

# **The Future Vision of The Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey**



## **Forward Plan 2014 – 2018**

Registered Charity No. 289555

# Background

## Introduction

The Farmland Museum is an Independent Trust and company limited by guarantee which was formed in 1992 following the establishment of a Museum in the village of Haddenham in 1969. The Museum is a registered charity and under a Local Management Agreement (LMA) also manages the historic monuments of Denny Abbey on behalf of English Heritage.

The Museum together with English Heritage actively work with other partners and businesses within the cultural life of its surrounding villages in South Cambridgeshire, the cities of Cambridge and Ely and beyond.

## The Purpose of the Plan

*In 2011 the Museum published its 2011 – 2015 Forward Plan. Following staff changes, new priorities and projects this plan replaces it to take the Museum's hopes and aspirations up to 2018. This new plan includes a summary of the period 2011 – 2013.*

Covering the period 2014-2018 this document aims to:

- Define the Museum's purpose, aims and underlying principles which guide its operation
- Evaluate and measure the current Museum operation
- Outline the environment that the Museum operates in currently and in the foreseeable future
- Propose targets and a strategy for the Museum to develop and meet the current and anticipated needs of its community
- Outline ways for the Museum to monitor progress against the Plan

## The Plan is designed to inform and guide:

- The Trustees of the Museum and observers
- The Museum staff
- Patrons of the Museum
- Volunteers and Friends
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Members of the public
- Waterbeach and Landbeach Parish Councils
- Any external partners and funding bodies

## Overall Aims

- To maximize the potential of the site without sacrificing our core aims
- To care for and learn more about our collections and to provide access to them by the public
- To inspire and engage people of all ages, abilities, backgrounds and interests
- To encourage life long learning via informal and formal means
- To promote community cohesion and a sense of place
- To provide a safe and nurturing environment
- To maximise external funding and partnerships
- To provide lively and topical exhibitions and programmes accessible to all
- To use all our resources and volunteers effectively

## THE FARMLAND MUSEUM AND DENNY ABBEY'S MISSION STATEMENT:

- *To enable a wider audience to participate in and enjoy the Museum's work, enabling every individual to gain an understanding of rural life in Cambridgeshire.*
- *To provide visitors to Denny Abbey and those participating in the Museum's outreach work with a sense of change, while evoking an equally strong sense of stability and continuity with the past, which helps in the development of an individual's sense of self worth, place and community.*

## **The Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey An overview**

### **The Region of Cambridgeshire and Beyond**

Cambridgeshire is a diverse county made up of urban and rural areas and containing fenland areas to the north in which agriculture has thrived following the drainage of the fens in the 18th century. The current total population of Cambridgeshire is 769,100. The county town is the University City of Cambridge. Silicon Fen is the name given to the region around Cambridge, which is home to a large cluster of high-tech businesses, especially those related to software, electronics, and biotechnology. Many of these have connections with the University of Cambridge, and the area is now one of the most important technology centres in Europe. The direct rail connection and motorways to London make Cambridgeshire a popular tourist destination with diverse cultural activities on offer. It is also a popular place to live, being in the commuter belt with access to the countryside and the Cities of Cambridge and Ely. Cambridgeshire also contains other large population towns such as Godmanchester, St Ives, St Neots, Ramsay and further afield Peterborough (population 165,000) and Huntingdon (population 30000).

Significant housing developments in the local area will create new communities near to the Museum. A large amount of development is planned or already started 20 - 30 minutes drive of the Museum. The Local Plan includes the option of a new town of up to 10,000 homes to be built on the now redundant Waterbeach Barracks site and surrounding land, with 1400 to be built within 20 years.

### **The Farmland Museum**

The Farmland Museum and Denny Abbey provide a place which enables people to explore Cambridgeshire's rural history and locality as well as inspiring their imagination, learning and creativity. The site has a unique story to tell, with its own history as a farming estate which supported, in particular, the medieval monastic development with its unique Grade 1 listed buildings. The collections represent the farming and rural domestic life of Cambridgeshire.

The first collections were moved to Denny in 1994 from the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) Oakington Depot, where they had been stored since leaving the original Museum in the nearby village of Haddenham due to the Delanoy family retiring from running the museum. The Museum formally opened in 1997. The Museum's first five years (1997–2002) of opening was a period of setting up, building a framework for the organisation and developing event programmes and an audience.

The capital costs of development were supported financially by the Heritage Lottery Fund and SCDC, East Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council. The Museum

receives annual revenue from admissions, café, shop, workshops, education, venue hire, donations, from SCDC (an annual revenue grant which ends in 2015) and a number of other project-specific grants. The Farmland Museum is the only accredited Museum in South Cambridgeshire supported by the district council.

From its original core of 2,500 objects, the Museum has increased its collection to 10,000 objects, which now encompass material relating to the whole county of Cambridgeshire. The Museum is fully accredited under the national accreditation scheme for museums (now managed by Arts Council England). The Museum is open to visitors from the beginning of April (or Easter Sunday if March) to the first Sunday in November and is currently receiving on average 12,000-13,000 visitors a year.

There are 1.75 full time staff, and five seasonal part-time staff. A dedicated team of volunteers carries out about 20% of the Museum's work. The volunteers provide 45 hours' work a week, throughout the year; others help at event days (providing 250 hours' work each season) and volunteers also provide an additional 300 hours' work on twice yearly 'work days' when a range of construction, maintenance and restoration projects are completed. The Museum is also supported by a small Friends' group.

### **Denny Abbey**

The Farmland Museum manages Denny Abbey on behalf of English Heritage under a Local Management Agreement. A grant from English Heritage pays for front-of-house staff and without the Museum the Abbey would be a site closed off to the public. Ownership transferred from Pembroke College, University of Cambridge who had bought the Abbey in the 1950s.

Denny Abbey, a Grade 1 12<sup>th</sup> century Abbey building, was inhabited by three different religious orders (Benedictine Monks, Knights Templars and Franciscan Nuns) until 1539 after which it became home to a series of tenant farmers including Chivers of Histon. The nuns' 14<sup>th</sup> century refectory building still stands as does a 19<sup>th</sup> century farm labourer's cottage.

The Abbey buildings are not treated separately within the site but are woven into the history of the whole site with its farming and community connections. Displays and interactives within the Abbey, refectory and cottage bring their history to life and play an important part in school sessions. The Abbey still also plays a prominent part in community life witnessing joint church services at Easter, during the summer and a community carol service at Christmas. Connected to Ely Cathedral the abbey was a site of some of the celebrations of the 900<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the diocese in 2009.

# Performance Measurement

## Visitor Figures 1997-2013

Year	No. Of Visitors	Comments
1997- 98	12,442	Opening year
1998 – 99	9,593	
1999 – 2000	9,031	
2000 – 2001	7,539	Foot & Mouth
2001 - 2002	7,513	Foot & Mouth
2002 - 2003	9,359	
2003 - 2004	9,891	
2004 - 2005	12,345	
2005 - 2006	13,402	
2006 - 2007	13,082	
2007 - 2008	12,248	
2008	10,542	All major events affected by rain.
2009	13,488	
2010	10,518	
2011	10,789	
2012	10,455	All major events affected by rain.
2013	11,896	

## Projected Visitors

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
12,200	13,000	14,000*	15,000*	16,000*

\*Excludes possible redevelopment of Grain Store

## School Children in Organised Visits & Outreach 1999-2013

Year	Number	Comments
1999	427	
2000	479	
2001 - 2002	626	
2002 - 2003	1120	HLF Funded Education Post
2003 - 2004	2074	HLF Funded
2004 - 2005	2455	HLF Funded
2005 - 2006	1771	2nd HLF Funded Education Post
2006 - 2007	1608	HLF Funded
2007 - 2008	1418	HLF Funded
2008 - 2009	1513	Museum now core funds 3 day a week post
2009 - 2010	2016	Based on figures from 2 separate sources
2010 - 2011	3661	Based on figures from 3 separate sources
2011 - 2012	2707	Based on figures from 3 separate sources
2013	4547	

## Projected School Children in Organised Visits & Outreach 2014-2018

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
5000	5300*	5600*	5900*	6200*

\*Excludes possible redevelopment of Grain Store

**Long Learners - Tours, Talks and Outreach in the Community  
2002-2013 (above school age)**

Year	2002-2003	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Life Long Learners</b>	<b>433</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>1564</b> HLF funded outreach project	<b>1517</b> HLF funded outreach project	<b>1085</b> HLF funded outreach project	<b>839</b> Museum now Core funds a 3 day a week post	<b>765</b>	<b>1167*</b>	<b>1418*</b>	<b>1076*</b>	<b>1018</b>

\*Based on Education Officer's data

**Life Long Learners - Tours, Talks and Outreach in the Community 2014-2018**

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>Life Long Learners</b>	<b>1400</b>	<b>1650</b>	<b>1900*</b>	<b>2200*</b>	<b>2500*</b>

\*Excludes possible redevelopment of Grain Store and subsequent outreach work



## **Market Analysis**

The Museum's strengths lie in providing life long learning, leisure and inspiration for the local community and tourists visiting the area. The collections attract visitors interested in agriculture including members of the farming community from the local area as well as from overseas, in particular Australia. Other visitors are attracted by the monastic history of the Abbey and in recent times connections with the Knights Templars. Denny Abbey is one of only three sites in the country to have been inhabited by three different religious orders.

The Museum is a regional tourist destination and resource, especially as it is, situated between Ely and Cambridge and attracts many visitors on their way to, or back from their holidays in Norfolk. Our core audience remains as families who are attracted by the space and events programme.

### **Quotes from visitors about the quality of the site and the experience that they had:**

*'This place is a treasure'*

*'So much to see very glad we came here will come back'*

*'Really well thought out and put together'*

*'Didn't realise we would see such an excellent farming museum - only really came to see the abbey - but was captivated.'*

*'A thoroughly amazing place with something for everybody. The education facilities are spot on and my 8yr old son loved the clay making. We all had a go at the hands on activities and really enjoyed them. Thank you for an amazing day.' 2nd Sept 2010*

*'Fascinating. I've learnt a great deal that I didn't know being originally a townie. I will value celery more now that I know how difficult it once was to produce. Thank you.'*

*'Thank you for having things to help children have fun too. We loved the stained glass making.'*

*'We have really enjoyed our visit to Denny Abbey. It has a wonderful state of calm about it and it is so nice to browse at unrushed leisure!'*

*'Most interesting. Shows how hard life was in those days.'*

*'I really enjoyed the dairy room because you can see how to make butter.'*

## **Achievements 2006 - 2013**

All these achievements have been made by a collaborative effort between staff and volunteers

- Attracting Project funding and grants of £500,000 exclusive of SCDC and EH core funding
- Working with English Heritage, SCDC and HLF on a joint five year development plan (2000-2005) of the Abbey interpretation (new text panels, timeline and dressing), production of a new guidebook, storage and display of excavated material, school sessions and children's interactives
- Achieving and maintaining accreditation.
- Locating, photographing and adding more information to the digital catalogue of 10,000 objects in the collection
- Six years of a HLF funded education and outreach post, 2002-2007 and ability to support an education officer from core funding from 2007
- Creation of a new temporary exhibition space, and ticket office and shop
- Redisplay of the Stone Barn to improve access to collections and create additional space for activities.
- Reorganisation of the Upper Stores in Grain Store.
- More family friendly activities during school holidays; increase in hands-on activities for children around site.
- New website, Facebook page and followers on Twitter
- Introduction of Season Tickets and Local Resident Season Tickets
- Play area created.

## **Review of Priorities set out for: 2011-2015**

The Museum has been at Denny Abbey since 1997. Over this time the museum provision has bedded in, grown and evolved into a vibrant and community-focused organisation. The priorities identified in 2011 for the following five years were partly based on a Development Feasibility Study conducted in 2006 by Stuart Davison, Cultural Heritage Consultancy, and the need to maximise the offer, adapting to the current economic climate and the reality of needing to be more business focused in these challenging times.

- **Positioning ourselves as a the centre for rural culture and life in Cambridgeshire**

**Review:** The Museum continues to strive towards being a centre for rural culture and life in Cambridgeshire by offering a varied programme of events, family activity sessions, adult workshops, temporary exhibitions.

- **Working with our partners in culture and business to raise the profile of rural life in the surrounding conurbations and beyond**

**Review:** It has developed, and continues to develop new partnerships with organisations and individuals to help with this aim.

- **Exploring and maximising the potential of the buildings on site.**

**Review:** Ongoing. Over Winter 2013/14 the Stone Barn was redisplayed to improve interpretation of the exhibits and create a space that could be better used by schools and groups for a variety of activities. During 2014 this space has been used for a craft fair, Morris dancing, maypole dancing (including training workshop), broom dancing, large floor model railway layout, a reception and a brass band concert. A year long creative project with members of the Eastern Region Textile Forum was launched in June 2014 to use the buildings and collections as inspiration for new work to be displayed on site in during May 2015 as part of a month long textile festival.

- **A major capital project to redevelop the Grain Store and Refectory for much needed and improved facilities for visitors and teh collection. This is a natural progression after living with the site for 15 years and responding to the needs of our audience and a clear way that we can strive for our financial independence**

**Review:** Plans to redevelop the Refectory as well as the Grain Store were dropped in 2012 as being too expensive but may at a later date be looked at again. The Museum worked closely with consultants, between 2011 -13, to put together a first round application to the Heritage Lottery Fund submitted in August 2013 to redevelop the Grain Store. Application was unsuccessful but the museum was encouraged to resubmit which it did in August 2014 with a modified plan to redevelop the Grain Store. The result of this application will be known in December 2014.

- **Encourage more volunteering to expand our offer**

**Review:** On-going. The Museum actively recruits for volunteers through the County's Volunteer Centres, the national volunteering website Do-it and its own website. Posters and application forms are distributed around the museum site. Occasional press releases and poster campaigns also successfully recruit new volunteers.

- **Improving facilities for volunteers to support our offer**

**Review:** As part of the Grain Store Redevelopment plans there will be better space provided for volunteers to access the collections, socialise and for training opportunities. In 2014 with funding from The Friends of The Farmland Museum the Museum purchased lockers for the volunteers to use.

- **Diversifying our income streams with entrepreneurial flair**

**Review:** On-going. The museum constantly looks at its income streams – since 2013 the museum has asked for donations in return for fresh produce from its allotment. In 2014 the museum reviewed its hire charges for the site – especially when used for weddings. In 2014 a Catering Consultant was hired to review the Tea Room and make recommendations – some of which have already been implemented.

- **Encouraging philanthropy and creating a legacy campaign**

**Review:** On-going.

- **Preparing to play a full part in the Cultural Olympiad in 2012 and use the opportunity to celebrate all cultures of the region**

**Review:** Achieved

- **Improving our sustainability and resilience**

**Review:** On-going. The Museum continues to aim for complete financial independence by 2020.

## **Current Objectives**

This section covers the plan for the Museum for the next five years. An Action Plan for each theme will guide the current objectives. Monitoring and measuring success will be reviewed quarterly with the board of Trustees as well as at regular meetings and feedback sessions with staff, volunteers and Friends.

### **Themes:**

- **Education and life-long learning**
- **Stronger resilient communities and volunteering opportunities**
- **Tourism, enterprise, innovation and regional economic growth**
- **Health, happiness and well-being**

Underpinning and integral to all of these themes/objectives are the collections and the triple bottom line of sustainability: environmental, economic and social.

These themes have been chosen to support and chime in with SCDC's own vision and key strategic aims:

- *We are committed to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.*
- *We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family.*
- *We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.*
- *We are committed to assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family.*
- *We are committed to providing a voice for rural life.*

In the current economic climate there is a greater emphasis than ever on working in partnership to deliver services more efficiently and more responsively to local needs.

All Museum users can expect a high level of Customer Care – as visitors, during telephone calls and email.

## **Education and Life Long Learning**

The Museum will continue to deliver a varied programme linked to the National Curriculum for schools on-site and in school.

- The programme will be reviewed and evaluated annually.
- New activities using the museum's collections will be introduced where appropriate and linked with any new national, regional or local initiatives

The Museum is used as an informal learning venue for a series of traditional arts and crafts workshops for adults led by experts in their fields. Workshops have included basket making, life drawing and rag rug making.

- The programme will be reviewed and evaluated annually.
- New workshops will be introduced annually to keep the programme fresh and varied.

### **Stronger resilient communities and volunteering opportunities**

The Museum is dependent on volunteers to help provide a dynamic museum service.

- Recruitment for volunteers in all areas of the Museum, from gardening to education is on-going.
- Volunteer opportunities are advertised on the national Do-It website, on the Museum's website, Facebook and Twitter, onsite and through posters and press releases.
- New opportunities are identified annually to encourage volunteering.
- Robust recruitment procedures are in place including application form, interviews and references taken up.

### **Tourism, enterprise, innovation and regional economic growth**

The Managers/Curators of The Farmland Museum, The Museum of Cambridge and Museum of Technology continue to look at ways of working together since the first joint marketing initiative in 2008. Staffing shortages and other projects at the three sites between 2012 – 14 stalled the earlier plans of creating a closer partnership.

- The Farmland Museum will continue to work with The Museum of Cambridge and Museum of Technology to look at joint projects and ways to increase visitor numbers and innovation within the three sites.

In 2013 annual Season Tickets were introduced to encourage repeat visits. In 2014 the Chair of The Trustees negotiated a grant from the Parishes of Waterbeach and Landbeach to supplement a new Local Residents Season Ticket for those living within the two Parishes to encourage greater use by the local community of the museum's facilities and collections.

- The Famlan Museum will review and evaluate its admission prices and cost of the Season Tickets annually.
- The Local Residents Season Ticket will be evaluated annually with a view to increase the number of local Parishes participating in the scheme.

### **Health, happiness and well-being**

The Museum runs a successful events programme every season mainly focused on the family audience. As part of the sustainability work at the Museum it is felt that smaller events run by the Museum should be linked with local, regional and national initiatives to widen the offer available to visitors to encourage both new and repeat visits.

- The events programme is reviewed and evaluated annually.
- Organisations and individuals are encouraged to participate in the Museum's events programme.

## APPENDIX 1

# Table of Objectives and Action Plan

Sustainability and collections underpin all of these objectives and actions.

### Resources available:

Staff & volunteer time

Annual budget (set at beginning of each year)

Advice & support from partners

Museum Friends

Museum site – buildings, green spaces and collection

External funding as appropriate – e.g: grant applications



<b>Theme</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>Education and Life Long Learning</b>	Extend school offer	<p>Increase awareness of schools' programme through direct contact, advertising and promotion.</p> <p>Offer themed teachers training workshops eg: tudor dancing</p>
	Extend programme of traditional craft workshops, creative workshops and talks	<p>Research into and find tutors in specialist crafts and change the programme every year.</p> <p>Identify new speakers and creative workshop tutors. Maintain minimum number of 6 workshops and talks offered annually.</p>
	Develop partnership projects to deliver learning opportunities.	<p>Offer additional textile workshops for adults and children during the Textile Festival (May 2015) in partnership with the Eastern Region Textile Forum.</p> <p>Work with the Education Team at Amey Cespa.</p>
	Provide a vibrant and creative programme of Family Activity sessions during school holidays.	<p>Refresh the activities annually.</p> <p>Update and refresh children's hands-on activities around the site annually.</p>

Theme	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<b>Stronger resilient communities and volunteernig opportunities</b>	Increase number of volunteers across all Museum work (will need better dedicated facilities to support this)	<p>Increase awareness of volunteering opportunities.</p> <p>Encourage volunteers to atternd SHARE training courses.</p> <p>Recruit new trustees to enhance Board.</p>
	More involvement with the local community	<p>Continue to offer activities that will encourage use of the museum’s facilities by the Community</p> <p>More presence in the local community to raise awareness – participate at community events when invited. Improve marketing within local Parishes.</p> <p>Continue to develop a programme of philanthropy.</p> <p>Encourage organisations and individuals within the Community to participate at Museum events as demonstrators, stall holders etc.</p>
	Plan for increase in population in neighbouring villages.	<p>Be aware of local plans and how they will impact on Museum service and core aims.</p> <p>Liase with developers as appropriate.</p> <p>Include potential growth of local community into any significant future development plans for the Museum.</p>

<b>Theme</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<b>Tourism, enterprise, innovation and regional economic growth</b>	Increase number of visitors and revenue generation	<p>Update website and social media on a weekly basis.</p> <p>Review and refresh design of Museum leaflet annually.</p> <p>Look at ways to generate additional income.</p> <p>Implement fundraising campaign Winter 2014.</p> <p>Work with new partners to develop projects and activities to increase visitor numbers and spend per head.</p>
	New building development of the Grain Store to improve facilities that the Museum can offer (outward facing cafe, toilets, work and social space for staff and volunteers, visitor orientation area, learning space and reception) and support the mission and vision of the Museum over the next 10 years.	<p>Project dependant on 1st round application to HLF submitted August 2014.</p> <p>If successful project will move into Development Phase.</p> <p>If unsuccessful project will be reviewed and if necessary cancelled and revised on a smaller scale.</p>
	Utilise the space offered by the Stone Barn since redisplay Winter 2013/14 for functions and events.	Hire the Stone Barn for receptions – weddings, local businesses etc
	Partnerships with local businesses and other organisations	<p>Look for opportunities and businesses who wish to be involved with a local charity closely linked with the community.</p> <p>Encourage corporate</p>

		volunteering. Develop Corporate membership scheme.
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Theme	OBJECTIVE	ACTION
<p><b>Health, Happiness and Well-Being</b></p>	<p>Improve community's health, happiness and well-being</p>	<p>Look to include events and activities to appeal to those aged 55 and above.</p> <p>Review annually the events programme to improve visitor offer and avoid duplicating similar events by neighbouring museums and/or running events on same day.</p> <p>Annual English Heritage Members' day based around aspects of the Abbey, medieval life and local history. If successful to consider offering similar as a study day as part of the Adult Leisure programme of workshops and talks.</p>
	<p>Extend outreach offer</p>	<p>Work with local Care Homes to provide a valuable reminiscence service.</p> <p>Participate in CMAP/County Council Social Services <i>Memories In The Community</i> Project. (2015 if funding application successful)</p> <p>Increase outreach to schools through advertising and promotion</p>
	<p>Increase and improve access to collections.</p>	<p>Refresh displays when resources allow.</p> <p>Annually develop at least 1 temporary exhibition to highlight an area of the collection.</p>

