



Mary Arden's Farm (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust)

Care Farming Program

Information Pack

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We hope you find the pack useful.

Thank you for your interest in joining the care farming program.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the care farming program at Mary Arden's Farm (Shakespeare Birthplace Trust).

We have a range of activities available on the care farming program which we offer all year round and hope to accommodate everyone interested in enrolling on the program.

What our care farmers and commissioners say:

"The support for such a programme for local students with special needs will enhance the curriculum, develop their social skills and provide them with life skills which are an essential tool in support of their learning."

"I have seen the students self esteem and confidence rise. This is a vital part of their development and learning and these soft outcome opportunities are a vital aspect of our students learning."

"The work has been 'real' the students have been shown a task, helped to participate and complete it to a good standard. For our students this opportunity is an experience that they wouldn't ordinarily have."

"The students transfer the skills they have learned back into the curriculum in school. The work also supports a PSD qualification (personal and social development)."

"I feel safe and supported and appreciative of work going on to break down the stigma negative discrimination experienced by people with mental ill health."

"I'm in a non-judgemental place and the animals have a calming influence on me. It helps to keep me well."

"We praise the staff at Mary Arden's Farm for their patience and dedication in building the confidence and self esteem of the care farmers. We are hopeful that this project progresses as we have other clients that would benefit from the care farming program."

A Summary Of Care Farming At Mary Arden's Farm



- **Mary Arden's Farm**
 - We are an historical visitor attraction, situated on about 20 acres of organic farmland. This site was the home of William Shakespeare's mother Mary Arden.
 - We hold certification with the Countryside Educational Visits Accreditation Scheme (CEVAS)
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- Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming and horticulture. Through meaningful, practical work outdoors, tending land and livestock, care farming builds self-confidence, teaches transferrable skills and improves physical and mental well being.
 - Participants/clients are often people who are vulnerable and excluded by society.
 - As care farmers they learn and work in a healthy, structured and supervised environment.
 - They connect with Nature and gain social, educational and training benefits.
 - Each prospective client can visit the farm and experience a free taster session to decide if this is an environment they would thrive in.
 - We offer a range of indoor and outdoor tasks related to livestock care, horticulture and rural crafts.
 - Activities and sessions can be tailored to suit to individual/group requirements.
 - Session fees start from £40/client/session.
 - Recommendation – minimum of 1 session (lasting up to one whole day) per week for 4 consecutive weeks.

The Benefits of Care Farming

Therapeutic	Physical	Social
Increased self esteem	Improved physical skills	Independence
Improved mood	Learning of new skills e.g. farming/horticulture	Improved social skills
Increased self awareness	Development of dexterity	Work success
Enhanced confidence	Altering habits (no drug or alcohol use)	Improved academic success
Increased sense of well being	Time management skills	Better teamwork skills
Increase in trust in other people	Practical skills	Improved work habit
Calmness	Improved gross motor function	Improvement in self discipline
		Personal responsibility
		Increased motivation

Site Tour

Welcome to Mary Arden's Farm!

This was the home of William Shakespeare's mother Mary Arden and now, as part of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, it is an historic visitor attraction, Soil Association accredited working farm, conservation site and fine example of Tudor living history.



The Rickyard



As you come through the entrance, you will find yourself in a large grassy square called The Rickyard. At the top end is the Great Barn which acts as a backdrop to the colourful stage. The other sides are lined by eating areas and craft spaces. Immediately on your left is the blacksmith and on the other side of the Rickyard, our carpenter plies his trade. Find out what a

working life was like for them in Tudor England. Walk along the left hand side of the Rickyard, turn left by the signpost and through the archway and step back in time to 1570s rural life, the time of Will Shakespeare's boyhood, into Palmer's Farmyard.

Palmer's House & Farmyard



Here you will find living history interpreters demonstrating life and activities from Tudor times. There is wood to be split for the kitchen fire, pigs and poultry to tend and muck to be composted and baskets to be made and mended for fetching and carrying.

In Palmer's Farmhouse, see the maids cooking the midday meal over an open fire, ready to feed the household and the labourers. See the beautiful flower beds in the front garden as well.

Falconer's Field

Then follow path down, past Palmer's Farmhouse into Falconer's Field. On the left you will see the working bread oven where the weekly bake of bread and pies is done. Its hot work with many a singed eyebrow!

Next to the bread oven is the Tudor veg garden. See if you can spot the fire pit where Mistress Alice can sometimes be found boiling up plants make her dyes. Or help to water the vegetables with the tinkle pots.

On Falconer's Field you can watch the birds of prey and the animal displays. Say hello to Ellie our horse as she has her daily grooming session, have a go at herding geese, or at shearing time watch the shepherds hand shear our rare breed sheep and explain about the wool trade in Tudor times.

Stay on the path down to the bottom of the site and you will discover Mary Arden's House.

Mary Arden's House

This looks rather different to how it would have been in Tudor times, as it has been modernised over its 500 year life. Look inside at the exhibition or wander round the dye, medicinal and veg gardens and don't forget to say hello to our Tamworth pigs and our friendly goats.



From the bottom of the site, head back through the Harvest Barn towards the Rickyard. Just past the pond on the left, turn left and you head out to the outer parts of the farm which are well worth seeing.

The Outer Farm

This is more modern and extensive. Stretch your legs, follow the nature trails and get away from it all.

Rabbits & Playground – First of all meet our lovely rabbits Bramble and Nettle who have a hutch right opposite our kids' playground.

The Old Orchard – Then, straight ahead beyond the playground is the Old Orchard full of traditional apple and pear varieties which we harvest to make fruit pies, preserves, juice and cider either for the Tudor kitchen or for Harvest Share with Transition Stratford.



Mangalitzta Pigs – Turn right up the track keeping the Old Orchard on your left and follow the path. The cattle and sheep move around our pasture so keep your eyes open for them. Bear round to the left and then take the first turn right and here are the Mangalitztas fast asleep, snuffling around for roots or cooling off in their wallow. What strange looking pigs!



The Willow Tunnel – Behind the apple trees that are opposite the Mangalitzta Pigs, is the willow tunnel. Staff and farm helpers re-weave all the new shoots in the autumn to help maintain it and kids love running through it.



If you go straight on past the Mangalitzta pigs, the path opens up onto the wider field walk flanked by cattle and sheep pasture. Our geese also graze up here and walk back to sleep in the Dovecote in Palmer's Farmyard at night.



Wildflower Meadow - At the top of the field walk is the wildflower meadow which is maintained as a wildlife habitat with High Level Stewardship grants. Ever changing with the seasons, it is filled with an abundance of flora and fauna which we encourage you to investigate along the meandering path mown through the meadow. Can you see our butterfly banks?



The Copse - Turn left at the entrance to the wildflower meadow walk along the top edge to the corner, turn left again and follow the path to get to the copse. We use the wood for the farmhouse and for carpentry and repairs. The copse is a very tranquil spot but also great fun for the kids for building dens.

Facilities



At the bottom of the site we have our private staffroom where staff and farm helpers can take breaks, make a brew and eat their food in peace and quiet. Farm helpers usually bring their own food but we have a good on site cafe and a well stocked village shop. The staffroom is equipped with tea and coffee making facilities, a fridge freezer, washing machine and tumble dryer, secure storage lockers and separate male and female changing rooms.



Within the staffroom block there are male and female toilets and a lockable upstairs room if extra private space is required. Behind the staffroom is the staff car park, open space to relax in and access to the village shop. There are ample toilets, including disabled, hand washing, first aid/minor treatment stations around the site. There is a large visitor car park at the top of the site. This can accommodate coaches, minibuses, bicycles and cars and disabled parking is situated close to the front entrance.



Behind the scenes we have a modern cattle yard, equipment stores and work areas for carrying out the essential modern tasks, repairs and cleaning. This and other designated areas are secluded spaces where the public cannot enter and care farmer who require a quiet environment can come and work. We also have a classroom and plenty of covered areas for wet weather work and provide all PPE for activities farm helpers undertake.

Activities include animal care, gardening, crafts, living history, site maintenance, social media and they can be indoor and outdoor to accommodate different abilities and the vagaries of the weather.



Animal husbandry – mucking out, feeding, grooming, exercising. We have small numbers of a variety of livestock – pigs, sheep, cattle, poultry, goats, rabbits and equines. It's great therapy.



Site maintenance – There's always lots of clearing up, tidying and repairs to do throughout the year. Anything from clearing away brush, sweeping barns or re-roofing a stable and our brilliant farm helpers keep coming to help out. The physical work in the fresh air clear away the cobwebs and the camaraderie always make it good fun.



Gardening & composting – If you're keen on plants then there's loads of gardening going on. We have knowledgeable and experienced gardeners on staff and there are a variety of jobs to do: weeding, planting and harvesting food crops, processing crops to make dyes and composting, weaving the willow tunnel.



Crafts & Textiles – If getting crafty is more your style then have a go at peg loom weaving or basket making or more wood related activities such as pole lathing or spoon carving. An advantage to these is that they can be done indoors and most are very portable. Farm helpers can also make and take items home and that's really satisfying!



Living History – If you like talking to people and want to learn more about Tudor life, you could get into period costume and help our period interpreters as they go about their daily tasks. These could be animal-related or craft based. Additionally, because the living history project involves making food, it also provides the opportunity to develop your cooking skills. Help cook the midday meal over an open fire and then get to eat it.



Social Media – Mary Arden's Farm has a Facebook page and a blog and we're always on the lookout for people to help with these, either taking photographs or writing posts and articles and coming up with new ideas for content. So if you're an IT enthusiast come and get stuck in.

What can you expect as a care farmer

Care farmers are an important and valued part of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Mary Arden's Farm. Below we have explained what you can expect from us if you choose to join the care farming program and what we hope for from you.

We will:

- Introduce you to the organisation and your role within it, and provide any training you might need to meet the responsibilities of your role.
- Explain the standards we would like to achieve and encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
- Provide a named person to whom you will be responsible and with whom you can discuss your care farming experience and any successes and problems.
- Do our best to help you develop your care farming role with us.
- Provide any relevant training and feedback in support of our health and safety policy.
- Provide adequate insurance cover for care farmers whilst undertaking work approved and authorised by us.
- Ensure that all care farmers are dealt with in accordance with our equal opportunities policy.
- Try to resolve fairly any problems, complaints and difficulties you may have while you care farm with us and in the event of an unresolved problem will meet to discuss the issues.

We will ask you to agree to:

- Help the Trust carry out its activities
- Perform your care farming role to the best of your ability.
- Follow Trust policies, procedures and standards that are notified to you.
- Meet time commitments and to give reasonable notice if you are not able to attend, so that other arrangements can be made.
- Provide referees as agreed who may be contacted, and to agree to a police check being carried out if necessary.
- Maintain the confidential information of the Trust and of its customers.

About the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

The Trust

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is an independent charity, receiving no central government funding. It was formed in 1847, following the purchase of the house in which Shakespeare was born. Since then four other historic houses associated with Shakespeare and his immediate family have been purchased. All of them are in or around Stratford upon Avon. The Trust is unique in that it is the only charity that cares for Shakespeare heritage. It operates under an Act of Parliament, the latest revision being in 1961.

For further information about the Trust please visit: www.shakespeare.org.uk

What To Do Next & How To Apply For the Care Farming Program

Contact –

Shashika Poopalasingham, Care Farming Co-ordinator, Mary Arden's Farm

Tel. 01789 293455 or

Human Resources, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Tel. 01789 204016

Email carefarming@shakespeare.org.uk

All applicants must be referred by their support worker, health team or education department.

Applicants and support workers will then be contacted to discuss their requirements and invited to visit the farm and participate in a taster session.

After successful completion of site tour and taster session and all application documentation, applicants will be enrolled onto the care farming program.

Location & Getting Here

Mary Arden's Farm (CV37 9UN) is located three and a half miles from Stratford upon Avon town centre in the village of Wilmcote. The site is well sign posted and on site free parking is provided.

By car: You can travel from London to Stratford-upon-Avon in under 2 hours by car. Since we are close to the M40, M42 and M6 motorway networks we are also easily reached from the Midlands and the North. The town centre is a short drive from Junction 15 of the M40 and is well sign posted on all major routes.

By coach: There is free coach parking located at Mary Arden's Farm in the main visitor car park at the front entrance. Coaches may wait there free of charge until the group has completed their visit.

By train: A direct service runs from London (Marylebone) and from Birmingham (Snow Hill and Moor Street) to Stratford-upon-Avon and Wilmcote stations. Wilmcote railway station is a very short walk from the Farm.

Trust Policies

Please find enclosed our safeguarding policy on Child & Vulnerable Adults and our Health & Safety, First Aid and Evacuation Plans (including PEEPS forms for the disabled).

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust has a full set of policies and procedures which cover the health, safety and work of all personnel, visitors and care farmers on all their sites. These documents are available for inspection on request.