

Volunteering with the Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI) at Fordhall Organic Farm

*"Volunteers are not paid – not because they are worthless,
but because they are priceless"*



"By restoring connections between hearts,
minds and the soil, we will encourage and
create meaningful change which helps build
health and resilience within people and planet."

About Fordhall Organic Farm

Farmer Arthur Hollins took over Fordhall at just 14 years old! Despite 'new' chemical farming being popular in the 1940s, he kept the farm organic for his whole life.

By the year 2000, the farm was at threat from development - but his son and daughter, Ben (19 years) and Charlotte (21 years) campaigned to save their home.

By 2006 they began to sell £50 non-profit making shares in the farm, and the farm became the first community owned farm in England! The land is still organic to this day and hosts herds of cows, sheep and free range families of pigs. If you're lucky, you may also spot woodpeckers, crayfish and even signs of otters!

Site map



What we can offer

Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering with us at Fordhall.

We hope that this guide will help you understand a little more about what we get up to at the farm, and what volunteering here may entail.

Why Volunteer?

- * Meet and work with like-minded people in a friendly atmosphere.
- * Learn and share new skills and experiences.
- * Make a difference to your local community farm.
- * Be Outdoors, Be Active, Be Connected.

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart"

Elizabeth Andrew



Opportunities for Volunteering with the FCLI

At Fordhall Farm, variety really is the spice of life. There are many different opportunities for volunteers to fit in easily with the work of the charitable society that owns Fordhall Farm: Fordhall Community Land Initiative (FCLI).

In fact, volunteers are vital to the daily running and upkeep of the farm. You will be one of our biggest links to the local community and will be integrated into our structure and operations at every level.

We have lots of roles, so if your skill is baking, making tea, carpentry, conservation or simply sheer enthusiasm, we have a job for you!

The different roles break down into six areas. Whilst there is **no** animal care involved in our volunteer placements, you will find yourselves working amongst the livestock, immersed in nature and supporting this wonderful organic farm to flourish.

- * **Volunteer Fridays** – Farm Fridays run almost every Friday throughout the year 10am-4pm. There are different activities each week, and is usually a hands-on day that could involve anything from planting new trees and preparing for events, to general site maintenance and improvements.
 - * This is our most informal but most consistent volunteering opportunity. It is a chance to join our friendly group of volunteers to make a real difference on the farm. You will be outdoors in all weather doing physical work. You will need to bring your own lunch for Farm Fridays, but there is always a cuppa available.
- * **Volunteer Weekends** – Our Volunteer Weekends are held four or five times a year 10am-5pm. The tasks vary widely depending what is needed around the farm, or if there are any upcoming events. Volunteers can either attend one or both days at the weekend, and food and accommodation is available. There is no charge for the weekend; however, we do ask for a donation to help to cover food costs.
 - * This is a chance to join our friendly group of volunteers to make a real difference on the farm. You will be outdoors in all weather doing physical work or perhaps in the volunteer kitchen helping to make lunch and cakes! Expect lots of hard work, to meet lots of wonderful people and to enjoy some fantastic food.



Fordhall Value 1: Muck in

It's a team effort, so we all support each other to make it work.

- * **Office Administration** – Jobs include data inputting on computers, filing paperwork, telephoning supporters, envelope stuffing newsletters etc. This work is immensely helpful in the smooth running of the office and, for regular volunteering, does require a sound knowledge of Microsoft Office.
- * Most volunteers come regularly once-a-week (Tues-Fri, times vary); others come whenever they have spare time or we have a particular need for extra hands. We try to encourage a more regular routine as it allows us to plan ahead more easily when we know the resources available.
- * **Events** – These are a key part of Fordhall's aims and success. They are an opportunity for the community to visit Fordhall Farm and enjoy what we have to offer. All events vary in scale and audience; we host all manner of family fun days and seasonal events. The role of a volunteer can vary from assisting with car parking to serving refreshments and running stalls/activities. If a volunteer has a particular skill or idea they wish to pursue, events are an excellent opportunity for this.
- * Often there is an early set-up time, general activities during the day, then a clean-up time at the end of the day. Although most volunteers are present throughout, there are plenty of chances for others to provide 'relief' for a couple of hours.
- * **Arthur's Farm Kitchen Assistant** – The café helps to generate funds to continue the running of our community and education programme at Fordhall. We serve freshly ground coffee and delicious homemade meals created using local and/or organic produce.
- * We typically have paid staff in Arthur's Farm Kitchen, but during busy times they can do with an extra pair of hands, either serving or clearing tables. Volunteering here means that you would be acting as the 'face' of Fordhall that day. We would, therefore, expect you to be approachable, presentable and friendly. No previous experience is necessary as full training can be given; however, if you have worked in catering before it would be a bonus!



Fordhall Value 2: Gather the flock

We encourage and support everyone, from anywhere to get involved.

- * **Remote** – Volunteers can help with flyer distribution and promotion of events and courses. This can be incredibly helpful during busy periods!
- * For volunteering with the flyer distribution, we would ask that volunteers collect flyers/posters from us and distribute them to local shops, schools, community centres, social venues etc.
- * **Youth Volunteering** – We are introducing specific days and weekends tailored to volunteers from the age of 12. These are generally through the summer and have fewer spaces due to the level of supervision required. Keep an eye on our website or contact us to go on a waiting list for these sessions.
- * **Residential Volunteering – a four/five week placement** – These are available during the summer. Roles will be rotated around the farm and our community projects throughout your placement. Details will be released on our website at the start of the year, or you can contact us to be sent the information as soon as it is available. This is our most limited placement opportunity, with a maximum of five places per year, which will be allocated to individuals through an application process.

Some general important points

All placements must be booked in advance so we can plan workload and allocate jobs appropriate to skills and experience. Please do not turn up for a volunteer opportunity unannounced.

All volunteers will be required to uphold health and safety guidance given to them during the induction and during further training sessions. Volunteers are representatives of FCLI and are expected to do their utmost to promote Fordhall Organic Farm/FCLI in its most positive light.



Fordhall Value 3: Plant the seed

We're always up for trying out new things, growing together and sowing ideas for others to follow.

Recruitment

FCLI welcomes and respects the breadth of experience, skills, dedication and goodwill that volunteers bring. Informal interviews and/or inductions are carried out to ensure that applicants are suitable for the role in question. We will base our selection on the ability of each applicant to fulfil the role concerned. Within this, we are committed to equality and diversity and as such, will do our utmost to provide a suitable placement for everyone that applies.

Age

In most cases you will need to be over 16 years of age to volunteer independently, and under 18s will be asked for parental consent. Younger people may get involved in some aspects of volunteering with us if they are accompanied by a responsible adult or taking part in our Youth Volunteering Days or as part of school Work Experience placements.

We do not have an upper age limit for volunteers, but there may be situations that require us to ask someone to stop volunteering; for example, when health issues are considered a risk to the person concerned, or others around them.



Fordhall Value 4: Love mother nature

We care deeply about respecting and protecting our natural environment and we want to share this passion.

If you are interested in one of our Volunteer Placements, here are the next steps...

- * Email us at project@fordhallfarm.com and let us know which kind of volunteer placement you are interested in and why. The more we know about you and what you would like from the placement the better.
- * We will email you with a volunteer form to complete. This allows us to understand what your skills are and if you have any medical conditions of which we need to be made aware. A more detailed Volunteer Handbook, which includes all you need to know about the logistics of volunteering at Fordhall will also be sent to you.
- * Once we've received your completed form we will arrange an informal induction, usually involving a short tour and a cuppa, with one the most appropriate volunteer leaders.

If you are happy with everything you see, then your placement begins and we share our journey from there!



Fordhall Value 5: Be a place in the sun

We want to have fun, creating memorable experiences which engage hearts and minds.