

Statement in support of The Farmland Museum's SCDC grant support for 2019/20.

South Cambridgeshire District Council were instrumental in establishing the museum at Denny Abbey; storing the collection when the Delanoy's retired, until the Denny Abbey site was acquired. The Council has provided substantial financial and other support since then. Whilst this has been at a greatly reduced level in the past few years, the Museum could not survive without it.

As South Cambridgeshire District Council's nominee to the Trustees of the Farmland Museum, I wholeheartedly request that you continue this funding in 2019/20 and in the future.

Since I was appointed in May 2018, I have enjoyed meeting the staff and volunteers and understanding more about the agricultural collection and the complicated architectural history of Denny Abbey. What comes over loud and clear is how much the enthusiasm of Trustees, staff and volunteers enables the museum to provide insight into our rural history and our connection with it.

The Museum is an asset to the District and will be to Waterbeach New Town, offering as it does, a place for learning, an opportunity for social inclusion and volunteering, a focal point for visits on foot, bicycle and on horseback for residents of the new town and a walk through time, from the recent history of the airfield and its Military Heritage Museum to the agricultural heritage of the Fens. Visitors I've spoken to say how much they appreciate the peace and quiet of the site, while children and adults alike can see, touch and smell the past, play in safety and enjoy tea and cake in the café. The Museum offers a place to learn, understand and to breathe.

You will have read in the Report from the Chairman of the Trustees, October 2018 about the broad range of activities volunteers and Trustees run - encouraging local people to understand what agricultural life was like in the Fens and to engender a sense of place and community.

The involvement of volunteers is essential to the Museum, in everything from the outreach work described above, through - running children's activities and education events, maintaining the site and equipment, tending the allotment and garden, running the second hand book shop, helping with cataloguing the collection and managing the accounts - to producing a Newsletter. The Board does a fantastic job of harnessing the skills and interests of volunteers, enabling the Museum to run as efficiently as possible on its very limited budget.

Despite financial constraints, the Museum has Full Accreditation with Arts Council England, which requires compliance with standards of management, services and care for the historic collection of over 10,000 objects. The Farmland Museum has a vision to become a truly independent organisation, attractive to funders and businesses and to become THE centre for rural heritage in Cambridgeshire. There are great opportunities for the site but it is limited by the current car parking, toilets and rather dangerous access from the A10.

Meantime the Museum is undergoing a period of considerable change, with English Heritage revising its funding offer. The Trustees are being assisted by a marketing consultant (funded by a grant from the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation) who is advising the Museum on how it can become more financially sustainable. The Trustees have also instigated a re-organisation to employ a Commercial Officer and to make the very best use of staff skills and abilities.

The funding that South Cambridgeshire District Council provides is essential to the continuing success of this gem in our District and County. Please continue to support The Farmland Museum.

Anna Bradnam, District Councillor for Milton and Waterbeach Ward
South Cambridgeshire District Council's nominee to the Trustees of the Farmland Museum