

Ikigai Farm Ltd (iFarm) – interim report, May 2024

Julian Thompson, Chair

Growing Community Resilience

Society:	Ikigai Farm Limited (iFarm)
Registration number:	8304
Registered office address:	The White Horse, Hopton Road, Thelnetham, Suffolk IP22 1JN



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Growing Community Resilience

Reducing Social Isolation & Loneliness, Improving Health & Wellbeing
Education, Protection & Conservation of the Environment



Plans

Plans – our Society's plans haven't changed, since submission of our report to Blo Norton Parish Council in September 2021. Please see:

https://blonortonpc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk/files/2021/09/BNPC_iFarm_v1.01.pdf

Though we are delighted to update on our successes and progress, in such a short space of time.



Land at Blo Norton

- Limited Market Gardening; winning best in show at Hopton Flower & Veg Show.
- Distributing produce to residents, patrons and charities (Still Good Food) for free.



Land at Blo Norton

Limited Market Gardening – this year is a fallow year, as we aim to regenerate our soil, which has proven to be depleted of nutrients.

- We have investigated plans for more community gardens for schools; consulted & engaged with existing and ex-primary school teachers
- We've received an exciting offer from a forest schoolteacher, interested in providing further educational services.



Land at Blo Norton

Community Municipal Space; music, celebration and cultural exchange

- We're delighted that the space we have created is being used for May Day Celebrations, May Pole Dancing, Morris Dancing and Music.



Land at Blo Norton

- Community Municipal Space; music, celebration and cultural exchange
- This includes cultural exchange with a King Lynn based community; a Lithuanian Choir.



Land at Blo Norton

Residential Educational Courses

- We hope to start with a Bee Keeping course.
- Our pollinators are essential to life. We've a number of bee hives @iFarm, teach about their stewarding, support habitats and educate on the importance of agroecology and changing our horticultural practices to ensure our pollinators (and us) thrive.



Land at Blo Norton

Fen & Water Management

- Please see our Water Management Report and Plans [here](#).
- We're investigating RPA & other payments, to fund work (with recent changes) in legislation. We've engaged with Thetford Rovers Trust, SWT, Norfolk Ponds Project, consulted LOHP, consulted Environment Agency (received advice & guidance and site visit from Natalie Wren, Catchment Coordinator, Environment Programme Team Environment Agency) and have work in progress – subject to licence and have recently consulted with the WaLOR project.



Land at Blo Norton

Fen & Water Management

- Work hasn't progressed as quickly as we would like on some elements of the project (major engineering works), as we've been informed by further research, affected by extreme weather; we want to ensure it's done well & in consultation with respective agencies, neighbours and farming community. Implementing best practice.



Land at Blo Norton

Fen & Water Management

- This includes historical drainage investigation (i.e. ditch from top field), working alongside Anglian Water, Highways Departments and Insurance Companies for Natural Environment Investment Readiness; Natural Flood Management Credits and other fiscal instruments to promote Regenerative Agricultural practices.
- We've conducted post flood Health & Safety inspections re. sewage & prospective contamination, including site visit on volunteer basis from a civil engineer, specialising in water management.



Land at Blo Norton

Trees & Planting

- We've planted a Queens Canopy, circa 1,000 native species (in memoriam)
- Recently planted Black Poplar at iFarm (Britain's rarest tree, gifted by local tree warden, as our site is perfect habitat)
- Planted a Community Orchard on Flatman's Piece and at iFarm, with 100 fruit trees. With materials funded by a Tree Council grant and delivered with volunteer effort.



Land at Blo Norton

Trees & Planting

- iFarm are applying to our County Councillor's Locality budget for signage to commemorate the achievement and to guide visitors in relation to safe access and local ecology.
- iFarm and our volunteers, in conjunction with Mr Flatman are responsible for maintenance, including tree guards (which need to be in situ for another 12 months or so).



Land at Blo Norton

Open Days

- iFarm have continued to hold successful open days, with music, refreshments, educational and farm tours, outlining plans and delivering Community Climate Action planning and other workshops.



Our Society

Community Climate Action

- Formed a Suffolk (and Norfolk?) Green Cluster (9 x villages and Parishes), meeting regularly.
- Working with UKPN to deliver Energy Efficiency & Retrofitting Advice (particularly to those suffering from cost of living or vulnerable).



Our Society

Community Climate Action

- Community Renewable Energy; iFarm are a founding member of Suffolk Community Energy Steering Group.
- Community Energy Fund Application (£140,000) in progress for Wind Turbine and Agrivoltaic solar farm.
- Are installing a 3.5kw solar system at the land in Blo Norton, for off grid resilience.



Our Society

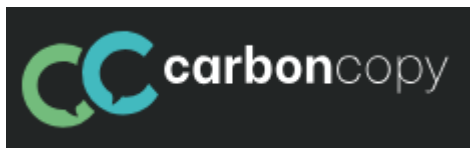
Community Climate Action

- Our Chair is also a founder and Director of The [Great Collaboration](#) (A toolkit for Council & Community Climate Action, which is funded by the Society for Local Council Clerks. This includes a Regional Pilot supported County Associations for Local Councils, for Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, in collaboration with County Climate Change Partnerships, community green groups, schools, sport clubs, community pubs and other charities and institutions.





MotherTree



**Professor Tim O'Riordan, Chair Norfolk Association
of Local Councils said:**

"There is real scope for Norfolk ALC to explore the lessons being learned by Community Climate Action in forms of management, of financing, of recruitment, and of widespread improvement of local livelihoods. This should be connected to county-based devolution at an early stage."



**Community
Climate Action**

The White Horse

The White Horse (Community Pub)

- iFarm have raised £300,000 in Grant Funding from the government's Community Ownership Fund, £57,500 from our phase One Share Offer (small bridging loan facilitated for match funding requirements, circa £5,000) and converted loan funding for land purchase to community Shares, in our Society; which includes our land and pub.



Funded by
UK Government



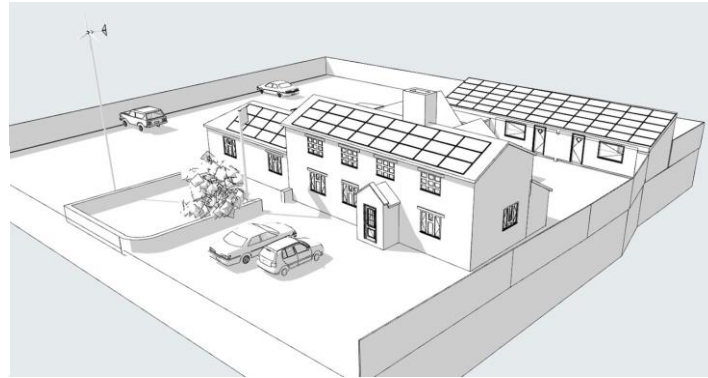
The White Horse

The White Horse (Community Pub)

- Phase Two Share Offer aims to raise a further £300,000 to renovate & retrofit; including £10,000 from Suffolk County Council, £150,000 from VCSE grant & balance from our phase 2 Share Offer.
- Fire Safety Inspection and other risk assessments completed (inc asbestos checks etc). Capital Funding for Essential repairs (i.e. Gable end wall) has been raised and is work in progress.



Funded by
UK Government



The White Horse

The White Horse (Community Pub)

- Meet Up Mondays is a great success and The White Horse has provided a much needed venue for: Wakes, Clubs, Culture & Music, Sports (Pool Team, adopted from The Swan, Coney Weston, which is now closed).
- Kitchen has been renovated and is nearly ready to open to serve the community.
- This has all been made possible by the tireless work of 53 regular volunteers from our local community.



Funded by
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Thank you. The Team at iFarm & The White Horse.

