

## Community Services

### Cogges Manor Farm Museum

#### Cogges Bulletin 11 - December 2008

**1. Advent Weekend 6/7 December**

A sharp frost and two bright sunny days encouraged 867 visitors to Cogges to enjoy a weekend of seasonal entertainments, Christmas crafts and food tasting; the Nativity Play (organised by Cogges Church) held in the barn with a 'real live donkey' was a highlight and the Abingdon Mummers performed their traditional play to the delight of audiences. Very many thanks to the staff and all the volunteers who helped out.

**2. Visitor numbers for 2008 are 32,331 – well done everyone and thank you for visiting. Please come back next year!**

**3. Cogges is now closed – but will reopen for Easter 2009 as usual – for a shorter season (until the end of August), in preparation for handing over to the new Trust (see below).**

**4. Key Dates and Events planned (so far) for 2009:**

- 24th February - opening for booked school visits.
- 7<sup>th</sup> April – general opening.
- 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> April – Easter Activities including our ever popular Easter Egg Hunt with Peter Rabbit.
- 18<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> April - a 'new' Food Weekend – highlighting local growers and producers in the area along with Witney Fair Trade Group.
- In May we are planning events to tie in with the Museums & Galleries theme of "*A night in the Museum*" in which we hope to explore some excellent ghost stories!
- Another new event which is still in the planning stage is a possible Beer Festival in July along with many of our traditional favourites including "Pig Pampering", Mini Beasts, Digs & Discovery, Craft Weekends and an end

of season event which will include The Oxford Waites and an evening of alfresco Shakespeare with *The Merchant of Venice*.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND DECISIONS

**Clarifying the Board's recommendations and the next stages in the County Council's decision making process:**

**The following recommendations were agreed by the Council's Cabinet on 25 November:**

- to instruct officers to establish a new charitable trust to manage Cogges Manor Farm Museum (including employment of staff and service delivery). That trust to be tasked with developing and implementing the vision of the Cogges Community Enterprise Group.
- to instruct officers to draw up a legal agreement between the Trust and Council, for a minimum of three years (from 2010), detailing what is expected from both organisations. The Council will remain the owner of the heritage asset (land, buildings and collections).
- to recommend to Council in setting its budget the allocation of additional financial support to the Trust for 2010/11 (£80,000 in addition to the existing subsidy of £80,000) and 2011/12 (£160,000).
- to include an allocation of £150,000 in its recommended capital programme as matching funding towards the necessary capital work at Cogges in support of an application for external funding in 2010/11.

***It is important to note that the financial details in these recommendations will not be confirmed until the Council sets its budget for 2009/10 in February.***

## 6. Cogges Project Board – final meeting

The Cogges Project Board has been meeting since February and leading the work to try to find a long term and sustainable future for Cogges and to make recommendations to the Council's Cabinet. Following the report to the Cabinet in November (reported in the last edition), the Board's work is now completed.

At the final meeting of the Board on 4 December, the chairman, John Jackson, thanked all the Board members for their work. He went to say that

although the Board's work has come to an end there is a lot more work to be done. The next steps include:

- Establishing in detail the County Council's parameters for creating the new Trust. The outcomes should be a draft constitution for the Trust and an outline partnership agreement between the Council and the Trust-to-be.
- A process for establishing the Trust – including a 'specification' for the chairman.
- Working with the Cogges Community Enterprise Group to identify some short-term actions to be undertaken during the 2009 season in order to test some of their vision and ideas for Cogges.

The Board agreed that Bulletins should continue to be published regularly at least until the new Trust is established.

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