



21<sup>st</sup> may 2018

## **Bunkhouse Appeal – urgent. 31<sup>st</sup> May deadline.**

Dear Friend

Fantastic news – I've just learnt of a £50,000 fund that we could secure if we raise at least £50,000 from supporters by May 31<sup>st</sup>.

The money raised will help to build an innovative straw bale building for volunteers, youth projects, care farming and school visits.

We have already secured planning permission and raised £400,000 of the £500,000 needed for the main construction. A contribution from you, matched by the Jean Jackson Trust could meet our goal.

**However, this has presented a major challenge and I hope you will, therefore, excuse the urgent tone of this letter and my appeal for a donation.**

In order to be eligible for the £50,000 fund – which the Jean Jackson Trust would like to give us – we need to raise at least £50,000 ourselves towards the project.

To allow contractors to start onsite this spring, we must do this by 31<sup>st</sup> May. (I've enclosed for you separately full details of the funding package that will enable us to create the building.)

**Please help us meet the 31<sup>st</sup> May deadline. Every £1 you donate towards the £50,000 will be matched with an extra £1 from the fund – which is brilliant. So each £1 donated will actually be worth £2.25 to us with Gift Aid.**

**Your gift of £25 would actually be worth £56.25 to us and could contribute to the clay and lime plaster we need to render the straw bale walls.**

If Fordhall is to meet your expectations and those of the thousands of people that backed us in 2006 then this project must go ahead – it is the last piece of the jigsaw. Our existing Porta cabins are simply



Volunteer Ellie, ensures everyone is well fed on our volunteer weekends



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The FCLI has exempt charity status ref: XR91116  
VAT registration no: 934 7449 93

inadequate for our volunteers, our adults with learning disabilities who attend our care farm, and the young people on our youth project. Infrastructure and facilities are currently limiting us reaching the true potential of Fordhall.

When Ben and I took on the farm after that amazingly frantic period when Fordhall was saved from the developers, we were acutely aware that with the dilapidated buildings there was a huge amount of work to do to realise our vision – and make the farm fully accessible to the community.

Ben's done a remarkable job since then building Fordhall up as a productive organic farm, and the land is in fantastic condition. Plus, wildlife is thriving all over the farm.

Eight years ago you helped us raise an astonishing £100,000 towards the Old Dairy building, which now provides a classroom space, meeting room, organic café, offices and farm shop. You have allowed us to create a really strong base. Now we need to do the same for our volunteers and the people in our community who work so hard to support us.

The new straw bale bunkhouse will contain the facilities needed to enable thousands more children – the next generation upon whom the future depends – to learn about Dad's vision for sustainable farming. This building will honour his legacy, both in its construction but also in what it represents – a place that is built by the community for the community. Dad always believed in people, just as much as he believed in his vital workers in the soil – the microbes and worms.

I know that you appreciate the wider importance of what we are doing. Fordhall is a blueprint for other farms to follow – giving countless people the chance to experience farm life and enjoy local food grown without chemicals. Our new building will also teach people about sustainable building techniques and it will provide a healthy and inspiring place for people to visit.

I am acutely conscious of the role you have already played as a key donor and backer of the farm. You rallied round to save Fordhall and turn it into the country's first community-owned farm and you have supported us ever since.

However, with this rapidly approaching deadline supporter donations are once again vital to Fordhall.

I therefore hope you will excuse me for being so direct in asking you send a donation now towards the £50,000 required. We are dependent on gifts to create this sorely needed bunkhouse that will remain in the ownership of the community – you. The wonderful plans sit in front of me as I write.

### A straw house?

We all know what happened to the little pig who built his house of straw. But a straw bale building is easy to build, warm and solid enough to confound any wolf! The building will also have a timber frame, shingle roof and lime render – all environmentally-friendly techniques that can involve lots of people. If you want to join in – just let me know.



Your donation, however large or small, will make a real difference. It could enable us to:

- Provide a social and lunch room for our hard working volunteers, our care farm users and additional lunchroom space for our visiting schools.
- Welcome scout/brownie groups and other youth groups to visit Fordhall for an overnight experience providing them with a memorable and magical overnight experience.
- Kit out a kitchen – giving our care farm the capacity to make jams and chutneys for sale in the farm shop with produce harvested from the community garden or foraged from around the farm.
- Construct facilities for volunteers and weekend courses on topics such as sustainable farming. There will be showers, catering facilities, and toilets including disabled access.

As I write though, we've still got to secure the funds from the Jean Jackson Trust, upon which the viability of the whole bunkhouse is based.

If all goes well and we meet the 31<sup>st</sup> May deadline, by late June the timber frame will be erected and in August we will be receiving delivery of the straw bales.

Our timber frame contractor is a worker cooperative based in Wales. The round wood larch timber will be harvested within 1 mile of their workshop. When it arrives on site it will be prepared by young people attending our youth project and erected using nothing more than ropes and pulleys – no crane will be needed. The walls will be constructed of locally harvested straw, keeping our carbon foot print low.

### Lay a bale

This element can involve you (if you wish), our volunteers, care farm members and young people. Working over four weeks in the summer to peg, resize and lay our giant straw bricks, this truly will be a building built by the Fordhall community.



These are some of the items on our shopping list.

Remember, matched funding via the Jean Jackson Trust will double the value of your gift.

- **£25 from you would be worth £56.25 to us and could help to buy 19 straw bales we will need to build the walls.**
- **£50 from you would be worth £112.50 to us and could help to buy the**



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- **photovoltaic solar energy cells for the roof to generate electricity.**
- **£100 from you would be worth £225.00 to us and could help to buy 56 of the 20,000 cedar shingles that are needed to complete the roof on the Bunkhouse.**

As your tenants, Ben and I will be forever conscious that Fordhall remains a living, vibrant organic farm working alongside nature – not against it – because people like you cared. You cared enough to support the vision of our father, Arthur Hollins.

So, I am asking you if you would consider contributing again for this major milestone for Fordhall.

With many heartfelt thanks for all your previous support and whatever you feel you can do now towards the £50,000 that is needed – we keep our fingers crossed that we can raise the funds by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> May.

If you have any questions or you would like to organise a fundraising event, perhaps with other shareholders, then please don't hesitate to contact me on 01630 638696.

Many thanks in advance and keep the good wishes flowing,

Charlotte Hollins on behalf of Ben and the whole team here at the Fordhall Community Land Initiative.

**PS: The team here are ready to start processing the donations as we wait to see whether we will raise the £50,000 needed by the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> May.** Every £1 you give will be worth £2.25 to us because it will hopefully be matched by the grant of £50,000 – to be released when we hit the £50,000. You can use the form enclosed or rush your donation to me at <http://www.fordhallfarm.com/bunkhouseappeal>.

PPS: We'd be delighted to provide an opportunity for you to get involved with the straw baling or the clay render process, just let us know.