

Visit to Pathways Care Farm 23 June 2025

Nestled in 5 hectares of land at the northern tip of Lowestoft, tucked in between the Yarmouth Road on the eastern side and the new course of the A12 (the “new road”) to the west, Pathways Care Farm was acquired by Director Geoff Stevens and his wife about 11 years ago having lain derelict for about 30 years prior (the original farm having been established in the 1850s). Since restored to productive use, the last farmer of the land has since told Geoff “You’ve done well” – praise from a farmer to a non-farmer to be proud of.

With a stream bringing life through the farm, the site abounds with wildlife (including 102 species of bird recorded over the last 7 years, of which 84 were recorded last year, with species including dabchick and lesser whitethroat breeding here as well), vegetables and crucially people who want to be here, with a central objective of the farm to be to find things that people can do, rather than what they can’t.

Users, or farm workers as they are referred to here, are mainly referred to Pathways via social services, and sometimes via occupational therapy, as part of their rehabilitation. The care farm provides a place where they can feel safe and a sense of belonging to a community whilst giving them a wide range of meaningful things to do, approaching each person as an individual with different needs and interests and structuring and guiding their work accordingly. Roles for the farm workers can include running the café (converted from the former grainstore), carpentry including making barn owl boxes, pottery, working with ceramics, making pens with acrylic, growing produce such as tomatoes to supply the café and the shop, as well as working with the many and varied animals that call the farm their home.



In return, the animals confer therapeutic benefits to their carers. The goats, Golden Guernseys, have a wonderful goat palace to play in and are themselves fantastic therapists. The farm is also home to two donkeys who came from a donkey sanctuary in Ireland, and are now considered “the two most spoiled donkeys in the entire world”! The chickens, including white ones who were donated to Pathways alongside brown ones who are rescued ex-battery hens, enjoy their meals from their little “chicnic tables”. The alpacas, all male, can be harnessed and taken for walks for their benefit as well as the enjoyment of those walking them. There are even beehives!

Providing access to and opportunities to connect with nature is another key theme at the farm, with the farm workers able to enjoy a woodland walk through an avenue along the east of the site, as well as a viewing platform and bird hide equipped with binoculars with views across the balancing pond. A sensory garden, complete with borders abounding with biodiversity, provides opportunities to experience nature up close. 3 species of orchid have been found to grow in their meadow this spring. There is even a secret garden tucked away, designed by and for people with experience of PTSD, laid out in such a way as to ensure that users can see out whilst being protected behind and contribute to a sense of calm.

Whilst all the wild flowers may be viewed by some as non-productive in the narrow sense of not providing food for the café, shop or animals, the productivity and value towards the mental health and wellbeing of the farm workers is immeasurable.



Gym equipment also available for the farm workers to use whilst on site, helping to avert the stigma perceived around using a public or commercial gym. The farm also has a good record of practicing upcycling at scale, for example, the bridge over the stream was created from a piece of large piping left over from the construction of the new road to the west of the farm.

The passion of our host Geoff for the care farm and their farm workers shone through during the entire course of our informative and enjoyable tour of the farm and some of our guests expressed interest in pursuing with Geoff their own ideas for bringing members of their teams to the farm for team working activities in the future.

Referrals to Pathways Care Farm can be made on behalf of an individual by health and social care professionals, teaching staff, parents and carers, and it is also possible for a person to refer themselves.

Pathways Care Farm can be contacted via:

Online: [Get in touch :: Pathways Care Farm](#)

Phone: 01502 219064 or 07434 915734

Email: info@pathways-care-farm.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pathways.care.farm.org.uk>



Other farms we are aware of in eastern Suffolk that do similar things include:

Deben Community Farm, Melton [Deben Community Farm - Care Farm](#)

(we visited Deben Community Farm in 2022, you can read about our visit here: [Guided-tour-of-Deben-Community-Farm-9-April-2022.pdf](#))

Potsford Farm, Wickham Market

[Accredited Care Farm - Potsford Farm](#)

For more about the principles of care farms visit: [Growing Care Farming | Social Farms & Gardens](#)

