

Green Spaces Project of the Month - May 2002 - Surrey Docks Farms

For information contact

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For information about City Farms and Community Gardens and where the nearest one is to you, contact:

Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

The Green House, Hereford Street, Bristol, BS3 4NA

Tel: 0117 923 1800

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The Surrey Dock Farm is a short bus ride from Peckham. It is a nice change from the inner city of Peckham. As you enter the farm gates you are transported to the countryside because of the noise and smells of the animals. The 2.2 acres of farm in the city is unexpected and dynamic, because as you approach the site there is no indication of what you are about to discover.

They give wonderful opportunities for people to learn about food production. They also allow active participation by visitors to the farm. All the animals are organically farmed, and they do produce a small amount of food for sale to the public. They have a local man who occasionally purchases a live chicken, possibly to eat as he always returns for more.

On 27th March 2002 HRH Prince of Wales Visited Surrey Docks Farm. The Prince is the Patron of the Federation of City Farms. The Prince was there to boost the cause of city farms, many of which were forced to close last year because of the difficulties resulting from foot and mouth disease.

The atmosphere in the farm is relaxed and friendly. The main area of the farmyard is designed split level, so that you can see the animals and the helpers as if you were in an arena. Within the farm there is a coffee shop and a class room.

The site has works of art which were produced by schools and trainees with learning difficulties. The trainees learn horticulture, beekeeping and craft skills. The classroom has a teacher on site who relates the activities to the National Curriculum for visiting schools. The Surrey Docks Farms has been recognised as one of the most innovative and successful city farm education projects in England

Aims of the farm

The farm aims to promote environmental education to both adults and children.

The farm feels that the animals are at the heart of the farm. Many of the farm's visitors appreciate the direct contact with the animals.

At the end of the year the management committee decided to undertake a strategic review for the next 3 to 5 years.

The farm gets its core grant from Southwark Council. It is essential to the running of the farm. Unfortunately Southwark Council recently made a 5% cut in voluntary sector grants.

It has been a difficult year for the Surrey Docks Farm because of foot and mouth. They did however receive compensation from two different sources, the Greater London Assembly distributed money around all London city farms, and also the National Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens raised funds and distributed the money nationally.

Future Plans

The Farm hopes to offer a range of opportunities in activities on an ongoing basis.

With the continued support of Southwark Leisure the Farm will continue to offer exciting educational projects.

At the end of the year the farm hopes to produce an audit of the major maintenance work necessary for the coming year, to lay down the basis for future development.

Activities

The Surrey Docks Farm is working with the Tate Modern Art Gallery and has taken part in four guided workshops.

Early Years Literacy trails are now run on site. For the Golden Jubilee a mobile Enchanted Garden was built.

The London Workshop company leaders joined children to explore the farm site and the environment of the Pumphouse Education Museum. The partnership integrates the use of computers with sponsorship from the North Southwark Environmental Trust, Pricewaterhouse Coopers, JP Morgan Flemming Educational Trust and WS Atkins.

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