

Summary

- Lambourne End Centre is a registered charity with an established reputation for providing outdoor learning for people of all ages
- The 54 acre site has dormitory accommodation, camping areas, dining, meeting and lounge facilities, as well as a farm education centre, dedicated conservation areas, and a variety of adventure activity equipment
- Volunteers are a vital and everyday part of our organisation
- The Centre has been running City & Guilds and BTEC land based courses since 2008 through the 'Hands On Partnership' with Wellgate Community Farm
- In April 2011 to meet the needs of volunteers who require more support, the 'Food For Thought' project was started and was funded by the Big Lottery Fund's Local Food scheme
- The project's aim is to enable people aged 16 or over who require support to volunteer on a project that will engage them in meaningful outdoor activities. This will assist them to contribute to local food production and develop new skills
- The 'Food For Thought' project has enabled the employment of two new staff, and has provision for up to eight 'supported volunteers' a day, using a 12 week pre-payment model
- The focus of the Food For Thought project is to provide 'stepping stones', to inspire people to make a positive contribution to their lives and communities.

What is special about this care farm

Lambourne End provides a safe, welcoming, yet alternative environment where people are encouraged to stay healthy, have fun learning and experience a sense of achievement.

It has a large site with a variety of activities and facilities, and has established strong links with a wide range of local organisations and individuals. It offers a unique blend of adventure, farming, horticultural and environmental activities.

The Centre is within the M25. This means there is a large population with 135 schools within a 5 mile radius, and is a 5 minute drive from an underground station.

As there are many other groups using the centre, there will be opportunities to be involved in collecting and preparing produce for use by the visiting groups.

Disadvantaged and disabled people can be offered important educational opportunities as well as giving those from urban community's access to our extensive provisions, including curriculum based farm activities.

We can provide a variety of opportunities for individuals to develop themselves, for example:

- taking part in our key stage 1 and 2 environmental learning packages
- BTEC Land-based courses are delivered on site at levels 1, 2 and 3
- existing strong links with other members of the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens, who can signpost them to other opportunities available locally.



Target market

Lambourne End has an inclusive ethos, so any one who feels they will benefit will be considered. It is anticipated that the main issue is likely to be persuading relevant organisations to fund placements, though so far this has not been a problem.

The centre works with groups of mixed abilities, skills and ages, and when possible engages some of the enthusiastic volunteers to work alongside those who require more support.

Up to eight people can attend on any one day, and arrangements can be made for each individual to attend from 1 day to 3 days a week.

The bottom line

Horticultural: The Big Lottery funding for the 'Food For Thought Project' runs out in March 2014. In order to continue offering supported placements after this date, there will be a need to structure this part of the service to be sustainable, and so enable it to grow.

The funding received allows the centre to offer a low daily cost to begin with, but this will need to be increased and systems will be drawn up to monitor what daily cost the market will support. This will be a fine balancing act!

In their own words

Motivation – “We are passionate about developing people, and aim to inspire people to fulfil their potential. We are keen to offer opportunities for individuals to take a fresh look at themselves and the world in which they live”.

Approach – “We treat each person as an individual, and do our utmost to make their experience at Lambourne End enjoyable and meaningful to them”.

Benefits – “Formal qualifications have been achieved by many young people who were at risk of leaving school without qualifications. We are continually amazed at the variety of ways we can see individuals benefiting from being in the outdoors, and are exploring how the less tangible benefits can be measured”.

For more information

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Key challenges

Lambourne End Outdoor Centre is situated in the corner of West Essex, and is very close to the London Boroughs of Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham, and Havering. Due to the geographic position developing relationships with relevant organisations in each of these areas is a huge challenge.

Tips for others

Visit other existing care farming sites to find out how they work, and speak to potential users and commissioners to see what is needed in your area.

The Care Farm starter pack from West Midlands Care Farming at a cost of £20 is an invaluable resource.

“If your site is not accessible by public transport, consider how participants will travel to you. As we are not on a bus route, access to our centre is a barrier for many potential users. In our application to the Big Lottery Fund we included the capital and running costs of a mini bus. This enables us to pick up groups of people from local stations, who would otherwise not be able to use Lambourne End Centre”.



If you want to learn more about Care Farming UK please visit www.carefarminguk.org or email enquiries@carefarminguk.org