

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER 505444

TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST



**ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

Corke Accountancy Services,  
2 Upton Road,  
Claughton,  
Wirral,  
CH41 0DF.

**TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

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# TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST

## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

#### Objectives and Aims

The Trust was set-up in 1976 to look after the Cottage whilst the Urban Farm opened in 1987. The Trustees remain committed to protecting and improving the environment at the Farm and, where possible, in the wider community, to improve quality of life and promote sustainable development.

The objects of the Charity are :-

- 1 To promote the preservation of the building erected on the land known as the Tam O'Shanter Cottage and the provision of a study centre for the advancement of education in the Borough of Wirral; and
- 2 To provide and maintain facilities in the interests of social welfare for the recreation and leisure-time occupation for the benefit of the inhabitants of the said borough with the object of improving their quality of life.

To assist with delivering these objectives, but not otherwise, the Trust may:-  
Provide and maintain an urban farm or smallholding as an adjunct to the Cottage.  
Co-operate with other charities and local authorities; and  
Do all such other lawful acts or things incidental and conducive to the objects.

To meet the objects of the Trust we aim to achieve the following:-  
Maintain a small, varied collection of farm animals with welfare a high priority.  
Use the farm as an educational and leisure facility.  
Preserve and enhance the farm's heritage.  
Maintain the Farm as a healthy, safe and secure recreational facility.  
Maintain, or improve, the environmental sustainability of the farm.  
Create opportunities for public participation and engagement.

The Objectives and Strategic aims are:-

- To continue to provide a free amenity to the public.
- To maintain, or improve, the facilities of the farm for public benefit.
- To continue to promote the farm thereby maintaining visitor numbers.
- To improve the level of income to meet liabilities and safeguard against future risks.
- To explore opportunities of working in partnership with organisations or individuals that help meet our objectives in a cost-effective way.

# **TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

### **Public Benefit**

A free recreational amenity based on the 4.5 acres of Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm which is open daily with a collection of farm animals, play equipment, nature areas, picnic facilities, café and the provision of a series of seasonal events.

The Trust manages, and maintains, toilets which are available to Farm visitors as well as visitors to the local area, including the nearby Bidston Hill, which includes the windmill, lighthouse and observatory, and Flaybrick Cemetery.

Opportunities for those aged 14 years and over to become involved in the day-to-day activities on the Farm by looking after the animals and undertaking maintenance tasks as well as becoming involved with fund-raising and the running of events. These opportunities have seen volunteers able to enhance their Curriculum Vitae which has helped them to apply for, and secure, paid employment.

Support for students undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and providing on-site experience for students at local colleges and those providing courses in the areas of animal management and veterinary qualifications.

The preservation of the historic thatched property known as Tam O'Shanter Cottage with its place in the heritage of the local area. Working with the Bidston Archaeology Group on the continued research into the history of the area which includes the project investigating what lies beneath the farm.

Educational benefits to local children through organised visits for schools and through volunteers undertaking practical tasks. A structured and supported work environment for adults with barriers to employment.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the requirements of Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission for England and Wales.

# **TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

### **ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE**

#### **Charitable Activities**

##### **Review of the year**

Following on from the global pandemic, the on-going war in Ukraine and consequential effect on energy costs and the impact of inflation the picture remained unsettled. Like many other organisations the Trust, severely affected by energy price rises and inflation, faced a financial challenge. This will increase with Government changes relating to National Insurance in April 2025. Along with the wider pressures facing the country grant-funding bodies began undertaking a review of their criteria for providing assistance effectively reducing, or removing, support they previously gave to a variety of charitable organisations.

The Trust continued to meet The Code of Practice on the Control of Animal Diseases to prevent the transmission of zoonotic diseases which applies to all farms and animal attractions. This involved the continuing enhancement of hand-washing and cleansing facilities, animal paddocks, maintenance of the middens, etc. With the impact of bird flu DeFRA (Department for Food and Rural Affairs) instructed birds to be placed in aviaries or similar enclosures as the bird population again faced 'flockdown'.

In response to these issues the Trust was grateful for the ongoing support from local businesses, service as well as financial, the incredible team of volunteers who put in hours of work to ensure the farm continues to remain open and the public for whom the farm provides a place of enjoyment, education and relaxation. The staff (Day Leads) have seen a number of changes in personnel during the year. They remain key to the successful operation of the farm and are on-site to oversee activities, and ensure the safety of volunteers and visitors, on the farm. As a result of the hard work of the people involved, including farm volunteers, volunteer maintenance team, staff and the Core Team the farm enjoyed another successful year

The connections with Oldershaw School, Claremount School and Wirral Metropolitan College enabled local students to enjoy activities on the farm whilst gaining valuable skills. Students from Reaseheath College, Myerscough College and Liverpool John Moores University saw placements supporting their studies with valuable on-site experience. The engagement of local schools and other local groups provided opportunities for working on the farm on a range of activities.

## **TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

### **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

The farm includes a range of animals including alpacas, chickens, cockerels, ducks, goats, pigs, sheep and smaller animals. Veterinary support was maintained and recognised the standards achieved. Unfortunately, the requirement from DeFRA for all birds to be kept enclosed to prevent the spread of avian flu between birds was re-issued early in 2025. Further work to the paddocks included drainage and fencing as well as dividing the existing duck field to facilitate stock rotation. However, the increasing number of periods of wet weather put more pressure on the availability of the paddocks.

Whilst complying with the Code of Practice animal feeding by the public through the use of feeding tubes and a different feed has proven popular. Bookings for The Barn, regularly used for children's parties, and Education Centre increased as did the number of group visits including schools and other organisations. Local business work-days saw Royal Sun Alliance and Department for Work and Pensions attending. Seasonal events continued to be well attended and successful, particularly those at Easter, Halloween and Christmas demonstrating public support for the farm.

Reference has been made to farm maintenance and appearance and, as always, there remains a lot that could be done. The nature reserve and Education Centre was funded by a grant from the Veolia Environmental Trust and the incredible support from Peter Gavin Contractors. The nature area continues to be developed and in conjunction with the Centre provides a space for teaching, understanding and appreciating nature. During December the area is turned into a Christmas haven and visited by Father Christmas. The Eco-Building's wooden veranda was replaced and improved through a successful grant application to Borough of Culture and further work from Peter Gavin and the volunteer team. The team continues to put in a tremendous amount of work which this year saw the upgrades to the middens, the removal, and replacement, of over 100 fence posts with the cost of the posts generously funded by local people. The new cabin / shop was installed before Christmas and has proven an excellent addition for the sale of feed and other items to benefit Trust finances. Some work, whilst essential, is not readily noticeable such as the replacement of fire alarms and improvements to security through CCTV works.

The café, run by BeeWirral, an independent caterer, provides a welcome facility for visitors to the local area. With the Trust benefitting from a lease arrangement this provides a reliable source of income to the Trust. BeeWirral offer a range of food and drink for visitors with the picnic area regularly filled by customers and other visitors to the farm and local area.



# **TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

The Cottage, occupied by the night security who oversee the farm and also alert the authorities over incidents in the surrounding area, is one of only a few thatched rooved premises in the Wirral. After the severe weather during 2023/24 major repairs were undertaken on the thatch from early 2025. Under the terms of the lease with Wirral Council these costs were met by the Council.

Despite the financial pressures the Trust continues to keep the farm free from any admission charge. The introduction of signage highlighting the cost of running the farm and encouraging visitors to make cash donations has seen on-site income increase. In response to the move in society away from using cash the Trust has in place cash-less donation facilities. The response of local people and businesses, including the Leverhulme Trust and John Moores University, continues to be amazing.

### **Financial Review**

#### **Overview of the year**

During the year income exceeded spend by £4513 although some of the income was to support costs to be incurred in 2025/26.

Income of £149,112 included John Moores Foundation £7,500, Koala North West £3,000, Wirral Together Fund £1,200, Wirral Heritage Fund £17,550

General Donations amounted to almost £45,000. The farm's Knit & Natter Group donated £490 and over £27,500 came into the shop for goods and animal feed sales.

Within the spend of £144,599 there was £38,000 for Farm Employees, £20,000 on animal feed and veterinary care, £35,000 on maintenance and repairs including ringfenced expenditure on replacing balcony surrounding the Eco Building

Our insurance came to over £6000 this year due to additional insured requirements for running courses for unattended children. As always, our electricity bill was a shocker at close to £18,000 and the remainder of our expenses were shop stock, phone costs, accounting etc.

## **Reserves Policy**

The year-end cash balance was £55,000. However, this included £16,500 of funding for commitments in 2025/26 leaving £38,610 to meet any unforeseen costs. The Trust seeks to hold Reserves which are sufficient to cover around three months spend.

# **TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

## **REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25**

### **FUTURE PLANS**

The Trust keeps under review its plans to ensure the Cottage and Farm are there for future generations. The challenges faced are similar to all other charitable organisations with the most significant being financial. The impact of inflation and new Government budgetary decisions are assessed and monitored. The need for adequate staffing to be in place to, enable volunteers to engage in and, undertake farm activities is increasingly reliant upon the Trust generating income as grant-funding bodies now focus on supporting non-core activities. The aim remains to become self-sustainable, this relies on securing income from café and farm activities; letting of the Barn, Eco-Building and Education Centre; seasonal events; educational, health and welfare support and donations. Wherever possible applications for grant assistance will continue to be pursued with a range of organisations.

### **STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

#### **Structure, governance and management**

##### Governing Document

The Charity is governed by the Trust consisting of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer together with other Trustees.

The Farm and Cottage premises are leased from Wirral Council with the 99 year lease agreed from July 2019 at an annual rental of one Bidston pine cone.

##### Recruitment and Appointment of New Trustees

The Trust shall consist of not less than six, and not more than ten, suitable and competent persons who are willing and able to carry out the duties of a Trustee for the Benefit of the Trust. These are the Trustees as presently constituted and such other persons as they, or their successors, may appoint either to fill vacancies or to increase their number, up to the maximum of ten.

##### Management

The day-to-day management of the Farm is undertaken by Trust employees, overseen by a Core Team comprising a number of Trustees. The night-time security

is provided under a lease arrangement with the tenant of the Tam O'Shanter Cottage.

# TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST

## REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/25

### REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Charity Name	Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust	
Registered Charity	505444	
Trustees	Tom Sault	Chair
	Steve Foulkes	Vice Chair
	Josephine Wood MBE	Treasurer
	Pauline Hayes	Secretary
	Bruce Berry	Resigned January 2025
	Shaun Brady	
	George Davies	
	Kath Pennington	
	Caroline Standring	Resigned November 2025
	Gillian Wood	
Principal Address	Tam O'Shanter Cottage, Boundary Road, Bidston, Wirral, CH43 7PD.	
Independent Examiner	Corke Accountancy Services, 2 Upton Road, Claughton, Wirral, CH41 0DF.	

### STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The Trustees are responsible for preparing this Report and Financial Statements in accordance with United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that enables them to ensure the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the applicable Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations, and the provisions of the Constitution. The Trustees are responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Annual Report was approved by the Trustees on 14-03-26

# **TAM O'SHANTER COTTAGE URBAN FARM TRUST**

## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**

I report to the Charity Trustees on my examination of the Accounts of the Tam O'Shanter Cottage Urban Farm Trust for the year ended 31 March 2025.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the Charity Trustees of the Trust you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's Accounts, carried out under Section 145 of the Act, and in carrying out my examination I have followed all applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- 1 Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Trust as required by Section 130 of the Act; or
- 2 The Accounts do not accord with those records; or
- 3 The Accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of Accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, other than any requirement that the Accounts give a true and fair view, which is not a matter considered as part of the independent examination.

I have no concerns, and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination, to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the Accounts to be reached.

Rachel Corke FCA,  
Corke Accountancy Services,  
2 Upton Road,  
Claughton,  
Wirral,  
CH41 0DF.



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