



Community Services

Cogges Manor Farm Museum

Cogges Bulletin – September 2009

On 31 August Cogges Manor Farm Museum closed as a County Council run museum after some 30 years. During that period well over a million visitors have enjoyed Cogges – and seen it develop over the years as the farm buildings and the Manor House were repaired and restored and opened to the public. The walled garden has been laid out, planted and maintained, the fields grazed and the orchards tended. There is no doubt that Cogges has delighted many visitors and we would like to thank you all for supporting the museum, and thank the staff and volunteers who have worked hard to achieve this success.

Particular thanks to Francesca Jones, who as the manager/curator at Cogges over the last few years, has helped to maintain the museum through to this point.

With support from the County Council a new Trust is being established to operate Cogges from 1 April 2010. A 'Shadow Board' is working with Council officers to manage that hand-over.

Members of the Shadow Board used the opportunity of the August Bank Holiday weekend to meet visitors and to listen to their views. These are some of the comments they heard:

- Open Café earlier- big traffic of mums taking kids to and from school, but always go to coffee shops in town, as Cogges not open...would come in number if were open 9am to 11 and 3 to 5pm- safe for kids
- Lots of educators passed through, from Marlborough School in Woodstock to Blakes - apparently schools crying out for vocational days as part of the new 14 -18 diplomas
- Bring back the horses! Very popular this - also offer animal husbandry/ courses around this – more integration with the animals, more on offer with animals
- Advent activity - is it happening ? (someone had been coming to it for 20+ years!)
- Straw bale activity centre (i.e. climbing/slides etc)
- Kids adventure playground- see the one on Marston Ferry Road which apparently is very popular
- Certify (?) the cows so the butter can be sold on site...and people can do courses in making butter etc and walk away with something very tangible

- Use the veggies in the garden/ offer gardening/ vegetable/ Victorian kitchen garden courses
- Dig It Weekends need to be much more hands on - no one to talk to/ have planting days for the kids
- Host community market/ community coop (see Eynsham's, championed by Helen Peacock of the Oxford Times)/ Farmers Market-theme running through of sell the produce and have a shop for this-one person also said have a post office!
- Make more of the shop - more things on sale at the £1/£2 range, parents will buy it and come back for larger Christmas presents. Also more mums and dads themed gifts- soaps/ maps! were suggested.
- Make every first Sunday a family day
- Advertise more than locally- no one in Oxford is aware of the Museum
- Bring back the threshing weekends- very popular
- More hands-on kids stuff
- Use the upper floors of the Manor house for people to come and stay and experience Victorian lifestyle...this one is out there, but this could make a lot of money!
- Cogges appreciated as open space for families without gardens
- We like the tranquillity
- Have children's parties
- Animals all year round
- Art gallery/craft centre would be good
- Love the picnic orchard
- Bigger shop
- Residential retreats
- Themed dinners in the Manor House
- I love Cogges the way it is – but needs more publicity and the café could be better

The Board's vision sessions, where we discuss the future direction and services at Cogges, are now set for October and these and all previous ideas will be considered as part of the mix.

Learning@Cogges

The new Trust is enthusiastic about the potential for expanding, broadening and enriching the learning opportunities for children visiting Cogges. A sub committee has been formed to develop an education programme with a continuing emphasis on school visits, which have proved so popular with schools across Oxfordshire in the past. To ensure the new programme meets the needs of schools, and provides an exciting and memorable visit for children, local schools will be invited to participate in a consultation period during 2010. This will include a pilot programme of 'taster' visits based on a range of themes which will tap into the rich historical, natural and cultural environment of Cogges.

Please contact Janine Charles (future@cogges.co.uk) for further information.

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