

Social Farming Report to AGM
June 2023

The running and delivery of the farm's day placement programme has continued to flow smoothly these past months.

The same seven co-workers who were with us at the time of last year's report are still attending regularly.

Some people were particularly negatively affected by the Covid lockdowns and it has been rewarding to observe how the farm experience contributes to a return to their previous, more outgoing selves.

Co-workers contribute greatly to the day to day work of the farm. They make sure that all eggs are collected and processed by Friday, ready for weekend markets and they will now be ensuring that eggs are ready by mid-week for our veg bag customers. They keep the laundry done and the bins emptied.

In response to specific coworker needs and interests, Tuesday mornings have now taken on a Craft focus.

Co-workers were already involved in many aspects of wool processing, including gathering up the sheared fleeces, and washing and carding them.

They have experimented to find the best washing methods and collected various plant materials, made dyes and dyed the yarn. There have been some good colours achieved.

Thanks to the help of our amazing volunteer, Lois, I have learned enough about how to use some of the looms to be able to teach the coworkers and so expand the range of activities we can offer on a craft day.

We have begun using our dyed yarns to weave simple straps.

Also thanks to Lois, Lauriston was awarded first prize in a competition run by Ashfords of NZ who make top quality wool crafting equipment.

With the prize money we can buy some excellent new kit for the craft room.

It was a happy day when the bird flu restrictions were finally lifted and our much loved chickens were once again free to scratch about and dust bathe outside. Poultry care is a key part of the coworker day. Checking the birds look well and keeping their houses clean. They also collect any old leafy veg and take to the chickens and sometimes cook them up some old potatoes, which the chickens appear to enjoy very much.

Last November the boardwalk was in a poor state meaning Coco Care were unable to visit the woods.

However, thanks to Aaron's hard work the paths have been repaired and are safe

and wheelchair accessible again.

Coco Care visited this month and plan to return soon.

Co workers visit the sheep fields every session and for most it is the highlight of the day. Lambing season has been exciting as the numbers went up each day and some very new arrivals were spotted in the field.

At the end of this month it will be time for me to hand over the Day Placement work to our new team members and move on. There is a very considered and supportive 'handover' phase in progress.

When I was a weekly volunteer I felt that there may be a way that I could contribute more, as the Social farming project developed, and I truly appreciate that I was given an opportunity to do so.

Working with the brilliant coworkers and an impressively dedicated staff team and supportive volunteers and trustees has been a real privilege for which I hope I will always feel grateful.