

## Care Farm Manager and Community Gardener

### JOB DESCRIPTION

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>Role:</b>         | <b>Care Farm Manager and Community Gardener</b>  |
| <b>Job purpose:</b>  | <p>With proven management capability and extensive organic gardening experience, you will lead and empower our care farm delivery team and volunteer workers, helping take our Care Farm forward to the next level.</p> <p>With compassion and empathy, you will support and empower vulnerable adults to achieve new heights, build their independence, and their feeling of self-worth and well-being.</p> <p>You will manage a dedicated team of two/three staff, develop strategies to improve the impact of the project, guide the creation of annual gardening plans, offer staff training and become part of the Fordhall Community Land Initiative's senior team. Thereby, helping to drive forward our community-owned farm in Shropshire.</p> <p>This role follows the departure of our existing manager after 12 wonderful years in post.</p> |
| <b>Duration:</b>     | Average of 25 hours per week over 4 days (9-3.30pm Mon-Thurs) with options for overtime.   |
| <b>Salary:</b>       | Competitive according to skills and experience.  |
| <b>Reporting to:</b> | General Manager  |

**Background:** As England's first community-owned farm, Fordhall has always been a dynamic and innovative organisation. We are forward thinking, environmentally conscious and with over 8,000 community shareholders, we are definitely community-focussed. Whilst the organic farmland is leased to a tenant farmer (Ben Hollins), as a community body and landlord, we utilise the same land for the benefit of our community.

We believe that by restoring connections between hearts, minds and the soil, we will encourage and create meaningful change which helps to build health and resilience within people and planet. We run many projects at Fordhall that support us on our mission. These include a café, youth project working with vulnerable young people, volunteer opportunities, community events, free community access to the farm through managed farm trails, social prescribing, and of course our care farm, which supports adults with learning disabilities. For more background on how Fordhall became community-owned, or for additional information on the many projects we run at Fordhall, please see [www.fordhallfarm.com](http://www.fordhallfarm.com)

**A bit about our care farm:**

Our care farm has been running for over 12 years and has gone from strength to strength. We are open four days a week (Mon-Thurs) and work with adults with learning disabilities and autism. We work all year round in the community garden and polytunnel, growing organic food for our volunteer workers to take home, for us to make chutney to sell or occasionally to add to the delights in our onsite café. We also complete conservation work around the farm, manage all of the composting, part take in woodworking in the greenwood shelter, support other activities and events on site, and enjoy being creative through naturally based arts and craft activities. During the winter months we have access to the main room in the Straw Lodge and the large catering kitchen, which is perfect for chutney making!

On any given day, there are up to seven volunteer workers (the name chosen by those attending our sessions), with two staff working alongside them to offer support and guidance, plus any external support workers who may be required to work alongside their clients. We occasionally have other Fordhall volunteers joining us for a session to gain experience.

**Job Purpose:**

Our focus is on growing people as individuals; encouraging them to grow, enjoy and flourish in the activities provided at Fordhall. We value our volunteer workers as integral members of the FCLI team, helping to create a beautiful and welcoming place to visit for every member of our local community.

This role is about having a positive and lasting impact on the hearts and minds of all those who attend the care farm, and whilst doing so, you will be nurturing the soil and environment around you. Sustainability, people and soil are at the heart of everything Fordhall. This will shine through in the way you lead your team; in the decisions you make and in the strategies you and your team create.

By actively supporting adults with learning disabilities to grow their own potential, confidence and skills within the setting of the Fordhall community garden and care farm growing project, you will be changing lives for the better.

You will ensure there are opportunities for volunteer workers to be involved in all aspects of the care farm from growing food, wood working, conservation work, cooking and, arts and crafts. Your role will ensure there is inclusivity and enjoyment at the centre of your team. You will be adaptable to working with the seasons and delivering outdoor sessions throughout the year.

As a proven leader in your field, your role as care farm manager will be to lead, inspire and collaborate with the care farm development support workers to implement our collective vision of the care farm, using your knowledge and experience to help shape the service, develop our staff team, retain a strong team dynamic, and increase the potential of what we can offer our clients.

As a key member of the organisations senior management team, you will also ensure the care farm and its participants are integrated into other activities across the site as appropriate. You will also contribute to Fordhalls wider strategic vision

### **About You:**

You will be a passionate organic gardener; you will love nature and have an instinctive understanding of how a connected growing system provides a healthy and productive site.

You will have excellent personal skills and a genuine interest in people. You will be passionate about enabling people to learn and develop. You will need to be sensitive to the needs of others, open-minded and have a willingness to be as open hearted as possible when the need arises. You will be committed to championing the needs of the individuals you are working with.

A passion for enabling individuals to fulfil their potential is a priority. Working within a small dynamic team, flexibility is essential and you will have the skills and experience to lead practical, purposeful activities in an outdoor environment in addition to gardening.

We seek to support people within the context of nature. You will thrive in sharing your knowledge and passion for the natural world with those around you, and you will appreciate the opportunity that Fordhall offers to further this journey.

Your strengths will include problem solving, adaptability, communication and self-motivation.

Whilst development training is given to all members of our senior team, proven capability of managing a staff team is essential. You will be an excellent listener, and you will be able to tackle difficult conversations in a diplomatic, balanced, yet clear and empathic way. Your diplomacy and compassion, together with your high standards and an understanding of how to empower those around you; will ensure you coach your staff team positively.

You will be committed to challenging yourself, reflecting, and to exploring ways to develop and improve the service we offer. Thereby, being committed to bringing the best part of you, and your team, to the role. Most importantly, we are a team at Fordhall. Working collaboratively and being honest with ourselves and each other is central to our approach.

A day on the care farm is never dull with a myriad of tasks and activities on offer. From growing food to planting trees, cooking outside or engaging with a craft activity, no two days are ever the same.

## Key Roles and Responsibilities:

### Our Volunteer Workers (Adults with Learning Disabilities)

- Working directly with adults with our volunteer workers, delivering a person-centred approach; supporting them to ensure they are safe and are able to carry out the activities they do the best of their abilities.
- To work with empathy and understanding to support, guide and encourage our participants to achieve their potential and improve their physical, mental and emotional well-being.
- Celebrate successes together
- Encourage interaction with other staff teams and members of the public onsite

### Activities and Growing

- Managing and maintaining the community garden and other growing areas on the farm. Maximise production of garden produce and the provision of a welcoming space for visitors.
- Planning, organising and running the day-to-day activities in the garden in collaboration with your staff team. Managing the winter activities that include tree planting and other conservation work, making jams and chutneys to sell, arts/crafts etc.
- Offering practical habitat and greenspace management and creative conservation techniques/ideas to the wider farm
- Responsible for maintaining the growing areas and storage spaces, ensuring a safe and tidy site. Co-ordinating the general cleaning and maintenance of greenhouse, shed, storage areas, all internal and external areas used by the group.
- Actively contribute to making the farm an interesting, welcoming and safe place for volunteer workers, staff and visitors. Interacting with people in a polite and courteous way.
- Engage with FCLI Volunteer weekends – to participate in a volunteer weekend once a year
- Ensure AQA certificates or other forms of recognition are provided to volunteer workers wherever the opportunity presents itself

### Staff Management

- To work in a way that empowers your team, encourages collaboration, builds trust and celebrates individual strengths.
- Management and supervision of staff and volunteers
  - Ensure all team members work within the appropriate policies, procedures and statutory practices and job descriptions
  - Ensure all team members are supported to adhere to the organisational values
  - Ensuring appropriate training is undertaken by staff and volunteers according to their roles and responsibilities.
  - Providing staff support and coaching through appraisals, team meetings, training orientation and induction of new staff and volunteers
  - Manage complaints, disciplinary procedures and staffing issues for your team.
  - Set annual targets/visions with your team for social impact and environmental impact (linked to the organisational strategic aims as well as any departmental objectives) as well as personal development goals.

### Strategy and Project Management

- You will be the site Adult Safeguarding Lead and as such be responsible for managing all adult safe guarding issues and that correct procedures are followed and policies are updated as required.
- To be responsible for the Health and Safety of your project and delivery – ensuring all areas are risk assessed and maintained to a high degree of safety.

- Ensure all Risk Assessments, Policies & Procedures are up to date according to best practice and recommendations from the local authorities and Care Farm UK accreditation
- Budget management – manage the financial needs of the care farm project, maintain the care farm budget, be responsible for petty cash spend. Propose forecasts to the General Manager for annual spend, maintain accurate records of expenditure.
- Be responsible for regular monitoring, impact measurement and evaluation of the project and clients using the service.
- To manage the an impact management strategy for the care farm project, ensuring impact is reviewed and positive strategies are put in place to continually improve our service for the benefit of those who attend and to support the Fordhall Community Land Initiatives strategic objectives
- Record keeping - Keep all appropriate records and information in an orderly manner and on a timely basis, provide any information and documentation required and prepare regular reports and updates
- Be actively involved in the gathering and documentation of individual's achievement. Keep all appropriate records and information up to date, provide any information and documentation required and prepare regular reports on the day's activities, including individual evaluations to help make sure there is accurate and timely information available.
- Liaising with outside agencies i.e. Shropshire County Council, day care centres, social workers, statutory agencies and voluntary services such as Social Farms and Gardens to ensure we meet the needs of people attending the care farm, ensure contracts are maintained and vacant placements are filled.
- To build partnerships with like-minded organisations to share learning and encourage collaborative working
- Staying up to date with statutory changes; implementing them where necessary
- Co-ordinating with other team leaders – youth project, the education team, tea room etc to ensure complimentary cross-working across site including the sharing of spaces.
- Promoting the service to outside agencies as well as visitors to the farm
- Liaise and communicate with families and support staff to ensure regular and up to date communication with them.
- Supporting Fordhall's General Manager and other senior management by attending senior management meetings or planning days as required.
- Undertake training and continuous professional development in accordance with the needs of the service and the people we support.
- Be part of the Fordhall team – upholding the values and ethos of the FCLI
- To undertake any other reasonable tasks as requested by your line manager or other senior staff members

## **Your Skills and Attributes:**

### **Essential:**

- A qualification or extensive practical experience in horticulture (preferably organic), A certificate in Permaculture would be welcome.
- A qualification, (Level 4 in Health and Social Care) or extensive experience of working with adults with learning disabilities and/or other support needs
- Experience of coaching / supporting individuals with specific needs
- Experience of managing and supervising staff and volunteers
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills

- Effective project management and co-ordination skills with the ability to take on tasks from conception to completion.
- Competent use of Microsoft Office (Word/excel) and regular email communication
- Flexible approach and motivated attitude
- An understanding of the importance of confidentiality, data protection and the needs and wishes of service users as appropriate.
- Working knowledge of risk assessments, Health and Safety, safeguarding, person centred planning.
- Good organisational skills and ability to manage and deliver multiple activities, prioritising workload.
- A caring attitude, empathetic and understanding nature
- An ability to maintain high levels of enthusiasm and motivation
- Ability to work on own initiative and co-operate as part of a team.

**Working hours and arrangements:**

**Start date** – January 2023

**Hours:** 25 hours/week on average

You will be required to be available to deliver sessions on the care farm, at least twice a week, (13 hours min) with the remaining time being allocated to managerial duties or holiday cover.

Start and finish times are 9.00 am to 3.30/4 pm depending on the needs of the project. Meetings after work will mean a later finish time of 5.30 pm but these are usually once a month on average. Other hours would need to be flexible around training days, covering for staff on annual leave or sickness.

The care farm is open Monday to Thursday and staff work on a rota covering these days. Our rota is worked out one month ahead of schedule.

**Holidays:** Equivalent to 5.6 weeks per annum pro rata including Bank Holidays

**Pay:** £25,727 pro rata depending on experience and qualifications

**Pension:** The organisation has a pension scheme in place with the Peoples Pension