

Social Enterprise West Midlands
Market Drayton Advertiser
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Advertiser

Fordhall spearheads new drive

Fordhall Farm has been chosen to spearhead a drive for businesses to operate with a more social and environmental outlook.

The Market Drayton community-owned farm is one of five "flagship" projects to be selected as part of a new, two-year programme by Social Enterprise West Midlands.

It encourages businesses to use "commercial know-how to achieve a social mission" by reinvesting profits for the benefit of the community, rather than shareholders and owners.

As a flagship social enterprise, Fordhall Farm will have access to publicity, training and networking opportunities which project director Charlotte Hollins said will help it raise awareness of food and farming in the Market Drayton area.

She said: "It's a great honour to be chosen because it's a reflection of what

has been achieved so far and all the people who have contributed to Fordhall Farm's success.

"We've been involved with Social Enterprise West Midlands for the last couple of years with regards to trying to promote social enterprise in the area. We applied for a flagship position and we'll be working with them more closely over the next two years.

"People want to know about social enterprise and the benefits of reinvesting profits for environmental or social purposes so this is part of the whole process."

Among well-known social enterprises are the Big Issue magazine and Cafe Direct.

Charlotte said the current recession was an ideal time for businesses to consider adopting a more social and environmental model.

"We're running Fordhall Farm as a

business and we have to make money to survive, otherwise what we're doing is not sustainable," she said.

"We've still got a lot of work to do to renovate the old buildings and provide classroom space, offices and a tea room. We need to keep promoting the farm and for people to know about what we're doing because everything we do is about increasing awareness of food and farming."

Social Enterprise West Midlands network director Kevin Maton said: "Fordhall Farm is an exceptional enterprise which demonstrates the fundamental principles of achieving difficult social and environmental goals through sound commercial work.

"We have ambitious goals and believe that Fordhall's Community Land Initiative has the potential to become a well-known example of social enterprise."