

Share offer for the
**Fordhall
community
land initiative**



**£50,000 Required to Complete
our Straw Bale Bunkhouse**

Fordhall
Farm

 power to
change

 | 
LOTTERY FUNDED


OUR BRIGHT
FUTURE
OUR ENVIRONMENT
IS OUR FUTURE

Offer summary

You are invited to join the 8,000 community shareholders who collectively own Fordhall Organic Farm in Market Drayton, Shropshire.

Become a land owner today by purchasing one or more of our £50 non-profit making community shares in our community-benefit society, the Fordhall Community Land Initiative.



Shares are life-long and allow you to be part of our inspiring and innovative community project, safeguarding a historic organic farm for the benefit of future farmers, the community and our native wildlife and biodiversity.

Fordhall has come a long way since 2006. This share offer will directly support the construction of our new straw bale bunkhouse, a community building to support our care farm, youth project, volunteer offer and education programme.

We need to raise £50,000 to complete this building. By purchasing a share today and joining our community you can help us do that.

'Build it Together'

Background - how we became England's first community-owned farm.

Fordhall is a 140acre organic farm based in rural north Shropshire and it has been farmed organically for over 60 years (128acres currently in community ownership).

Revolutionary farmer, Arthur Hollins was born at Fordhall in 1915 and later took over the tenancy of the farm aged just 14. Despite the push for 'new' chemical farming, in the 1940s he adopted organic principles to which he remained faithful for the rest of his life. By the year 2000, Fordhall Farm was under serious threat from big business and the bulldozer. The Hollins family was on the verge of being evicted and Arthur's life's work was about to be reduced to ruins.



In 2004, Arthur's children, Charlotte and Ben (then 19 and 21) returned from college and university to lead the fight to save Fordhall. By 2006, with less than six months to raise £800,000 to buy the tenanted farm outright, they began to sell £50 non-profit making community shares. When people read about their plight in the Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, Country Living and many more publications, they immediately supported the brother and sister team - it was quite amazing.

Now, quite remarkably, Fordhall is England's first community-owned farm - with one farmer, Ben, and no fewer

than 8,000 landlords - a number that is increasing all of the time.

The land remains organic to this day. The cattle and sheep are 100% grass-fed reared using a system called Foggage farming and the pigs are naturally free-range. The Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI) is a Community Benefit Society with charitable status and it now owns Fordhall Farm (through its 8,000+ shareholders). It manages the farm as a popular open community resource, whilst leasing the land to tenant farmer, Ben Hollins.

He has a 100-year lease and manages

the land, livestock, farm shop and butchery through his own limited company. That company has a separate staff base and in turn pays a rent to the Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI).

The FCLI, is a landowner, but also exists to utilise the land for community benefit, with education at its heart.

Fordhall is testament to what can be achieved when community, farming and nature all work together. **Mountains can be overcome and the seemingly insurmountable challenges can become possibilities.**

Our successes since 2006

It has been a whirlwind journey since 2006. Fordhall has transformed from a run down and derelict farm, to a wonderful community resource.

We have renovated our Old Dairy building, creating an organic and local food café, a meeting room and office space. We have also improved facilities for our tenant farmer to run a farm shop.

We provide free open access to the farm through our farm trails providing a real opportunity for families to see farm life close up and in real-time, and we offer yurts out for glamping, encouraging those less familiar with nature and the outdoors to dip their toe in the water and feel inspired.

We have an oversubscribed care farm supporting adults with learning disabilities, a hugely successful youth project supporting young people who struggle in the classroom, we receive over 2000 school children each year to take part in our highly regarded education programme and we welcome over 100 volunteers. Fordhall is a hustling, bustling hive of activity, but we are missing out on opportunities to help more people. Furthermore, the facilities we provide for our current community projects are less than adequate.



The construction of our straw bale bunkhouse will facilitate the continued successes at Fordhall, allowing us to benefit more members of our local and wider community, ensuring that sustainable farming and healthy living remains at the forefront of society.



The Old Dairy



before & after

What will our current share issue achieve?

This share issue is being launched to raise £50,000 to support the completion of our straw bale building at Fordhall Farm.

This building will:

- Replace the current unsightly porta cabins with accommodation and social space fit for purpose and the needs of our community.
- Allow us to expand the educational offer we have at Fordhall, encouraging inner city children, youth groups and schools to spend a night on the farm, providing them with an opportunity to immerse themselves in nature.

We believe that the way to encourage behavioural change is by creating fun experiences that lead to lasting memories. Our educational experiences will inspire a generation of adults to appreciate and care for our natural world.

- Create additional onsite toilets to alleviate pressure on current facilities when a coach load of children are onsite.
- Allow us to double the size of our care farm, supporting more adults with learning disabilities in our local area.
- Provide a lunch space for our youth project.
- Provide accommodation for our growing base of volunteers.
- Provide accommodation for our onsite weddings to help increase our trading revenue.
- Allow us to introduce new revenue generating schemes such as yoga and meditation holidays or corporate team away days.

The building will provide:

- Sleeping accommodation for up to 22 people (with space for an additional 8 camp beds in the living room area and one bedroom with disabled access).
- A social and dining room area large enough to seat 30 people
- A catering kitchen
- Five toilets (one with disabled access)
- Three showers (one with disabled access)
- Brew room for volunteers and muddy boots!



How Fordhall Farm will make a difference?

Fordhall Organic Farm is home to a unique community enterprise, which is expanding to meet the growing needs of its community.

Your contribution will:

- Help a youngster gain new skills and confidence to flourish in the adult world.
- Support a person with learning difficulties to engage with nature and grow in self-esteem.
- Inspire a child to explore the world, learning how to respect and protect it for future generations.

Help us on the next stage of our journey by supporting the build of a straw bale bunkhouse, our story is only just beginning!

How will we build it?

- The roundwood timber frame has been produced by a workers cooperative in Wales. The timber is all harvested by hand and crafted by hand, with no machinery in site. It is oak pegged together and by using the Roundwood, waste timber is reduced. Furthermore, it allows the smaller trees which are no good for conventional timber yards to be fully utilised and not wasted.
- The walls are all made from straw harvested in Shrewsbury and built on site by members of our community. Internally this will be rendered with clay and externally it will be rendered with lime.
- Recycled Car tyre foundations (sourced from our local town) have been used for the base - there is no CO2 emitting concrete insight.
- The straw walls or sheep's wool in the roof will form the insulation needed.
- A cedar shingle roof completes the build – in fact it is almost a compostable building!
- PV Panels will be erected to produce electricity.

This construction will not only be supportive of our community, but it will be supportive of our environment too. By using natural and where possible, local materials it will act as a carbon sink, rather than causing harmful greenhouse emissions.



Where will the rest of the funding come from?

The total cost of this build (including professional fees) is £550,000. Those funds are made up of the following:

- £300,000 grant from Power to Change
- £100,000 grant from Our Bright Future, Big Lottery
- £50,000 donation from the Jean Jackson Charitable Trust
- £50,000 donations from our Members through an appeal ran in May 2018
- £50,000 through this share issue and crowd funding campaign (October/November 2018)

What are community shares?

All Members should regard these shares a long-term investment.

They may apply to a minimum of 50 to a maximum of 20,000 shares at £1.00 each, payable in full on application. Anyone aged 16 or above can invest. Organisations, cubs or companies can invest, too.

Community shares are withdrawable shares that cannot be sold, traded or transferred between Members, unlike shares in a typical company. All Members are entitled to one vote – regardless of how many shares they hold, so we remain completely democratic as an organisation.

A Board of Directors is selected from those members that stand for election, based on a democratic vote at our AGM (postal votes also accepted). We have a board of 12 members, with permanent places for our tenant farmer and one for Shropshire Wildlife Trust.

Community Shares (also called ‘withdrawable shares’) are ideally suited to community-focused organisations. Investors may withdraw their investment (in essence, get their money back) but only under

certain conditions. The Society must first have the funds to support withdrawal and that withdrawal must not put the Society in jeopardy.

Community shares cannot increase in value. If the Society ever sold Fordhall Farm, the money raised would belong to the Society and investors might be offered their money back at the original purchase price or the money could be used by the Society for other community purposes subject to its constitutional rules (this is called an “asset lock”).

The Board believe that investment in this share offer will be eligible for Social Investment Tax Relief. We have applied to HMRC for confirmation of this, and expect to hear by the end of December, and we will communicate any news via our website and other channels, as well as the crowdfunding page.

If we are eligible, investors can reclaim 30% of the value of their shares against their income tax liability, and if they use funds classed as a capital gain to make the investment, they can reduce the Capital Gains Tax due by 30% too. Whether an individual investor will be able to claim the tax relief will depend on their own circumstances, and the society cannot advise investors as to their own personal eligibility.

It is important to note that the value of the shares will not increase. There is no financial benefit to community shares in the Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI) – this is an altruistic investment in the future.

The shares are not transferable (except as allowed by the rules of The Society upon your death) and cannot be sold. The only way to recover the value of the shares purchased is to give notice of withdrawal to the Board of Directors. However, the Board of Directors may decide to withdraw this option without notice and at any given point. These rules are here to safeguard the FCLI as a community-benefit (not member-benefit) society.

The FCLI has been running since December 2005. Since that date 568 shares have been withdrawn from the Society; an average of 47 shares per year, which has generally been as a result of the death of a shareholder. We have honoured 100% of the requests for share withdrawals and plan to continue on this basis. Only in the unlikely situation that the result of withdrawing the share capital will put the society’s work in jeopardy, will these requests ever be delayed. Thus far, withdrawals have been repaid within two months of the Society being in receipt of the necessary paperwork. Share withdrawals and have been balanced by an average sale of 100 new share purchases each year.

What do you get for being a shareholder in the Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI)

Each community share comes with a beautifully presented share certificate and for the first year you will receive a free subscription to our quarterly newsletter, The Grazer. These shares are completely non-profit making and cannot be sold on or transferred (unless stated so in a Will) – you are investing in the future.

There is no limit to the number of shares one person can own, but they will hold only one vote regardless of the volume of shares. This means the society remains completely democratic.

As a Member you will have the right to nominate yourself to join our Board of Directors. This provides a further opportunity for you to share your skills and experience to help move the Fordhall Community Land Initiative forward.

We consult with our members on our strategy, our focus and our future. Being a member provides you with a say in how Fordhall progresses. We also hold an annual special Members' BBQ. This is a free event held in the farmhouse garden by kind invitation of our tenant farmer and provides an informal space to meet other members, discuss progress with staff and share stories in addition to the annual general meeting.

We strongly recommend that you read our Society Rules before purchasing a share in the Fordhall Community Land Initiative.

In brief...

Community shares, also called withdrawable shares, are a unique form of share capital and can be only be issued by co-operatives and community benefit societies. Community shares cannot be sold, traded or transferred between Members, unlike shares in a typical company. They cannot increase their value (£1) but may decrease if the Society suffers financial losses.

The Basics:

How can you invest?

We are running this share offer through the Crowdfunder website, which means anyone with a credit or debit card inside or outside the UK can invest. Funds you pledge to invest will be taken from you as soon as you agree to become an investor, but will be held by Stripe, Crowdfunder's payment provider and only released to us if the offer meets its minimum target by the deadline for the offer closing.

If you cannot use Crowdfunder, there is an application form at the end of this document. We can accept cheques payable to The Fordhall Community Land Initiative Ltd or payments made through our own website www.fordhallfarm.com or direct to our bank account.

What will happen to the money?

Funds invested via Crowdfunder will be released to us soon after either the share offer closes, provided we have hit the minimum target. Cheques will be banked after this point, whilst bank transfers will go direct into our

account. All funds received will count towards our £50,000 target.

What is the minimum and maximum investment? The minimum shareholding is £50 (50 £1 shares). The maximum investment is £20,000 (20,000 £1 shares per investor.)

Who can invest? Anyone over the age of 16 can invest (but only people aged 18 or above can serve as directors). If you would like to purchase shares for children under the age of 16, then they need to be held on an adults behalf until they reach 16, at which point the share will become theirs in their own right. We can provide special 'child friendly' certificates for younger members (please contact our office for further information on this 01630 638696).

Can organisations and businesses subscribe for Community Shares? Yes. A representative of that organisation will need to become a nominee member of the society on behalf of their organisation/ business. If the organisation or business is legally

incorporated, the shareholding remains the property of the organisation/ business and any withdrawal would be paid to the organisation or business. If the organisation of business is not legally incorporated (eg, a small sports club or a sole trader business) then the shares are the legal property of the named individual who completes the form and any withdrawal would go to the named individual, and it would be a matter for the organisation and the named individual to resolve how this was handled by them.

Can people club together to buy shares? Yes, but as with organisations, you'll have to nominate a member of your group to be the named shareholder in our share register.



Frequent Questions:

Are my shares at risk? Although the Fordhall Community Land Initiative is registered as a society with The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), the sale of community shares is not regulated by the FCA. Like many investments, community shares are at risk and you could lose some or all of the money you invest. Unlike deposits with high street banks, community shares are not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, nor is there any right of complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. If you are considering investing a significant amount then you may wish to seek independent financial advice before doing so.

As the Society confers limited liability, the most you could lose due to business failure would be your original investment. As this offer is unregulated, you have no right to complain to the Financial Ombudsman or to compensation.

What if the society fails? If the Society ever runs into financial difficulty, it is possible that not all of the original investment could be repaid to shareholders. We believe there no serious prospect of insolvency. The Fordhall Community Land Initiative has been successfully trading for 12 years and has a healthy balance sheet of £800k+. In the unlikely event of this happening, the ability of investors to recoup the funds they have invested would depend on firstly the value we could realise for the assets of the Society and secondly, the value of our debts at that point. Any surplus after paying any debt owed by the Society would be used to enable shareholders to have their capital returned, and any surplus left after that would have to be spent on charitable activity in the community.



A photograph of a wooden stump on a wooden table in a hayfield. The stump is the central focus, resting on a rustic wooden table. The background is a dense field of golden-brown hay, creating a textured and natural setting. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunny day.

Frequent Questions Cont.

Can my investment be gift aided? As we have charitable objects, we are recognised as a charity with HMRC. We can therefore claim Gift Aid on donations, but as investments (community shares) do not count as donations we cannot claim gift aid on share purchases. Anyone donating will not be a Member of the Society or enjoy any of the rights associated with membership. Anyone who wants to indicate that they would rather have their money treated as a donation can complete the gift aid section in the application on the application form at the end of this share offer document.

Can I sell my shares? No. This investment is in withdrawable share capital which cannot be transferred, sold or given to anyone else, except on your death to someone you have nominated and told us about.

Can I withdraw my share capital? In accordance with Rule 26, share withdrawals may be authorised at discretion of the Board, subject to twelve months' notice and the financial performance and available funds. However, unless withdrawals are significant in amount we aim to repay shares within two months.

Can shares increase in value? Shares cannot rise in value, so there will never be a capital gain. They may be reduced in value if our auditors instruct us to do so if they believe that the value of our assets has fallen.

Will I get a Share Certificate? Everyone who invests will receive a beautifully presented community share certificate and a year's free subscription to our quarterly 32-page newsletter, The Grazer.

Frequent Questions Cont.

What will you do with my personal details and data?

Your personal details as submitted on the application form will be held by the society and used in accordance with the provisions of the rules and of the 2014 Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act. The society will not share, sell or provide my details to any other individual or organisation and will ensure compliance with the European GDPR regulation in accordance with its responsibility as a data controller.

Do my shares give me voting rights? Yes, they do. One member one vote. Everyone has an equal voice, regardless of the size of their investment.

Will I receive interest from my shares? No. The Society does not believe it is prudent or necessary to pay interest on community shares. Therefore, no interest will ever be accrued on shares with the Fordhall Community Land Initiative.

Am I entitled to any discounts or financial rewards? No. We are not allowed to offer Members special discounts that are not available to the whole community. We will however, keep you up to date with progress, events and activities at the farm, so quite often you will be the first to know! It is also important to note that the Farm Shop and Fordhall Event Catering are separate businesses to the Fordhall Community Land Initiative and are run as limited companies by our tenant farmer, Ben Hollins. Whilst we all adhere to the Fordhall brand values, these companies work independently to each other.

Bunkhouse Appeal and Share Form



Title.....Forename.....Surname.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Telephone number.....

Email address.....

Buy shares How many would you like? (£50 each).....
(1 year's free subscription to 'The Grazer' when you buy a share)

I would like to donate to the Straw Bale Bunkhouse

£50

£75

£100

Other

Total amount enclosed £.....
Please make cheques payable to the 'Fordhall Community Land Initiative' and return to The FCLI, Fordhall Organic Farm, Tern Hill Road, Market Drayton, Shropshire. TF9 3PS.

When buying a share for UNDER 16s, they automatically become a member of The Cow Pat Club, please circle which certificate design you would like

Cow

Pig

Sheep

Date of birth.....

Name of guardian.....
(This is the formal name of person who holds the share until the child turns 16)

Name of person buying share.....
(eg. Mummy, Grandad, Aunty Bess) In the interest of saving paper and costs, we correspond by email where possible. We will keep all information securely, confidentially and electronically.

Gift Aid - Give more at no cost to you!

giftaid it

We can claim 25 per cent from HMRC providing you have paid sufficient Income Tax or Capital Gains Tax to cover the amount that we reclaim. Sign below to enable us to reclaim tax aid on all donations we receive or have received from you over the last four years and to continue claiming Gift Aid from your donations until you notify us otherwise.

SignatureDate

www.fordhallfarm.com

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/fordhallfarm