



**Bridge Inn**  
Community Farm

Proposal for Ainsdale Library

## **Bridge Inn Community Farm**

### **Background**

Bridge Inn Community Farm was established in May 2010 for adults with learning disabilities. Over the years it has become a community with in itself, having its own “friends of Bridge Inn Group” which is a small charity run by parents and carers of the students whom attend the farm.

The farm aims to provide a service of training, a real life work environment and experience in agriculture, horticulture and conservation. The farm delivers a high quality service for adults with learning disabilities within North and South Sefton and West Lancashire.

From it's small beginning in 2010 the farm has grown, now having over 60 students, employing 5 full time staff, 4 part time staff and a number of volunteers.

In September 2012 the farm expanded to include another unit on the site. This was developed in to an Arts and Craft Centre. In May 2013 Bridge Inn Community Farm became a limited company.

The farm now has a public profile and social standing within the area, and as a result is sponsoring various events, such as the 2013 Southport Comedy Festival. We believe in supporting local organisations, working together to promote the local area.

The Farm already works with local authorities, education departments, environmental departments, community groups and local businesses.

Students access the service through referrals from the independence living team, part of Health and Social Care. Also by independent enquiry direct to the farm.

The farm offers places for 20 students per day and is now virtually at capacity. We are looking for a further opportunity to expand and develop the service and believe Ainsdale library would provide the ideal location.

The farm currently offers various activities and also the opportunity to take these further with a qualification.

### **Current Activities :**

Agriculture  
Animal Husbandry  
Horticulture  
Arts and Crafts  
Drama  
Photography  
Bike Riding  
Fishing

### **Current Projects and Partners**

Bridge Inn Community Farm staff and students assist with a number of projects in the Sefton area . Working together with both the local authority, Community Groups and 'Friends of' volunteer organizations . The students both enjoy helping with the projects but the practical work is also credited to any qualifications they may be taking. A situation mutually beneficial to all.

### **St Helens College**

Bridge Inn Community Farm is an accredited outreach site for St Helen's College. Our partnership with the college offers our students the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills regardless of their age or level of experience. We pride ourselves on working at various levels of ability to educate and inspire all our students.

The qualifications we offer in partnership with the college are as follows;

Working Skills lvls 1,2,3 in Horticulture

Diploma pre NVQ in Horticulture

NVQ level 1 in Horticulture

Working Skills lvl 1,2,3 Animal Husbandry

Working Skills lvl 1,2,3 in Conservation

Tutors visit twice a week as St Helens College feels it is better to view the students in a working environment rather than a classroom for assessment.

In addition to the visiting lecturers, Carl Craven Director of Bridge Inn Farm, is a qualified assessor accredited with St Helen's College.

### **Sefton Council Parkforce** (The Stray, Coronation Park and Kings Gardens)

Bridge Inn Community farm is working together on various projects with Sefton Council Parkforce Department. (previously Parks and Greenspaces)

#### The Stray, Churchtown

The stray is a small woodland which runs from Preston New Road to Botanic Gardens. A mature wooded walk a quarter of a mile long .

The Stray is utilised by the local community, from dog walkers, children going to school and as an extended walk from Botanic Gardens.

It is very important this area is correctly maintained and the pathways kept clear, without this on going maintenance the area can flood very quickly and become impassable.

The staff and students from the farm are helping rejuvenate the woodland walk; Clearing scrub, raising the canopy height of the trees, removing any dead, damaged or diseased material and removing any invasive non indigenous species.

Students have also been creating wild life habitats for flora and fauna. Installing bird boxes and bug boxes which they have made at the farm through our crafts program. Also stacking logs creating habitats for insects and small animals.

With the Parkforce Rangers, students have been conducting bird, butterfly and wild flower surveys, which provide data on the habitat of the Stray and help us with the conservation of the area.

The council have provided a unit in Botanic Gardens as a base for staff and students to work from and support from the Parkforce Rangers.

#### Coronation Park, Crosby

The students from the farm have been assisting the Parkforce Rangers and The Friends of Coronation Park. There is a old Victorian Bowling Pavilion in Coronation Park, Crosby. The exterior is looking a little tired and in great need of some TLC.

The staff and students from the farm have been going twice a week. They have been removing the old rendering, filling and repairing any holes, once the render is fully removed, the building will be reskimmed and then the students will under coat and repaint the exterior of the building. This is a building utilised by the local community, so it is important that this ongoing repair and maintenance is done allowing the community to enjoy the facility for many more years to come.

### Kings Gardens, Southport

This is a restoration project of the Victorian gardens on the promenade in Southport. Bridge Inn Community Farm is an active member of the Friends of Kings Gardens.

Carl Craven Director of Bridge Inn Farm is the gardening co-ordinator for the group and Cheryl Craven, the event co-ordinator. Both sit on the Friends of Kings Gardens Committee.

The group work very closely with the local authority and the Parkforce dept with support from the Kings Gardens Community Development Officer. At present the restoration and construction work is ongoing and the aim of the group is to promote and provide information about Kings Gardens.

The Students from Bridge Inn farm have been on site before the contractors arrived. The first stage was to clear scrub, litter and weeds from the site. A community garden is planned as part of the restoration. The students from the farm will start work in August 2013 preparing a tiered level ready for laying a lawn . Also in the surrounding gardens the flower beds will be prepared ready for the planting of over 4000 perennials and shrubs . The students will then continue to maintain the area in the ongoing project. The friends of Kings gardens and Bridge Inn also work together with local schools and HMP Kennet in this project.

This is a project designed to rejuvenate the gardens. An important area for both the local community and tourism in the town.

### **Merseyrail**

Bridge Inn Community farm currently work together with Merseyrail on a project to enhance Formby Station.

The idea of the project is both to improve the look of the station but also to encourage people to cook and eat more vegetables.

The students and staff from the farm have built 4 large vegetable beds and a herb bed from old railway sleepers donated by Network Rail, which are both a perfect material for veg beds but also in keeping with the railway station. Merseyrail has provided financial support to purchase seeds and compost.

The students sowed seeds at the farm and grew the plants on until they were a reasonable size, they then transplanted them to the beds at the station.

The students go at least twice a week to maintain the beds, weeding and watering them. We now have a large crop of vegetables including runner beans, board beans, courgettes, onions, peas, peppers, lettuce and strawberries which commuters can pick free of charge.

The project has been extremely successful and has had a lot of positive feedback. Due to the success Merseyrail would like us to expand all the way down the platform, creating more beds and growing a wider range of vegetables and herbs.

### **St Mary's School, Crosby**

A project working together with St Mary's School.

The decline of the bee population has been a much publicized topic in recent years. In 2013 Bridge Inn Community Farm was approached by the school to collaborate in a project to research the decline of the British Bee population. Students and staff from the farm built a high fenced enclosure to accommodate 20 bee hives and extraction shed. 200,000 bees were then re-homed in the new hives at the farm. Over the following months both Bridge Inn and St Mary's worked closely together to create habitats for the bees to source food. Areas of Himalayan balsam have been left all around the farm as this is a good food source for the bees. The teachers from St Mary's have given demonstrations to the farm with students wearing full protective suits and looking closely to see how a hive operates and honey is produced. This project will be on going and we are already looking to create new areas of planting and also to run a qualification from the farm in conjunction with St Mary's on beekeeping. This has been a very interesting project providing information of bee habits during different weather conditions, showing us where they are flying to source food. Different pollens show the destination of the bees. Also showing how GM crops, pesticides and parasites affect the bee population.

### **Churchtown Civic Society**

In the autumn of 2012 Bridge Inn Community Farm started work on the community garden in Churchtown village in conjunction with The Churchtown Civic Society .

Staff and students visit the garden once a week to help maintain and keep tidy the community garden and also create wildlife areas within the garden. Local schools can utilize the garden for nature studies, observing wild birds, frogs and newts, in a tranquil and peaceful environment. This is an ongoing project. The work done in the gardens goes towards qualifications in horticulture and working skills. The work achieved goes towards the judging in the Britain in Bloom competition.

### **Working with Schools**

Bridge Inn Community farm already works together with specialist and mainstream schools offering courses in agriculture, horticulture, arts and crafts and work placements for individual students.

Merefield School attend once a week with a group of students to access the Arts and Craft classes. They have taken their work back to the school which is now on display around the school.

Thornton College and Hugh Baird college have recently undertaken work experience with a large group of students, learning working skills in painting and maintenance.

The farm has regular work experience students from local schools in the borough. This is in conjunction with the Sefton Education Business Partnership 's work placement program. We have worked together for a number of years now and are quite a popular choice with students.

### **Friends of Ainsdale Village Gardens**

The students from the farm helped prune out brambles and clear away scrub. Also planting spring bulbs, and general tidying of the area. The students were happy to assist in any way they could, whilst supplying an additional work force to the project.





Dear Carl

Here is a brief resume of the tasks completed by Paul and the students since they started helping us at Ainsdale Village Park earlier this year.

During April the students came on three occasions and helped prune out brambles and clear away scrub. ( photo attached) As you can see there was a lot of work involved as the area to be cleared was quite extensive.

In June Paul and the students helped the park rangers plant spring flowering bulbs.

Attached is a photo taken today before the start of nettle pulling.

The friends group and I greatly appreciate the help Paul and the students give us. As the gardening coordinator for the group, I would find it problematic enlisting volunteers to do this type of work and since Ainsdale Village Park is a coastal park there will always be areas that require pruning/ clearing etc.

During the past five years the park has been created from what was a litter-ridden inhospitable field to the lovely park we have today. Our plans for the future are to continue planting bulbs for spring colour and to further develop wildflower areas which will attract butterflies, bees and other beneficial insects. We also plan to plant ornamental grasses which will fit well with the coastal theme.

The work that Paul and the students carry out for us is vital for the successful development of the park. Ainsdale Village Park feels like a nice place to be, and gives a lot of pleasure to the local community.

Thank you for supporting us.

Kind regards  
Martine



Carl, Just wanted to say,

Thank-you so much for Giving me the  
Opportunity to work with such wonderful young people.  
The last few months have only been a pleasure; they  
have been the most fulfilling, rewarding times in  
my life.

Carl, your personal vision for Bridge Inn farm  
is amazing and Inspiring, along with your  
enthusiasm and sense of fun!

I hope to continue working along side  
you and this amazing Project for a long time to  
come.

My Sincere "Season's Greetings" to you and yours.

May it be a happy and peaceful one.

Mike



45 Gores Lane  
Formby  
Merseyside  
L37 3NU

Carl Craven  
Bridge Inn Farm  
Moss Side  
Formby

Dear Carl

We are writing to express our pleasure at the progress Thomas is making through attending Bridge Inn Community Farm.

As you know Thomas gained an NVQ level 1 in horticulture at Pengwern College and attending the farm is allowing him not only to utilise and develop that skill but also to progress towards additional qualification in animal care. As you may be aware we had some difficulty persuading Sefton social services that Thomas would be better attending the farm than a council run day centre. However when we have seen on our numerous visits the work that Thomas is engaged in, his interest in the farm project generally and the warm and friendly environment in which he works we are fully satisfied that the pressure we put on Sefton to allow Thomas to work at the farm was totally justified.

The amount of progress you have made at the farm since opening it is wonderful to see. It is very pleasing to think that Thomas has been part of that development and we would imagine that the parents and family of the other clients working there feel equally pleased and satisfied.

We have noticed how all the people at the farm, despite their various disabilities, seem to work together in a spirit of mutual friendship and we have to congratulate you on the spirit of friendship and teamwork that you have fostered amongst your various clients.

Keep up the good work!  
With our kindest regards  
Yours sincerely

*P. A. Davies*  
*M. Davies*

Pat and Martin Davies.



## SEFTON EDUCATION BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Mr C Craven  
Bridge Inn Community Farm  
Moss Side Farm  
Formby  
L37 0AF

Telephone (direct line): 0151 330 5751  
e-mail: [Joanneh@seftonebp.co.uk](mailto:Joanneh@seftonebp.co.uk)

Dear Mr Craven

A very big 'Thank You'!

We have reached the end of another academic year and I am writing to thank you for all the time and effort you have put into the Work Experience programme over the past 12 months. I have said it before and will say it again but we really couldn't do it without you.

Work Experience has such a positive impact on the young people involved and as you know the skills gained are becoming more and more valuable to them as they look into the opportunities available to them for their future career.

As you may be aware both the previous and current government have very much supported the route of apprenticeships for young people leaving school and college however more and more employer involvement is needed in order for this route to be a viable one. For this reason I have enclosed some literature in relation to apprenticeships which I would be grateful if you could complete and return to me as soon as possible.

In addition to this I would ask you if you could kindly indicate where and how many students you are able to support and return the calendar to me along with the questionnaire in the FREEPOST envelope enclosed. Once you have agreed to these dates, specific paperwork will be sent to you a couple of months prior to the placement commencing. The student will then contact you approximately two weeks in advance to confirm final arrangements.

Where it is possible we will try and communicate as much as we can with you in the future via email assuming this is suitable for your company. Can I please ask that you complete the box on the calendar with your email address.

Once again many thanks for your continued support

Yours sincerely

Joanne Huddart  
Work Experience Manager

28 Myers Road East  
Crosby  
Liverpool  
L23 0QZ



### Bridge Inn Community Farm/Honey Bee Project Partnership

To whom it may concern

We contacted Carl about our project in October 2012 as we were aware of their outstanding reputation for their commitment to conservation and education. After the initial meeting, Carl was very receptive to our project, we were invited to place some hives on a piece of waste land on the Bridge Inn site (see photos). In March 2013 Carl & his team set about turning the overgrown waste land into an apiary for the project. This involved a tremendous amount of physical effort and organisation to get the site ready for the arrival of the bee hives & bees in May. The work was completed on time and we now have an apiary to be proud of (see photos).

Not only do we now have an excellent facility for the project but Carl & his team have done a great deal of complimentary planting of trees and bushes that will benefit not only the bees but other pollinators.

During the short period that the apiary has been functional the clients, who attend Bridge Inn on a daily basis, have shown a great deal of interest and have got involved in 'hands on' conservation work by constructing the mesh fencing around the perimeter of the apiary and produced some beautiful bee related' artwork which has been displayed on the fence. The groups who have attended our practical sessions when inspecting the hives have been keen to learn and have followed up these sessions with independent study to further their knowledge.

We have found the staff at Bridge Inn to have an overwhelming commitment to their clients, the time and patience they invest to tailor the educational needs of each individual is outstanding and the outcome of this learning is clear to see by their achievements. Carl and his team have always displayed utmost professionalism and dedication to their conservation and education projects.

Yours Sincerely

John Moran Project Coordinator



## **Proposal For the library**

The library is an important community resource and a fundamental element of our proposal would be the retention of a library service for the benefit of the community in general. We would utilize a quarter of the available space for the library keeping a similar proportion of the book stock, reviewing the genres of stock kept on site.

More specialized books could be ordered on request via liaison with the library service . It would be our intention to provide a home visit service for the Ainsdale area. A portion of the library would be a children's library, reading groups would still be welcome to utilise the space. Also the outside seating area could again become the focus for children's story time or for the reading groups, in the summer months.

In the past we have organised several outdoor children's plays which were well received by the local community, and a great success. These performances were in partnership with Gambolling Arena Theatre Company, and we would look to put on shows in the summer months in the outdoor space which we are looking to restore.

We would create a community information area to be located at the entrance to the building, this would be a free of charge area for local groups to display and promote events and ongoing activities, furthering our relationship with local community.

The reception area would function with a dual purpose. First as the library counter and also the main reception to the building. We would suggest our opening hours to begin with would be 10am – 4pm Monday to Friday, 10am – 1pm Saturday and closed Sunday. These times would be in conjunction with our other sites, but would be subject to change on the occasion of specialist events.

Initially we would work together with the Library Service as to how the service is run and the actual practicalities of the loaning of books would require some initial training. In terms of book loaning we would look to use

a separate Ainsdale membership card, allowing us to be independent from the council system.

For specialist books not available on our site, we would provide a pick up and drop off service to other Sefton libraries, where we would order a book, pick it up and drop it back off at either the Atkinson library or Formby library.

The library service would be run by students and staff and we would also welcome volunteers from local community groups. However we would like to point out that the service is not dependent on volunteers, they would just be a welcomed addition.

Many of our students enjoy more clerical activities so this would be ideal for them. It also could be used to develop their numeracy and literacy skills, and eventually leading to a qualification within this area.

The library would work alongside and integrate with other activities and courses the project provides. The interaction between the sites will provide a combination of disciplines for students to choose from. Creating a varied and stimulating service that can be tailor made for each individual.

## **Community Garden**

Adjacent to Ainsdale Library is a nature and wildlife garden. Originally it was a quiet haven for the community and library users, which has now fallen into disrepair and is currently closed. It comprises of a seated area with mosaic floor surrounded by plants and shrubs loved by insects and birds. As part of the project for Ainsdale Library, we would restore this oasis back to its former glory.

Works required:

Restore the paving,

Restore the circular seated area,

replacing damaged seating, posts and fencing.

Replant ,prune and revive existing plants

Introduce new shrubs and perennials, and creating a wild life area.

At the rear of the property is a grassed area. We propose to build six vegetable beds which would be planted and maintained by the students.

These beds and their produce would be available to the local community to pick and take home. A free scheme similar to the one currently run by Merseyrail and Bridge Inn Farm on Formby station, where waiting train users can pick vegetables on their daily commute.

At the front of the property we propose to establish flower beds planted with seasonal bedding throughout the year. Creating a pleasing aspect for the community and enhancing the frontage of the property benefiting Ainsdale and Sefton for Britain in Bloom.

All Construction and maintenance of the grounds area and beds will be fulfilled by the students supervised by staff. Plant stock will be grown on site at the farm minimizing costs.

The intention is to create an area surrounding the library which the local community can utilize and enjoy .

## **Activities and Classes**

The proposal is to utilize the building in part for a specialized unit to promote art based therapies such as dance, drama, music and visual art for adults with learning disabilities.

A place where people can be creative and express their individuality and increase their confidence whilst developing skills in the arts.

Drama classes at Bridge Inn Community Farm began in 2012 and have gone from strength to strength, with the pinnacle being a 2 day run of a specially written and devised pantomime, during Christmas of 2012. The pantomime was a huge success and gave all the students a huge boost in confidence and pride in what they had all accomplished.

Our Students developed their creativity and confidence through collaborations with each other and the local communities. They learn to work together, listen together and develop their imaginations to enable them to perform with a high level of confidence.

Because of the nature of the building we intend to leave the area as an open space, with a performing area in the centre.

Classes will be run in single sessions of one discipline at a time. So to avoid the intrusion of noise from multiple classes running at the same time.



Classes at the proposed site will include workshops and lessons in drama, acting, performing skills, music, dancing, and singing. These disciplines encourage the development of the life skills, which are at the core of the Bridge Inn Farm ethos.

These classes will be designed to enable people with learning disabilities, and other learning needs, to partake in performing arts to develop their confidence, social, expressive, communication skills and learn to work in a team.

	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
10am - 12pm	Drama	Creative Writing	Music and Percussion	Choir	Music and Percussion	Saturday Club
12pm - 1pm	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1pm - 3pm	Choir	Dance	Poetry	Drama	Dance	Saturday Club
3pm - 3:30pm	Cool Down Yoga	Cool Down Yoga	Cool Down Yoga	Cool Down Yoga	Cool Down Yoga	Saturday Club

We like the idea of using a structured timetable as this allows the students to gain the sense of a regular routine. We would start the day with a higher octane activity such as percussion as this would get the students into an energetic mood and ready for the day.

In contrast to this we would close the day with a calming activity such as yoga. Allowing the students to reflect on the days activities, and putting them in a relaxed mood in preparation for the end of the day.

Sessions would be run in blocks of ten weeks, reviewing the success of each class with the tutors and the management team at the end of each block. This will enable us to respond quickly to feedback and tailor a program that suits all involved and is as productive as possible.

Other sessions that could be added in the future include Arts and Crafts, Stage design, Costume design, Book club, Filmmaking and we are really keen on the idea of developing a Employability Skills program and so forth.

Classes will be run by industry specialists with teaching and specialist skills and all will be fully CRB checked. The outcomes of the classes are simple, to develop the inner performer, learn new skills and overall have fun. We believe that everyone can become good at what they want to do given the right support. Our focus is on providing the right type of environment where our students can grow with ease, and through encouragement undertake in any and all opportunities given to them.

## **Plans for the Library**

Refurbishment of Kitchen

Refurbishment and additional toilets ( including accessible toilet)

Investigation of electrical and mechanical services

– Condition Survey Costs Mechanical – £20,240. Electrical – £2,770

General Decoration

Restoration of community garden

Planting at front and rear gardens

Restructuring of internal layout

Building of an office area

Costs for work to be completed will be funded from existing Bridge Inn Community Farm income and potential income from new students accessing new unit.

## **Income and Funding**

Income is generated from students attending the farm, whilst paying an hourly fee which is funded through The Direct Payments Scheme or via a commissioned package of care from the local Authority or by private payment.

The hourly rates are as follow  
£8.00 per hour

Or if the student comes with a support worker it is £5.00 per hour.

Number of Clients per Day	Hourly Rate	Number of Hours	Total Income per Day	Total Income per Week (mon-Fri)
20	£8.00	6	£960	£4800

**All running costs and staffing costs will be funded from this income. No other funding is required.**

Staff	Number of Staff	Hourly Rate	Total Hours per Week	Total Cost
Full Time	2	£8.00	70	£560
Part Time	2	£6.50	40	£260
Tutor	2	£10	60	£600

Total Staffing Cost per Week

£1420

### Initial Costs

Item	Initial Start Up
Kitchen	£3000
Toilets	£6000
Computing	£2000
Office Equipment	£1000
Activities Equipment	£1500
Furniture	£3000
Kitchen Equipment	£800
Eternal Building Supplies	£1400
Gardening Tools	£350
Interior Decoration (Painting)	£150

## Running Costs per year

Rent and terms of lease to be agreed upon

Item	Monthly Costs	Yearly Costs
Repairs and Maintenance		£5469
Utilities		£5545
Refuse Collection		£685
Cleaning - In House		£500 materials
Council Tax		£5520
Fuel		£4000
Public Liability Insurance		£2000
Transport and Vehicles	£1600	£19,200
Promotion and Advertising		£2500
Training		£1500
Uniforms		£1000
I.T and Telephony		£1000
Office Supplies	£75	£900
Provisions	£40	£480

The library building in Ainsdale is an important and prominent site on the main route through Ainsdale. Our proposal is to provide a service focused on adults with learning disabilities. Whilst also keeping the building open to the public via the library and gardens, to see the building grow as a viable sustainable business, and to be part of a thriving local community.