

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 29 February 2024

Gorgie Farm Site Update

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
7 Sighthill/Gorgie

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note this update on the Gorgie Farm site, as requested by the Council on 31 August 2023.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Report

Gorgie Farm Site Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to the request from the for a report on the Gorgie Farm site in response to a motion by Councillor Heap which was approved on 31 August 2023 (Appendix 1).

3. Background

- 3.1 On 31 January 2023, Education, Children and Families Committee [approved](#) the transition and development of a community led solution to the Gorgie Farm site.
- 3.2 Education, Children and Families Committee noted that £150,000 had been identified to support the transition and development of a community led solution and Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC) were subsequently appointed by the Council to progress this.
- 3.3 Part of the approach taken by EVOC in their work with the local community has been to utilise office space on the farm site for some of their own staff teams. The lease between the Council and Love Learning Scotland SCIO was renounced on 28 February 2023. A new ground lease between the Council and EVOC was put in place from 1 March 2023. The original term of the lease was 1 March to 31 March and then runs from month to month thereafter.

4. Main report

Maintenance of the Farm Site

- 4.1 There were immediate maintenance issues requiring attention when EVOC took over the lease. These included repairs of multiple burst pipes, replacement and repair of ceilings outside the toilets in the main building, deep clean, painting of offices in main building, removal of high levels of different types of waste from site, ongoing pest control, pest related repairs and service and replacement of fire alarm parts.
- 4.2 The work to date has been to respond to essential works. In December 2023, EVOC had the site fire risk assessed and commissioned a structural engineer to assess the site. At time of writing, final reports are awaited.

Steering Group Formation

- 4.3 On agreeing the project with the Council, EVOC sought expressions of interest to join a steering group through its member organisations and networks.
- 4.4 The membership of the Group is made up of representatives from EVOC, Edinburgh Social Enterprise, Volunteer Edinburgh, Edinburgh Zoo, the City of Edinburgh Council, Health and Social Care Partnership, Fundraiser (pro bono support), Gorgie and Dalry Forum and a local business recommended by Big Hearts.
- 4.5 Steering Group details are publicly available on the EVOC website.

Work of the Steering Group

- 4.6 A memorandum of understanding for the Gorgie Farm Site Steering Group outlines that they are responsible for:
 - 4.6.1 Managing the project and accounting for the project to the City of Edinburgh Council, and other funders; and
 - 4.6.2 Providing constructive feedback on the partnership experience.
- 4.7 The Steering Group's key activities to date have focussed on addressing key immediate issues and the consideration of future options. A project manager was appointed in June 2023 to progress these.
- 4.8 Immediate concerns involved ensuring the re-homing of animals, addressing health and safety issues on site and addressing well-being concerns both in respect of the actual site and of former employees and volunteers.
- 4.9 To begin consideration of what the future may look like, the Steering Group and EVOC secured additional funding to commission a piece of work through "Community Enterprise" (described at paragraph 4.14.1) to consult with stakeholders and research possible options, including consideration of other urban farm models across the United Kingdom (UK).
- 4.10 In December 2023, the Steering Group agreed to set up a company Limited by Guarantee with a small number of founder members. This will enable it to start planning for charitable status, ensure Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) compliance, draft a constitution and to start applying for funding.

Engagement with the local community

- 4.11 Community engagement is fundamental to the development of future plans for the site, and this has largely been carried out via the Gorgie and Dalry Forum, which has around 30 local organisations in membership and is represented on the Steering Group.
- 4.12 A consultation plan is in place and in December 2023 a comprehensive piece of work took place which reached over 500 people through various events (see Appendix 2).
- 4.13 EVOC has a base on the site and has enabled a series of activities to take place on the farm. Currently, two community groups provide gardening activities on the farm,

and space has been provided for local artists to store their work. Over the Christmas period, the farm was also used by Tummies not Trash to distribute surplus food to the community for free.

Development of a New Farm Model

4.14 The model for the future of the farm is being developed in four phases:

Phase 1: Research and Information Gathering

4.14.1 This involves exploring what worked well in the past and what did not. It includes exploring other urban farm models, scoping the land issues, scoping interested parties that may want to be involved in the farm and finding out what local people need from the farm site in respect of community needs and aspiration.

Phase 2: Consultation and Organisation Development

4.14.1 This involves sharing the views gathered with the community and seeking ideas that might not yet have been explored. This includes identifying community members that might wish to be involved in a new organisation taking the project forward. In addition to the consultative work described at Appendix 2, a number of different events and a stakeholder survey are taking place in early 2024.

Phase 3: Feedback and Business Feasibility

4.14.2 This involves a review of the consultation findings, and the events and stakeholder survey currently underway. This phase will explore what ideas are feasible and the cost implications of these.

Phase 4: Moving Forward

4.14.3 This involves the Steering Group and the project staff handing over to the new company limited by guarantee to take the vision and plan for the site forward.

Timeline for Steering Group Recommendations

4.15 The project manager overseeing this programme of work is contracted until July 2024 and final recommendations are programmed for that month.

Farm Re-opening to the public

4.19 A full re-opening of the site will be dependent on the nature of the future model presented to the Council as land owner. The current role of EVOC and the Steering Group is to establish if the farm is viable to reopen and develop a plan to support that if it is, and if not, to propose other models for consideration.

5. Next Steps

5.1 The blueprint for the future of the Gorgie Farm site is expected to be available by July 2024.

- 5.2 Community activities on-site will be maintained until future recommendations are approved and progressed.
- 5.3 All-party briefings on the consultation findings described in Appendix 2 will be arranged for March and April 2024.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Council funding is supporting staff costs and expertise, routine maintenance, utilities for the site and legal compliance of the site.

Gorgie Farm Expenditure 2023/24

Expenditure Title	Amount
Staffing	£88,230.13
Activity Costs	£9,000.00
EVOC Staff Management /Overhead Costs	£7,400.00
Facilities Costs	£36,900.00
TOTAL:	£141,530.13

- 6.2 Additional funding on top of that provided by the Council includes rent from EVOC, Just Enterprise (£10,000 business research) and dedicated pro-bono time of Health and Social Care staff and an experienced fundraiser.
- 6.3 On completion of the options analysis and blueprint review, a series of recommendations, including financial implications, will be presented to Committee.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Any proposals resulting from the Gorgie Farm Site options analysis would require an equality and poverty impact assessment.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 Any proposals resulting from the Gorgie Farm Site options analysis would require to be considered and agreed in line with the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 Local community organisations and stakeholders are being engaged with throughout this work programme.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 Gorgie Farm Site [report](#), 31 January 2023 - Education, Children and Families Committee.
- 10.2 Gorgie Farm Site update, Business Bulletin [update](#), 7 December 2023 – Culture and Communities Committee.
- 10.3 EVOC Website – [Gorgie Farm Site](#).

11. Appendices

- Appendix 1 Motion approved by the City of Edinburgh Council on 31 August 2023.
- Appendix 2 Summary of Consultation Results

Appendix 1

THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL – 31 AUGUST 2023

Gorgie Farm Update – Motion by Councillor Heap – Final Decision

- 1) To note that the Council invited the Edinburgh Council of Voluntary Organisations (EVOC) to develop a sustainable vision Gorgie Farm in March 2023.
- 2) To welcome work done so far by EVOC and the project Steering Group it had convened, including the appointment of a Project Manager and maintenance to the site.
- 3) To note the recent work by EVOC to update the community on developments, including a blog and a poster displayed outside the farm.
- 3) To note that six months will shortly have passed since the project started.

Council believes that:

- 4) To believe that the Council had a major interest in the project as it had been commissioned by the Council, was supported by Council funding; the farm was a Council-owned site, and also because the Farm was a much-loved institution across Edinburgh and beyond.
- 5) To believe that Councillors, therefore, should have regular updates on the work of the farm and opportunities to scrutinise work on the future of the farm done on behalf of the Council.
- 6) To believe that local community groups and residents should have an opportunity to comment on the project's work so far, and to speak to Councillors about their vision for the future of the Farm.
- 7) To request an urgent briefing of ward councillors, group leaders and Culture and Communities Committee members on points 7a-7h:
 - a) Details of any maintenance of the farm site done since the commencement of the project
 - b) How the Project's Steering Group was formed
 - c) The work of the Steering Group
 - d) Engagement with the local community
 - e) How a new model for the farm is being develop
 - f) When and how the Steering Group intends to recommend a way forward for the farm
 - g) When the Farm is likely to re-open to the public
 - h) How Council funding has been spent

- 8) To request that officers invite a suitable representative(s) from EVOC and/or the Steering Group to speak to the report at the same meeting.
- 9) To request a report to the Culture and Communities Committee in two cycles setting out progress on points 7a- 7h, any other matters raised from the briefing of elected members and the likely timeline for the reopening of Gorgie Farm.



SUMMARY OF RESULTS

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION:
PHASE ONE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document summarises the findings and engagement activities carried out during Phase One.

Informed by over 400+ questionnaire responses, approx 30 'Cuppa Conversations' and 40 guided walks, key themes and messages arose (including; Animals and Activities, Facilities and Spaces, Payment and Support, Education and Training and Food and Gardening). Many memories were shared along with ideas for income generation opportunities and desired outcomes. All of these will be further explored and considered during Phase 2.

We thank all who took the time to engage with us and share their stories, thoughts, hopes and aspirations for the site.

Initial ideas including income generation, site development and community needs will be practically assessed and explored further during Phase Two.



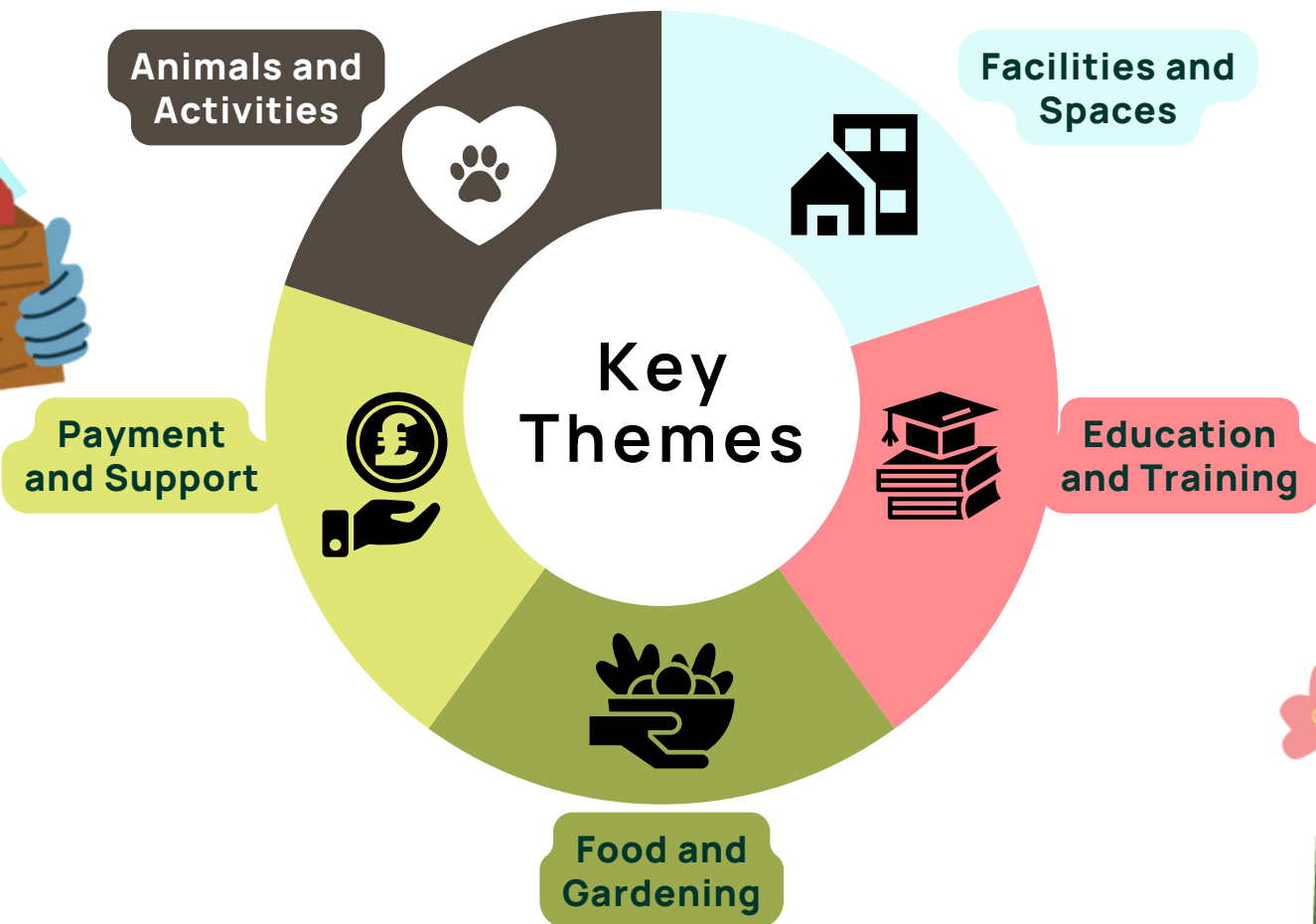
400+
Survey
responses



40
Guided Walks
attendees

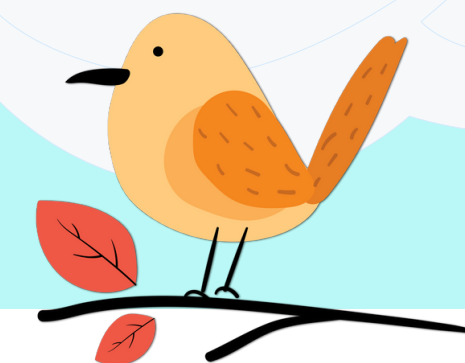


30
'Cuppa
Conversation'
attendees





COMMUNITY CONSULTATION: PHASE ONE SUMMARY OF RESULTS CONTENTS



1. DISCOVER AND DEFINE:

- What we did
Oct/Dec 2023

2. LOOKING BACK:

- Visitor numbers:
 - Have you visited the farm before?
 - If yes, how often?

3. LOOKING FORWARD:

- Key messages
- Animals And Activities:
 - What would make you come to the farm?
 - What activities would you like to see?
- Facilities And Spaces:
 - What facilities would you like to see?
 - What would make you stay longer?
- Support And Payment
 - Would you pay to support it?
 - Income generation +
- What do you think the community needs?
- The Story of the farm
- Next Steps...



DISCOVER AND DEFINE

What we did
Oct/Dec 2023



400+
responses to our
Discovery Questionnaire



30
people attended our
Cuppa Conversations



40
people attended
our Guided Walks

- **Discovery Questionnaire:**

We received **over 400 hundred responses** to our online and paper questionnaire. We want to thank everyone who completed this.

- **Cuppa Conversations:**

We held **4 Cuppa Conversations** across the community. An informal opportunity for the public to hear what's happening and come and explore our consultation questions with us. Through these we spoke to approximately **30 people**

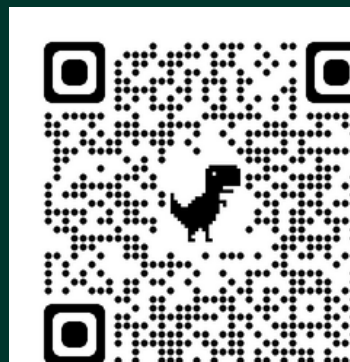
- **Guided walks:**

On Saturday 25th of November we opened the farm and invited the community to book a time to join us for a guided walk followed by a conversation exploring our consultation questions. In total **40 people attend** these sessions.

- **School visits:**

We are developing an opportunity for children at Dalry Primary School to participate in the consultation. This will happen in the 2024 and will link with Phase Two.

Scan to visit our
website and
keep up to date



LOOKING BACK:

Visitor Numbers



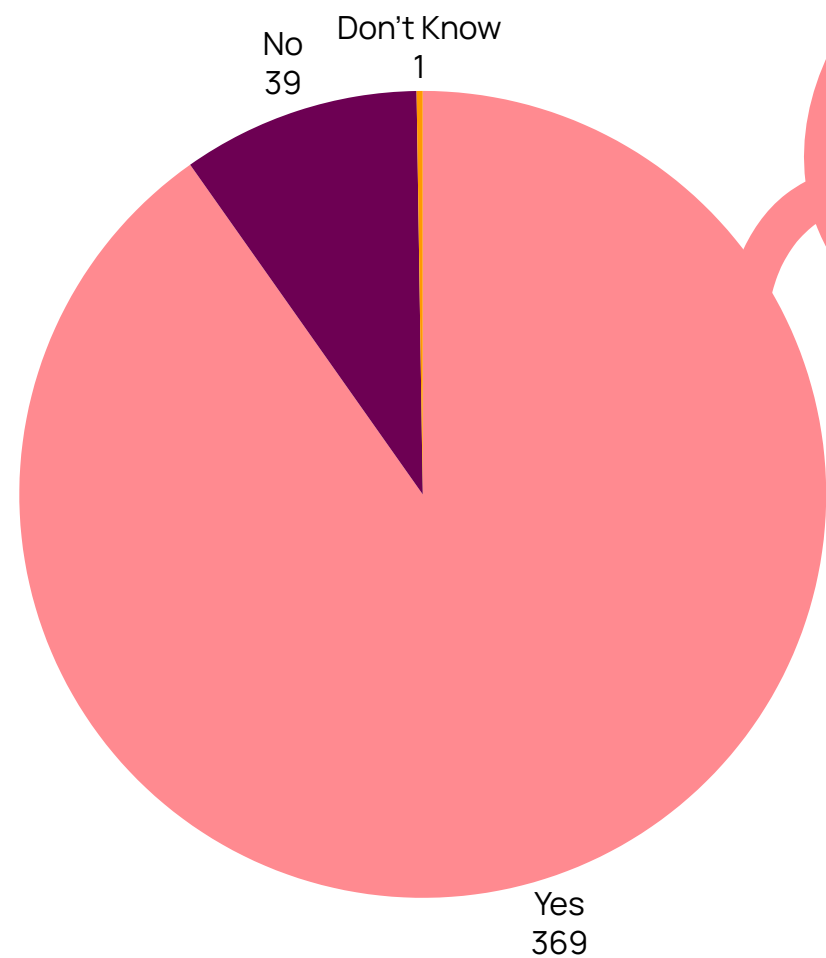
Have you ever visited the farm before?

10%

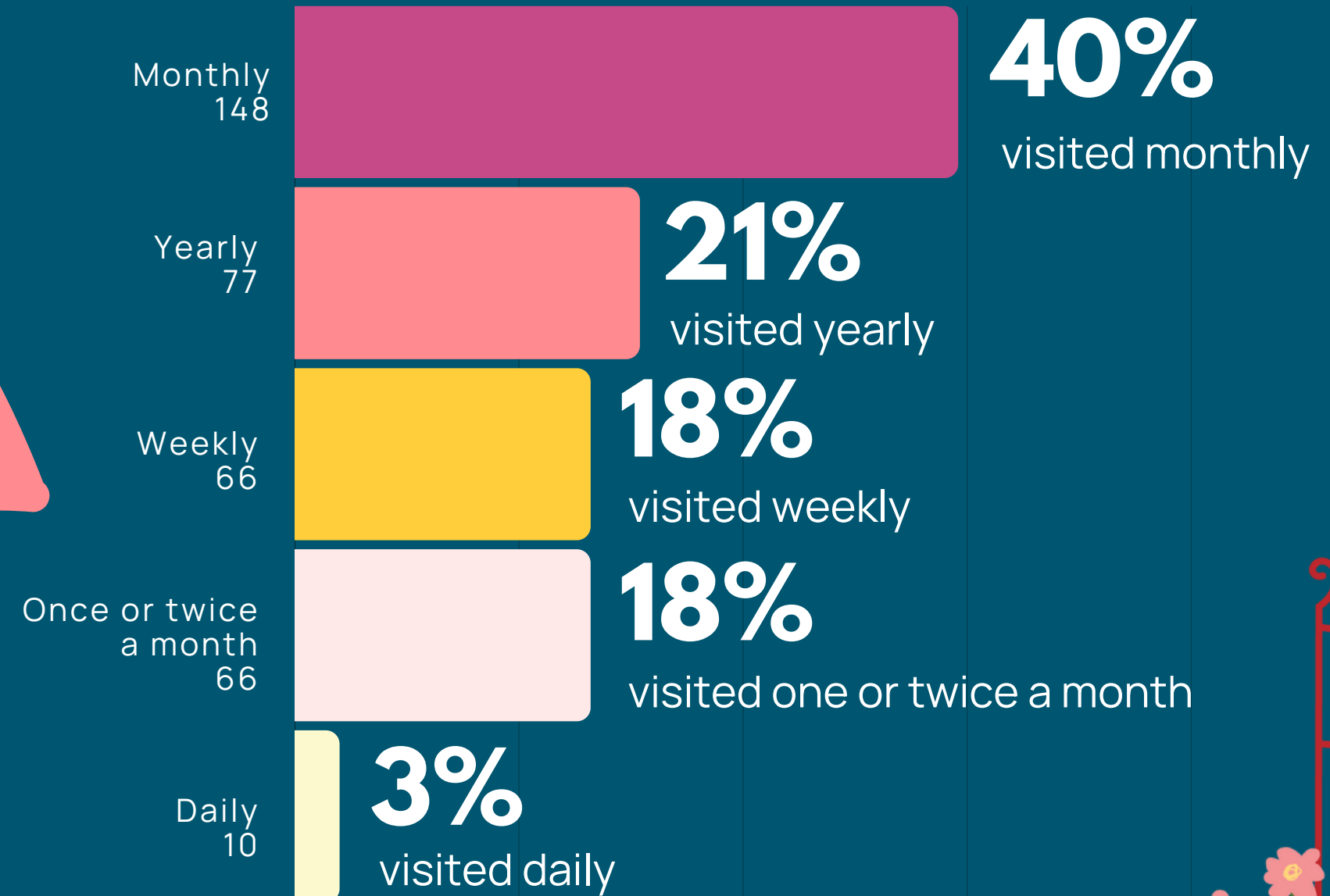
had not visited the farm before

90%

had visited the farm before



If yes, How often would you visit?



Looking Forward: Key Messages

Facilities And Spaces



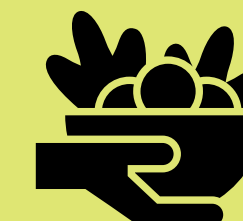
People want to see an improved café area with a shop. They would also like to see spaces the community can access and which organisations can use at low rent.

Education And Training



People are looking for the site to bring education and training opportunities to the community whether this is through classes, volunteering, work placements, or skill development opportunities.

Food And Gardening



Food was mentioned in a lot of the answers. This was related to gardening on the site as well as people sharing food, cooking together, and learning about food.

Animals And Activities

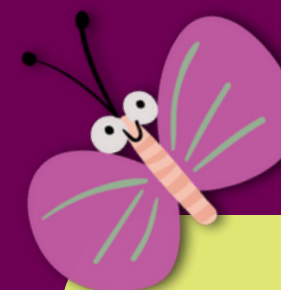


Most people do want to see animal back on site however this is alongside other activities and facilities. Most people only refer to a particular animal type such as small animal, goats, or birds. They also talk about ways to make the animals sustainable which could be explored in our next phase.

Payment And Support



41% of people would be willing to pay in some way. There have been many suggestions about how this could be done. We acknowledge that not everybody could afford this and therefore insure it is done in a way that is not stigmatising or uncomfortable and remain free from the point of access.



LOOKING FORWARD:


Animals And Activities



What would make you come to the farm?

 **21%**
Animals

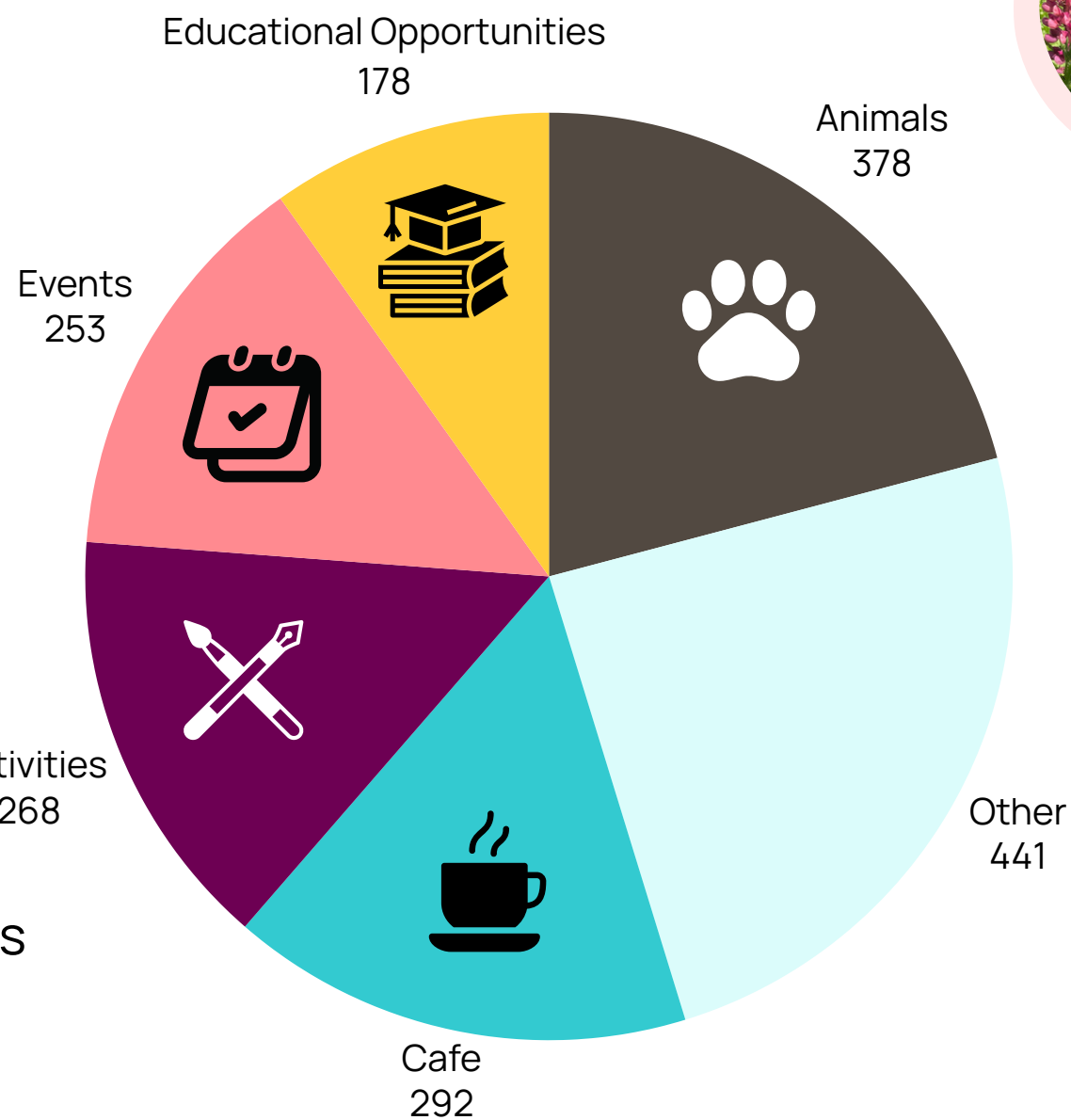
 **16%**
Cafe

 **15%**
Activities

 **14%**
Events

 **24%**
(Other)

 **10%**
Educational Opportunities



“Can’t you bring back some animals that wouldn’t take up as much care and cost. It would be better than nothing”

“Have a clear vision for the animals with the right staff to support them with their care”

“The animals is what makes the place unique”

“A cosy farm area”

Income Generators:



- Animal encounters
- Animal care classes
- Goat therapy
- Link with University of Edinburgh vets

- Pet hotels
- Hire in alpacas for walks
- Animal feed
- Sell produce and use produce in cafe

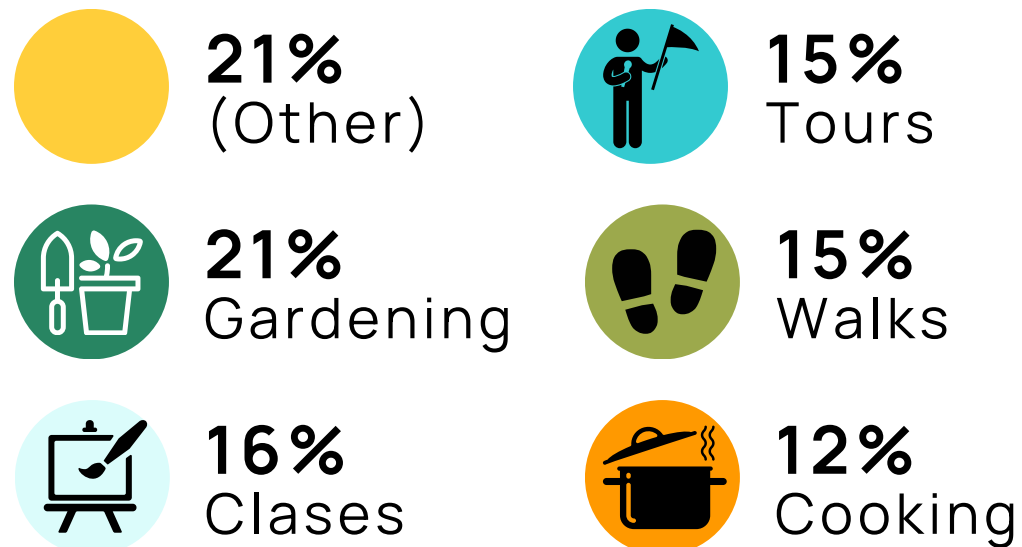
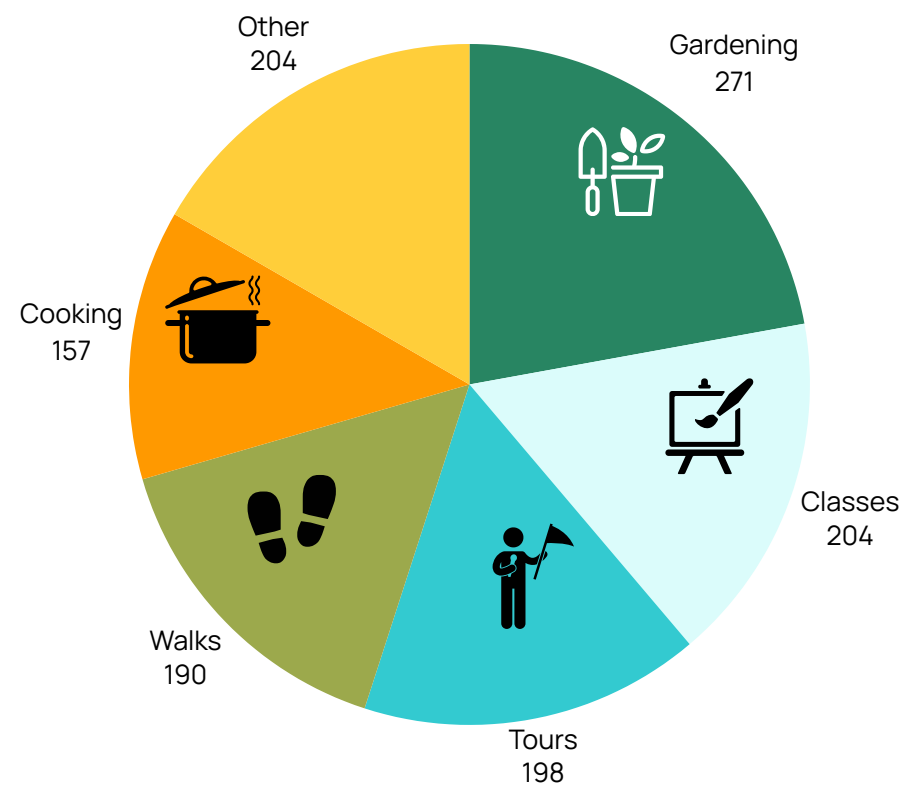


LOOKING FORWARD:

Animals And Activities



What activities would you like to see?



For Wellbeing:

- Gardening
- Cooking and eating together – shared meal days
- 'Earth to Plate'
- Yoga/Thai Chi/ Pilates in the park (IG)
- Foraging space: education on food and medicine
- Archery (IG)
- Strawberry picking (IG)



For Education:

- Activities for different age groups from pre-school
- night-time learning classes on site for adults
- Book bugs
- School Camps
- Local high school – skills development
- Dalry Primary School – curriculum-based activities
- Scran academy
- Garvald
- Intergenerational learning
- Learning about farming and the environment
- Sustainable farming
- Learning disabilities

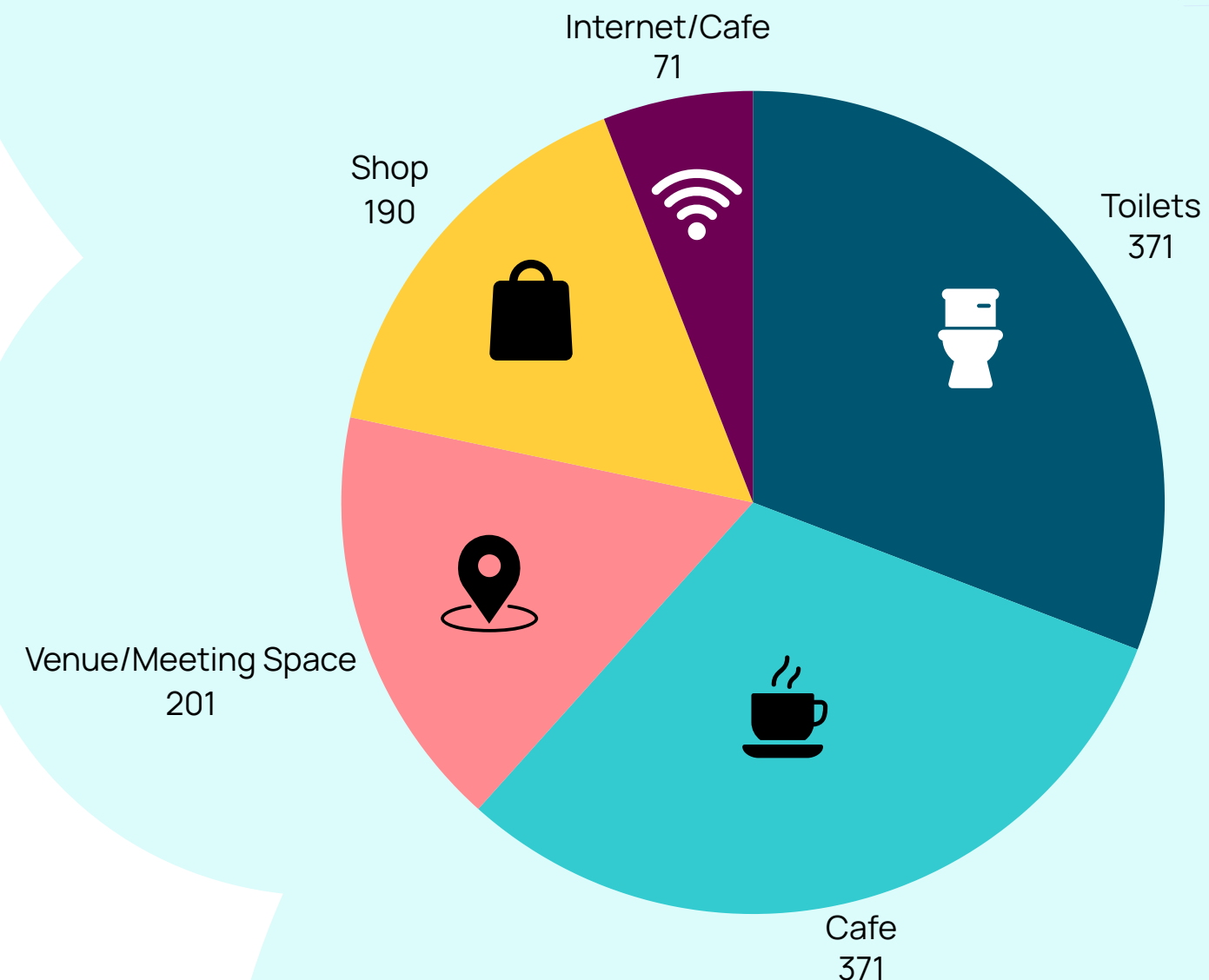
LOOKING FORWARD:

Facilities And Spaces



What facilities would you like to see?

- A decent affordable Café that promotes sustainable food and uses food from the garden
- Meeting spaces for community and organisations to use
- Farm and gift shop
- Sensory and interactive space
- Covered play area and outdoor exploratory play area
- Interactive walks
- Museum
- The tractor
- Yurts to rent out for community activities and fun
- Modular shipping containers for community activity (community incubator)
- Toilets
- Wifi
- Patio area with furniture
- Dance studio for exercise



31%
Toilets



16%
Shop



31%
Cafe



6%
Internet/Cafe



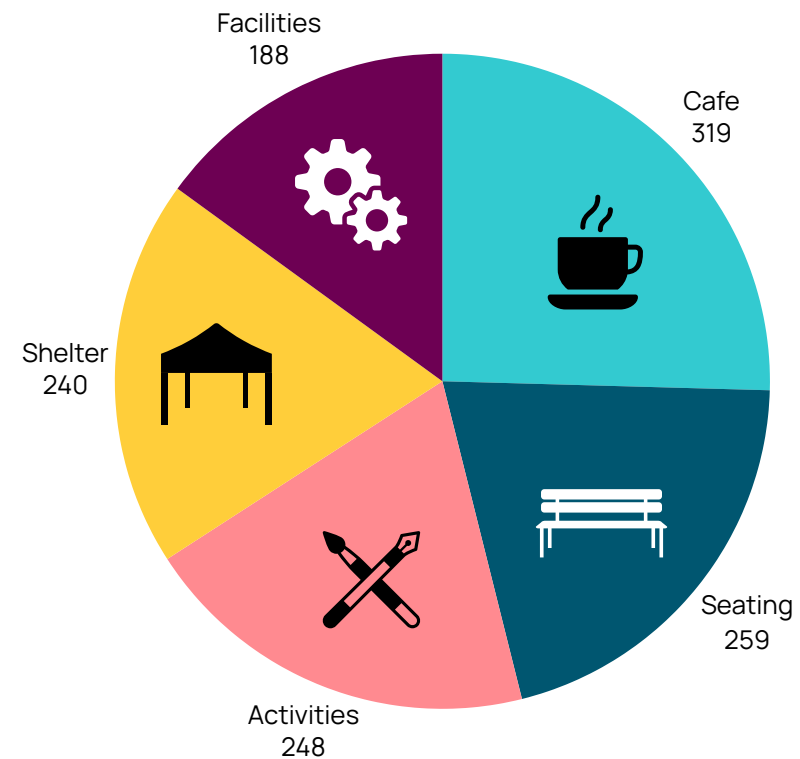
17%
Venue/Meeting Space

LOOKING FORWARD:

Facilities And Spaces




What would make you stay longer?



 **21%**
Seating

 **19%**
Shelter

 **25%**
Cafe

 **15%**
Facilities

 **20%**
Activities

Arts:

- Visit from authors (IG)
- Storytelling
- Amateur dramatics
- Creative writing classes (IG)
- Festivals: Fringe events (IG)
- Promote local artists with exhibitions
- Music in the cafe
- Arts hub

Seasonal:

- Wreath making (IG)
- Halloween pumpkin patch (IG)

Other:

- Clothes swaps
- Bike repair
- Knitting
- Repair cafe

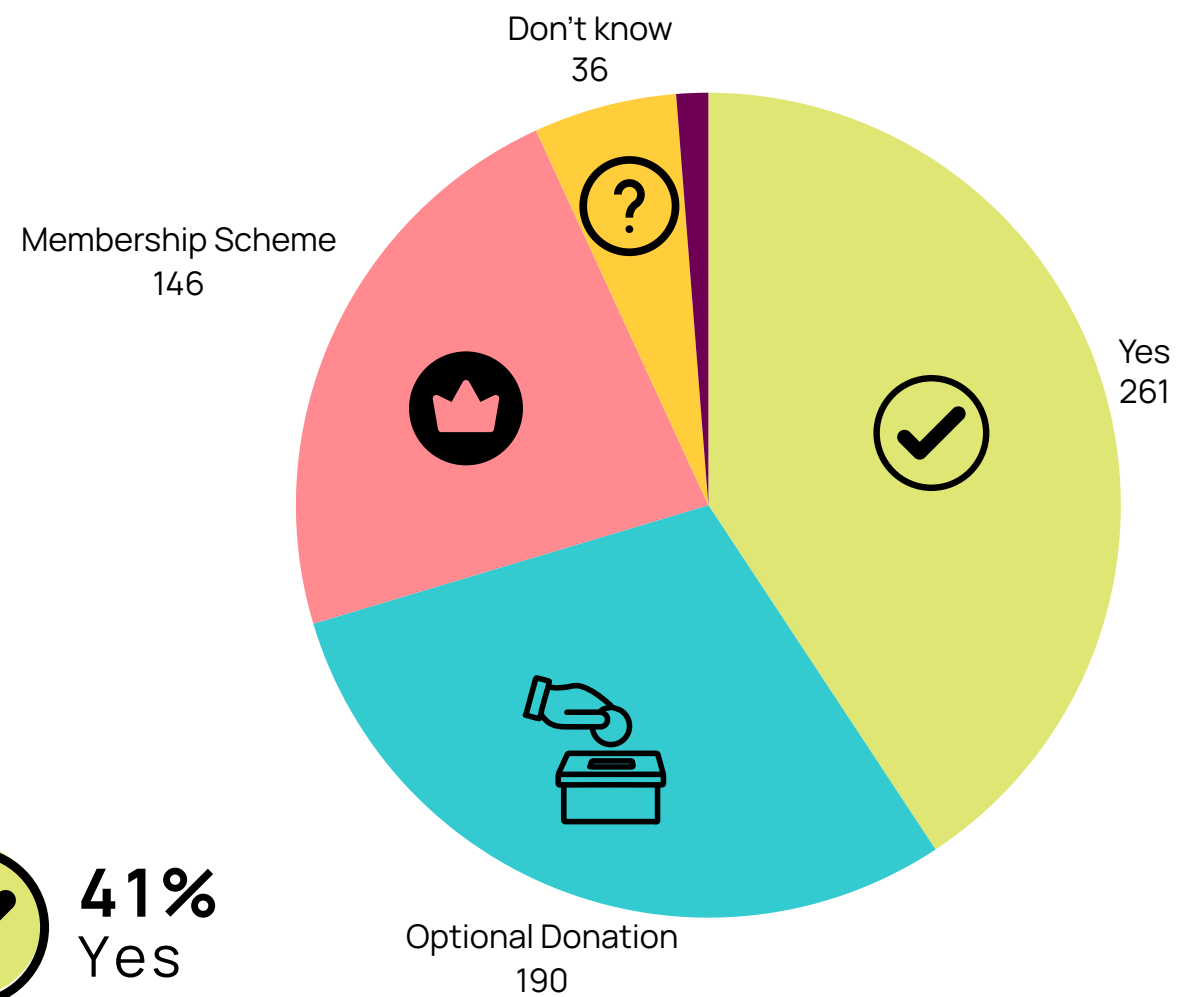


LOOKING FORWARD:

Payment And Support



Would you pay to support it?



41%
Yes



30%
Optional Donation



23%
Membership Scheme



1%
No



6%
Don't know



Some ideas:

- Remain free from point of access
- £2 entry fee for adults
- Be clear about what a donation might cover e.g. £2 feeds a sheep for a day (guidance)
- Tap and go
- All classes should be paid for e.g arts and crafts
- Membership scheme with different tiers and goodies
- Animal sponsorship
- Increase price of animal feed

We acknowledge that not everybody could afford this and we therefore need to ensure it is done in a way that is not stigmatising and uncomfortable.

LOOKING FORWARD:

Income Generation +



Link local building contractors to support new builds

Rent out building spaces

Rent spaces out to fringe companies

Corporate



Corporate events

Corporate team days

Farmer's market

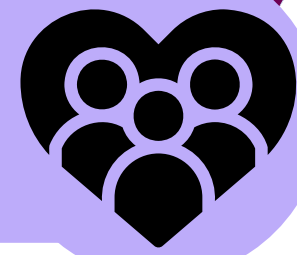
International street food days

Asking local organisations to sponsor the farm. E.g. 5 sisters farm has a lot of corporate support



LOOKING FORWARD:

What do you think the community needs?



- Volunteering opportunities particularly for young people
- Greenspace and learning about sustainable farming
- Inner city nursery
- Gorgie Farm community group for socialising and getting to know people
- A greenspace and arts hub that is fully accessible to them and welcoming, that belongs to them to use and make decisions on.
- Somewhere that promotes wellbeing, purpose, and feeling valued and connected.
- It is not what they need, it's what they deserve.
- Re-wild the place
- Needs to be made fully accessible
- Social housing
- Foodbank
- Drop-in support
- Community gardens
- Leadership



“Something to be proud of!”

“I think the community need a safe green space where they can escape from city living”



LOOKING FORWARD:

The Story of The Farm



Let's not forget the Farm's heritage and story. People want to know the farm story and to share in its heritage. Could this be done interactively through creating:

- An interactive treasure map
- A trail with characters
- A museum
- Re-enactments
- Sculptures through the site
- Signposts in memory
- A song from the community
- Photo box and sound bites



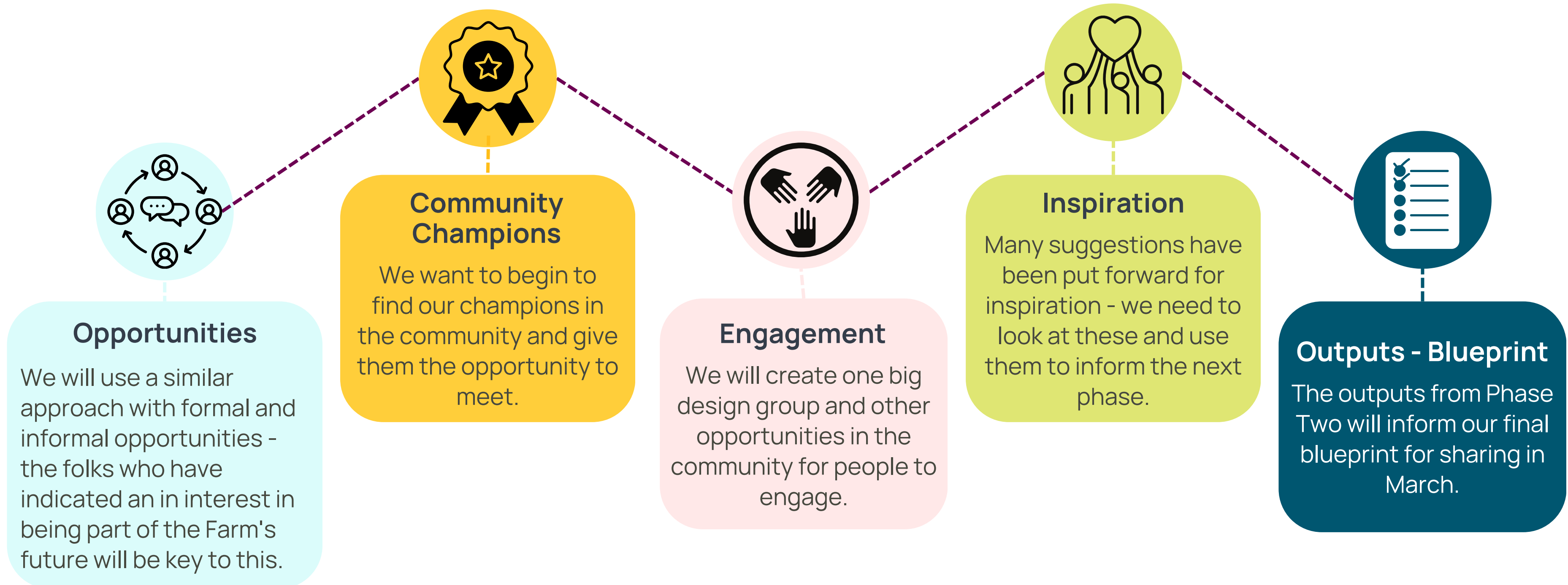
LOOKING FORWARD:

Next Steps...



COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PHASE TWO: IDEATE TO CO-CREATE (JAN/FEB 2024)

As part of Phase Two we have created this document to begin to share our findings from Phase One and really explore what is feasible and viable and how we can make it happen.



THANK YOU!

JOIN IN!

If you would like to learn more about the project, or how to get involved please get in touch.

We would love to hear from you!



@GCFarmSite



@GorgieCityFarmSiteProject



Email: gorgiecityfarmsite@evoc.org.uk



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