. Many support the farm through their subscription and visits whilst others actively take part in meetings, organizing events, fund raising, staffing the souvenir / information counter and producing 3 newsletters per year for members. With five representatives on the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust there are opportunities at several levels to influence the management of the farm.

## iii) Maintain links with local community

There are strong links with other local groups such as: -

Friends of Bidston Hill

Friends of Flaybrick Memorial Gardens

Claughton Community Group

Birkenhead Woodcraft Folk

Wirral Community and Voluntary Sector Network

Wirral Tree Wardens

Wirral LA21 Network

Bidston and North Birkenhead Environmental Action Group

Local Allotments

Many have similar aims and these links should be maintained and strengthened whenever possible through providing support such as a base for volunteers and a venue for meetings and events.

## **7. To be as self-sustaining as possible within the parameters set by the previous objectives**

### **i) Keep costs down and liabilities to a minimum.**

Livestock numbers should be kept as low as practical to minimise costs and maximize welfare standards (see Objective 1). Maximum use of grazing areas should be made by rotational grazing, use of manure, collecting fresh herbage. Good working practices adopted with good instruction given to volunteers to reduce wastage of food, bedding etc.

Careful consideration should be made before taking on any other liabilities such as buildings, plant and machinery and their consequent maintenance costs.

### **ii) Market produce**

Eggs and meat can be sold direct to the public from the farm as long as current regulations are followed. Animals should be mainly productive breeding stock with offspring sold/slaughtered before winter (higher feeding and housing costs). This is an opportunity to promote the benefits of food production by less intensive means, animal welfare issues, rare breeds and food quality. Although the farm is small and consequently can only produce small quantities of meat and eggs for sale to the public, it is a valuable opportunity to encourage greater consumer awareness of the implications of their choice of food purchasing.

### **iii) Sales of souvenirs**

These are an important source of income and provided these sales are made with the help of volunteers the venture should prove profitable as well as being value for money to visitors. Inevitably this venture is dependant on the number of visitors to the farm and provides another reason for the farm to provide a quality recreational experience to visitors.

#### iv) Seek opportunities for grant aid.

Probably the most important source of funding is grant aid and advantage should be taken of the Trust's charitable status to apply for funds and sponsorship when appropriate circumstances arise.

#### v) Maintain current marketing strategy

Heavy reliance is placed on good service and word of mouth to promote the farm and encourage people to visit. Visitors are able to comment on the farm and its facilities through forms and a box available in the café. This provides useful feedback and should be maintained.

A promotional leaflet, events, brown tourist signs, promotion through the Parks and Countryside section and articles in the local press promote the farm within Wirral whilst the website reaches people farther afield.

Given good weather in school holidays the farm is often at full capacity and it is estimated that current visitor numbers are in the region of 80,000 / year. With a policy of free admission and being open every day the farm is able to sustain itself with the current level of staffing. However, as one post is grant aided only until 2008 this policy may have to be reviewed.

Recognition is made of the fact that many visitors from the immediate area are probably on low income and may be unable to afford an entry fee. Free entry enables everyone to access the farm and may assist in applications for community grants. Many visitors generously make donations to the farm, which they probably would not make if charges were imposed. It should remain the farm's policy to maintain this current charging structure for as long as possible.

The current marketing strategy has minimal costs as no payments are made for advertising despite many offers from educational and tourist publications. This policy should be constantly reviewed but it would be useful to have more accurate visitor figures which can be obtained through visitor surveys / counts or through use of technological equipment.

## 5) Action Plan

Action	Responsibility	When	Financial
<b>1. To maintain a small, varied collection of farm animals with their welfare a high priority.</b>			
i) Keep stocking levels low	Farm Manager	Ongoing	00
ii) Keep a wide variety of animals	Farm Manager	Ongoing	£400 p.a.
iii) Provide basic needs for all stock	Rangers & volunteers	Ongoing	£5,000 p.a.
<b>2.To use the farm as an educational facility</b>			
i) Provide guided tours for schools and other groups.	Rangers	Ongoing	00
ii) Provide up-to-date information	Rangers	Ongoing	00
iii) Work in schools – 12 hatching projects / year	Rangers	Annual	£200 p.a.
<b>3.To preserve and enhance the farm’s heritage</b>			
i) Maintain the Heritage Trail	Rangers	Ongoing	£200 p.a.
ii) Organise guided walks (min 6 / year)	Rangers	Ongoing	00
iii) Maintain Tam O’Shanter Cottage	Trust	Ongoing	£500 p.a.
<b>4 To maintain the farm as a healthy, safe and secure recreational facility on Bidston Hill.</b>			
i) Maintain safe access to farm animals	Rangers	Ongoing	£1000 p.a.
ii) Maintain a range of facilities for visitors	Trust / Farm Manager	Ongoing	£750 p.a.
iii) Check play equipment daily and independent annual inspection	Farm Manager / Rangers	Ongoing	£100 p.a.

iv) Hold regular events and children's activities	Friends Group / Rangers	Annually	00
v) Improve café facilities, souvenir / information point and offices	Farm Manager / Trust	2008 /09	£250,000
vi) Maintain the security of the buildings, equipment, cash, keys etc as per the security audit	Farm Manager	Ongoing	£500 p.a.
vii) Repair / remove all graffiti, litter and vandalised items ASAP	Rangers	Ongoing	00
viii) Improve the CCTV system, linking into MBW Community Safety Team	Farm Manager / Trust	2007	£10,000
ix) Improve perimeter hedging	Rangers	2006 / 07 / 08	£300 p.a.
x) Improve perimeter security fencing	Farm Manager / Trust	2007 / 08	£10,000
xi) Report all incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour to Merseyside police / Community Patrol / anti-social behaviour unit	Rangers	Ongoing	00
xii) Apply for Civic Trust Green Pennant / Green Flag Award	MBW Parks and Countryside	Annually	£25 p.a.
<b>5.To maintain or improve the environmental sustainability of the farm.</b>	Rangers	Ongoing	00
i) Use organic methods on crops and grassland.	Rangers	Ongoing	00
ii) Manage non-agricultural land for nature conservation.	Rangers	Ongoing	£2000
iii) Promote nature conservation through education	Rangers	Ongoing	00
iv) Promote recycling through good practice	Rangers	Ongoing	00

v) Promote energy conservation and green building techniques	Farm Manager / Trust	Ongoing	00
<b>6. To create opportunities for public participation in a community project</b>			
i) Coordinate the role of volunteers	Rangers	Ongoing	00
ii) Maintain the Friends' Group	Rangers	Ongoing	00
iii) Maintain links with local community	Rangers	Ongoing	00
<b>7. To be as self-sustaining as possible within the parameters set by the previous objectives</b>			
i) Keep costs down and liabilities to a minimum.	Farm Manager	Ongoing	00
ii) Market Produce	Rangers /Volunteers	Ongoing	00
iii) Sales of souvenirs	Volunteers	Ongoing	00
iv) Seek opportunities for grant aid.	Farm Manager	Ongoing	00
v) Maintain website	Farm Manager	Ongoing	£250 p.a.
vi) Improve visitor counts	Farm Manager	2007	£1000
vii) Maintain staffing levels (5 full time posts) and opening arrangements	MBW	2008	£125,000





## **6) Monitoring and review**

The Trust Members in conjunction with the Farm Manager should undertake an annual review of the main objectives identified within this plan in order to monitor progress and to establish priorities.

Annual application to the Green Pennant Award scheme should ensure the Farm continues to meet the required standard.

The Plan should remain adaptable in order to accommodate ideas as they emerge during the five-year period 2007 – 2012.

A fundamental review of the plan should take place during year four of the plan in preparation for the following five-year plan.

## **Appendix 1 Animal Welfare Policy**

**We believe our animals have the following basic needs, which we must meet at all times:**

- \* Freedom from thirst, hunger and malnutrition
- \* Suitable comfort and shelter
- \* The prevention of, and rapid treatment of injury, disease, infection or infestation
- \* Freedom from fear
- \* Freedom to display normal behaviour

For more information please speak to a member of staff

### **SO WHEN YOU ARE ON THE FARM PLEASE**

1. Keep your dog on a lead
2. Respect our animals - - do not chase them, or let others chase or frighten them. Sometimes they will want peace and quiet and won't want to be touched.
3. Be safe - do not enter any paddock or animal enclosure. Always close gates behind you.
4. Be careful - most of our animals are good-natured, but we cannot guarantee their behaviour - some may bite or push. Be especially careful if you have small children with you.
5. Be hygienic - Always wash your hands after touching animals

**If you are, or could be pregnant - avoid contact with sheep and lambs at lambing time.**

### **PLEASE DON'T**

- Feed our animals - (Except corn for the poultry available from the shop) as overfeeding or the wrong food could cause serious problems.
- Drop litter - some animals will try to eat it
- Smoke - in any of the buildings

## Appendix 2 Volunteer Policy

We are committed to providing valuable opportunities for volunteers to be involved with work at the farm. The aim is to encourage the development of new skills for personal benefit and, where necessary, to maximise employment potential. We welcome all volunteers from the age of 12 and will endeavour to find suitable hours and tasks for them.

**All volunteers are insured as long as they are working under appropriate supervision and in accordance with the farm policies (Health & Safety, Equal Opportunities, Volunteer).**

A volunteer is anyone without compensation or expectation of compensation who performs a task at the direction of and on behalf of the farm. Volunteers include farm volunteers, souvenir counter volunteers, work experience students etc.

### Principles and Procedure

#### ALL VOLUNTEERS MUST:

- read and complete a farm volunteer fact sheet before working at the farm.
- wear a Farm Volunteer badge to identify them as volunteers to members of the public.
- remember that they represent the farm – the use of unsuitable language or behaviour with other volunteers or members of the public is not acceptable.
- follow the Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety Policy.
- Volunteer hours are 9am – 11am unless previously arranged with a member of staff. Hard-working and trustworthy volunteers may be able to work longer hours.
- All volunteers are equally valuable to the farm – older volunteers must set a good example of working rather than delegate tasks they have been asked to do.
- If you can see a task needs doing, always ask a member of staff before starting.
- Volunteers are not permitted behind the Souvenir Counter unless asked to do so by a member of staff or Souvenir Counter volunteer.
- Inappropriate behaviour of any kind may result in a volunteer being asked to leave the farm.

## Volunteer Fact Sheet and Application Form

The members of staff who are responsible for you at this site are:

John Jakeman / Linda Passey / Peter Cox / Nic Harding / Dawn Holmes

If you need advice or aren't sure how to do a task, ask them for information.

Volunteers must be 12 years or over

Activities may include:

Feeding animals, cleaning pens, moving animals to and from fields, assisting visitors, farm maintenance, work on Bidston Hill, help at events, litter-picking

### **Protective Clothing**

You're advised to wear suitable clothes when volunteering at the farm e.g. old clothes or overalls, boots or wellies (with toe protection if possible).

Waterproofs might be needed! If you don't have suitable protective clothing it may restrict the type of work you can do. Protective gloves will be provided when necessary.

### **No Volunteer will be allowed to:**

a) Drive any vehicle or ride on machinery or tractors

b) Ride on a trailer

c) Use axes, bill-hooks, saws, scythes or sickles if under the age of 14 years

d) Use equipment without adequate instruction or bring any equipment on site without permission

e) Use power tools

f) Use a pedestrian mower

g) Use chemicals

Medical Advice

You're advised to seek medical advice on tetanus prevention (most people have a tetanus jab at school). Some tasks are strenuous so you must take care not to over exert yourself.

Never lift something that's too heavy or too large.

### **First Aid**

A First Aid Kit is available in the Ranger's Office.

### **Accidents**

If you have an accident, report it to one of the Rangers who will help you fill out an Accident Form and make sure it's recorded in the Accident Book.

### **Insurance**

All volunteers are insured by the Authority, as long as they're working under appropriate supervision and in accordance with the Code Of Practice.

## **WE HAVE A VOLUNTEER POLICY AT THE FARM – MAKE SURE YOU READ IT!**

✂

### **Work Experience, Placement, Volunteer Application**

Name.....Tel.Number.....

Address (Home/School/Organisation).....

Date of Birth (if under 18 years old).....Today's date.....

Current situation (e.g.school,college,unemployedetc).....

Why do you want to be a volunteer?

.....

Details of any medical condition or allergy that may affect you or others by working here.....

I agree that, in the event of an emergency, medical treatment may be given to the person named above.

**Signature (if under 16, signature of parent or guardian).....**

Print Name.....

**Any Personal Information you give us on this document will be treated with the utmost care in accordance with The Data Protection Act 1998.**

## Volunteer Fact Sheet 2

As you'll be working with animals there are some risks you need to know about:

- 1) Illness from contact with animals  
These can range from stomach upsets to more serious infections eg. E Coli, and Enzootic Abortion. Read the leaflet on 'Zoonoses in Agriculture' (in the Ranger's Office) for more information.
- 2) Bites or other physical injury  
Although the animals are not dangerous they are capable of biting or kicking. The risk is small but can happen!
- 3) A small pond near to the bee hives. Although not very deep, take care if working on the pond.
- 4) Bees. These shouldn't cause a problem as long as they aren't interfered with.
- 5) Tools. You may be working with tools such as shovels and forks. Remember to use and store them very carefully. The farm is open to visitors and there may be young children who could fall over or injure themselves on the tools you are using!

**These risks are reduced if you:**

- **Wash your hands** thoroughly after working with the animals and **always** before eating or smoking
- **Follow the instructions of your supervisor**

<b><u>DO</u></b>	<b><u>DON'T</u></b>
Wear your 'Farm Volunteer' badge	Feed any animal without asking
Ask questions, especially if you're not sure	Go into fields or pens without asking
Behave sensibly and maturely	Use unsuitable language
Respect the animals, visitors and other volunteers	
Let staff know if you see a sick or injured animal	
Follow the farm policies (in the Rangers Office)	

### **PLEASE NOTE**

- Volunteer hours are normally 9am – 11am. If you would like to stay longer, you need to arrange this with a member of staff. Hard-working and trustworthy volunteers may be able to work longer hours.
- Work Experience hours are 9am – 3.30/5pm, by arrangement
- The farm is open access i.e. volunteers may leave the farm when they want. They are only under staff supervision whilst they are on the farm!

Other things you need to know about:

1. **Refreshments** – help yourself to a drink in the kitchen when your supervisor says to take a break
2. **Compost** – please check with your supervisor that you are using the right compost heap! It saves a lot of wasted effort!
3. **Padlocks** – if you unlock a padlock, please lock it onto the gate straight away so it does not get lost
4. **Toilets** – there are 2 sets of toilets – you can wash your hands in these sinks
5. **Manual Handling Techniques** – please ask about the safest way of lifting heavy objects.
6. **Records** – please ask about recording your hours of voluntary work. We give café vouchers and certificates depending on how many hours you have done.

## Appendix 3 Farm Plan & aerial photograph





## Aerial Photograph



## Appendix 4 Emergency Procedure

### A. During opening hours i.e. when visitors are on the farm

1. Assess the situation
2. Ring **999** for Fire / Ambulance / Police
3. Sound the bell outside the office door to gather all members of staff in the yard
4. On hearing fire alarm sounders or own warning bell gather in the yard to ascertain the nature of the emergency
5. Depending on who is on duty a member of staff needs to assume control and delegate duties such as
6. Evacuation of buildings
7. Roll call of staff and volunteers
8. Securing and isolation of areas if necessary to restrict and control access by people including visitors
9. Arranging search parties N.B. Ensure communications are open through radios (Check operational) or mobile phones and maintain base for communication.

### B. Out of opening hours i.e. no visitors on the farm

1. FIRES – small fires can be tackled if considered safe to do so and speed is important to prevent the fire from spreading. Use appropriate equipment and remember never to put anyone at risk of harm - any fire out of control report to Fire Service immediately on **999**

2. INJURIES / MEDICAL – call **999** immediately for any emergency considered to be serious.

Only attempt First Aid in event of immediate threat to loss of life, or minor complaints not needing emergency services.

#### 3. CRIMINAL and ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIVITY

- Crime in progress – i.e. offenders are still present – immediately report to Police on **999** and Community Patrol on **666 5265**. Includes vandalism, thefts, assaults, fly tipping, suspicious adults on premises (i.e. anywhere on the farm when gates are locked)
- Crime committed, no offenders present but person(s) injured - immediately report to Police on **999** and Community Patrol on **666 5265**
- Suspect serious crime may be about to be committed e.g. suspicious person(s) near locked property - immediately report to Police on **999** and Community Patrol on **666 5265**.
- Crime committed, no offenders present, nobody injured. Phone Merseyside Police to report the crime on **777 2080** or **777 2320** (Laird Street) or **709 6010** at the earliest opportunity (normal business hours). Report all anti-social behaviour on **606 2020**

Nuisance activities eg gangs of youths phone both Community Patrol on **666 5265** and Community Support Officers.

NEVER PUT YOURSELF AT RISK

5.4.06



## Appendix 5 Stocking Level

	As at 1.10.06	Recc Maximum
Pigs	2 Sows – Oxford Sandy and Black and Gloucester Old Spot	2 Sows + youngstock
Sheep	4 Ewes and 3 lambs from 2006 Manx Loughtan	3 or 4 breeding ewes + youngstock
Goats / Cattle	2 Nannies	2 or 3 nannies or 1 cow and calf
Poultry	25 Hens, 8 Ducks, 4 Geese, 6 Guinea Fowl	50 birds + youngstock
Rabbits	8 Various types	8
Equine	1 Shetland Pony + 1 Donkey	2

## Appendix 6 Five Year Budget

### Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm Budget 2006 - 2011

	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
	<b>2006 - 07</b>	<b>2007 - 08</b>	<b>2008 - 09</b>	<b>2009 - 10</b>	<b>2010 - 11</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Sales	10,000.00	10,200.00	10,404.00	10,612.08	10,824.32
Donations	1,500.00	1,530.00	1,560.60	1,591.81	1,623.65
Grants, unrestricted	2,000.00	2,040.00	2,080.80	2,122.42	2,164.86
Bank Interest	1,000.00	1,020.00	1,040.40	1,061.21	1,082.43
Café Rental	6,500.00	6,630.00	6,762.60	6,897.85	7,035.81
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>21,000.00</b>	<b>21,420.00</b>	<b>21,848.40</b>	<b>22,285.37</b>	<b>22,731.08</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Services	3,000.00	3,060.00	3,121.20	3,183.62	3,247.30
Farm Costs	11,000.00	11,220.00	11,444.40	11,673.29	11,906.75
Buildings and Equipment	2,000.00	2,040.00	2,080.80	2,122.42	2,164.86
Admin & Insurance	5,000.00	5,100.00	5,202.00	5,306.04	5,412.16
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>21,000.00</b>	<b>21,420.00</b>	<b>21,848.40</b>	<b>22,285.37</b>	<b>22,731.08</b>
<b>Surplus of receipts over payments</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

NB Core budget excludes wages, special projects and restricted grants

Farm Costs inc shop purchases, feed, vet, hort, security, misc



## Appendix 7

### The Green Pennant Award 2006/2007 judging feedback



## Tam O Shanter Urban Farm Tam O Shanter Urban Farm Trust Green Pennant Award 2006/2007

Status – Pass

Score bandwidth – 80+

### Field Assessment Feedback

Assessment Criteria	Strengths	Recommendations
Good and Safe Access	The site is well sign posted and has no negative access issues.	
Welcoming	The site is welcoming and provides the visitor with much information on arrival.	
Signage	There is plenty of information available through signs and ample notices.	
Equal Access for all	This area has been well considered.  Because of the nature of the site there are many un-surfaced paths. However these do not present serious problems and changes are not recommended.	
Personal Security	Visible staff on site promote a feeling of safety. This is augmented through visible security and safety information.	
Safe equipment and facilities	Safety considerations have been taken into account in the provision of facilities.	
Appropriate level of facilities	All aspects of the facilities can be enjoyed by all members of the community.	

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Dog Fouling</b>	The site has good notices on dog control.	Dogs are allowed on site and fouling is an occasional problem. Consideration could be given to the provision of dog bins.
<b>Litter &amp; Waste Management</b>	The recycling of farm waste is excellent.	The skip for disposal of litter is unsightly and consideration should be given to the provision of a screened off area or an off site location.
<b>Overall Standard of Maintenance</b>	Maintenance is very good and appropriate for this type of facility.	
<b>Graffiti &amp; Vandalism</b>	There was no evidence of graffiti or vandalism.	In urban areas there are always occasional incidents of vandalism which should be taken into account when any facilities are provided in the future.
<b>Peat Use</b>	The site has an excellent Peat use policy.	
<b>Pesticides</b>	On the majority of the site there is no pesticide use.	Consideration should be given to the control of nettle by mechanical means.
<b>Sustainable Materials use</b>	Good policies are in place.	
<b>Waste recycling and Minimisation</b>	Excellent policies are in place.	
<b>Conservation of Landscape &amp; Historic Features</b>	The natural landscape is well managed to conservation standards. The Tam O Shanter cottage has been restored and is an important historic monument.	
<b>Conservation of Biodiversity</b>	Conservation of biodiversity is extremely well addressed on site.	
<b>Promotion of Green Space/Project</b>	The facility is well known in the community it serves. A problem exists in overuse at peak times.	
<b>Links to the Wider Community</b>	This is mainly approached through Wirral Council which publicises the Farm's facilities and events. The site enjoys strong use by local schools.	
<b>Involvement in Decision-making</b>	This is well approached through a Board of Trustees meeting which meets quarterly and through Trustees' involvement in monthly management meetings.	
<b>Involvement in Operations</b>	Volunteers work at the Farm including some with learning difficulties who receive valuable work experience.	

<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
<b>Appropriate Provision for the Community</b>	The Farm is well used by children, their parents and schools. Play facilities are provided for the children.	Consideration could be given to facilities that would attract older children and young adults possibly combining with the adjacent Bidston Hill open space.
<b>Innovation &amp; Creativity</b>	Good educational programmes have been developed involving school children in livestock management.	
<b>Resources Secured/Used</b>	The Farm raises money through café leasing, product sales, donations and grants.	
<b>Additional comments</b>	The Tam O Shanter Urban Farm is a success story as indicated by the high score level and the above comments. Although legally managed by a Trust, the majority of the site's management is carried out through Wirral Council via the Ranger Service. Consideration therefore should be given in future years to submitting the site into the Green Flag Award scheme as its standards are currently sufficiently high for it to succeed at this level.	

## Appendix 8 Security Audit



### SECURITY AUDIT

<b>Audit Date:</b> 18/01/2006	<b>Auditor:</b> Peter Whittle
<b>Site:</b> Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm	
<b>Contact:</b> John Jakeman – Farm Manager	

#### Objectives:

- i. Identify security aspects and risks
- ii. Identify corrective/preventative actions necessary to minimise security risks

#### Scope:

- The security aspects and impacts arising from the management and operational activities of Tam O'Shanter Farm

#### Methodology

The audit took place on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> January 2006. Information was gathered by interviewing John Jakeman, Farm Manager and by inspection and observation on site. The Merseyside Police self-assessment checklist was used to assess the buildings and premises and the park's Security Audit checklist to appraise the farm site.

#### Introduction

Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm is located on Boundary Road in the Bidston and St James ward within the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral. The farm and the historic, thatched Tam O'Shanter cottage is preserved by the Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm Trust (Reg. Charity number 505444). The farm has a range of livestock, a café, children's play area, picnic area, car park, activity room, souvenir counter. The farm has an 'Ecobuilding' with a green roof. The farm occupies a site of approximately 1.15 Hectares.

## Observation and findings:

### 1. Buildings

- The boundary of the site is clearly signed and directs visitors to the main entrance



- All staff have been briefed on security procedures
- Due to the character and layout of the farm buildings it is not possible to eliminate the potential for concealed areas
- Measures have been taken to restrict access to the roof of the thatched activity room building. As all buildings are single storey measures are limited in attempting to restrict access to the roof

### 2. Locking up

- There is an established procedure for locking up and securing the site
- All entrance doors, gates, windows are secured at the end of the day
- The premises are checked to ensure that nobody has hidden in the building, toilets etc
- Security fittings are regularly checked

### 3. Keys

- Keys are issued to designated key-holders by the farm Manager
- There is an up to date inventory of keys
- There is not a regular audit of keys
- Padlocks are not changed if keys are mislaid; main door locks would be changed in the event of key loss

### 4. During Working Hours

- Staff are easily identifiable in distinctive clothing
- Due to the farm's nature as a place visited by large numbers of the public on a daily basis a system of signing in and out is not practical
- Visitors are not issued with visitor/identification badges
- It is not practical to escort individuals and groups visiting the farm
- Community Patrol respond to any reported incidents



## 5. Outside Working Hours

- Contracted personnel working on the site are supervised by the farm's staff
- There is no regular security patrol of the premises
- Arrangements are made for the surveillance of the site during evenings and holiday periods

## 6. Preventing Theft

- Computers and printers etc are not housed in secure storage
- Rooms containing valuable equipment are kept locked and alarmed at night
- Equipment is not security marked to identify the ownership
- Signs are not displayed indicating items have been security marked
- Staff are provided with lockers to safeguard their personal property
- Cash is kept at the premises and not necessarily to a minimum amount
- Cash is kept in a lockable filing cabinet prior to being banked
- An inventory or list of valuable items is not currently kept

## 7. Lights and Alarms

- The farm is well lit by exterior security lights with movement detection sensors
- An intruder alarm is fitted to all the farm's buildings
- Not aware of any conditions set out by the farm's insurers
- The alarm system is regularly maintained by the supplier, Arrowe Security Systems Ltd.
- The last member of staff to leave the site has responsibility for ensuring that the alarm system is set
- The alarm is monitored and a registered key holder is alerted to any activation

## 8. CCTV

- There is a CCTV system installed, three cameras cover the car park and farm buildings, images are not monitored
- The system is regularly maintained
- Equipment is not stored in a locked cabinet
- Images are not recorded
- Signs are displayed to warn the public of the presence of surveillance cameras
- The system is not registered with the Information Commissioner
- Signage does not state the name of the CCTV operator or the purpose of use or detail a contact telephone number

## 9. Sight-line visibility

- The site has open largely unrestricted views with few 'blind-spots' along the main footpath routes. The high level of staff presence together with general farm activity engenders a positive perception and reassurance regarding the personal safety of the farm's visitors. Staff are very accessible. Visitor comments on feedback forms indicate people consider the farm provides a safe environment for them and their children

## 10. Undesirable activity

- Occasional groups of youths enter the site and misbehave or act inappropriately; when alerted to problems of this nature the farm's personnel monitor the situation and if required intervene.

## 11. Motor vehicles

- Speed ramps have been installed along the main drive to farm restricting vehicle speeds
- Car crime to vehicles parked external to the farm is rare due to the volume of visitors and the presence of legitimate users/visitors to both the Hill and farm
- The main entrance point to the farm does not provide separate access for pedestrians and motor vehicles; potential therefore exists for conflict
- Delivery vehicles access the farmyard; given the number of children and proximity of the children's play area the potential for conflict exists
- Car parking space within the curtilage of the farm site is limited; ideally preference for parking in this small car park area could be for drivers with mobility difficulty

## 12. The farm at night

- The site is secured at 16:30 pm each night with only the occasional organised event or activity taking place

## 13. Paths

- Paths are well surfaced and routes clearly defined, associated information and directional signage is in place

## 14. Boundaries

- The perimeter enclosure of the farm largely consists of stock-proof fencing attached to timber posts surmounted by twin strands of galvanised straining wire
- The fencing along the boundary to Bidston Hill is further bolstered with piles of cut tree brush

- Thorn whips have been planted in places but struggle to establish
- All entrance points situated within the boundary have lockable timber gates

#### 15. Children's play area

- Situated adjacent to the farm yard the area provides open clear visibility
- The play equipment provided is intended for use by toddlers and therefore does not attract older youths
- Two vintage tractors are also provided for children play on



#### Recommendations

- Regularly audit the stock of keys to highlight the exact location of every key and identify any that are missing
- Upgrade CCTV surveillance of the site linking to Wirral Council's Community Safety's network
- Security mark equipment with an ultra-violet marker or other marking system to identify ownership and to deter theft, display signs indicating equipment is security marked
- Keep cash on the premises to a minimum (check any insurance implications) and keep it secured in a safe or strongbox, bank all takings as soon as minimum amount is exceeded
- Empty donation box regularly to a specified frequency ie daily in summer, weekly during the winter
- Check conditions of insurance coverage regarding alarm provision
- Consider available options regarding the provision of separate entrance points for pedestrians and vehicles
- Consider available options re the delivery of goods to the farm to better ensure public and staff safety, meanwhile carry out risk assessment specific to this issue
- Improve security fencing to the farm's boundary to Bidston Hill
- Plant additional thorn species to improve boundary hedging
- Undertake daily inspection of play equipment
- Introduce an annual independent inspection of the play equipment