



Five Ways to Wellbeing case study

Rebecca enjoys a slice of the good life down on the farm

If someone had asked me what “community supported agriculture” meant a few months’ ago, I would have had very little idea what they were talking about. However, my time at Oak Tree Farm has been a revelation and has allowed me to carve out my own piece of the countryside that has improved my wellbeing no end.

I first signed up to the project in late 2016. The prospect is simple: in return for a small monetary contribution each week, I am one of several people to take a community share of the farm, including a regular supply of freshly grown produce. I can choose which hours I spend working on the farm – generally a Saturday morning – and which tasks I take on.

The fresh vegetables are a bonus; what I really love about the farm is that I can earmark time for me to enjoy the beauty of the countryside at a location just outside Ipswich. It gives me time to think and reflect in an environment which is very different from my professional working life. It is also an opportunity to connect with other members of the project. We have become a close-knit family, doing tasks together and enjoying the sense of community that this entails.

Oak Tree Low Carbon Farm, to provide the project’s full name, was set up in 2010, providing 12 acres of land near Rushmore for like-minded people to get together and contribute to a working farm. We have cattle and chickens as well as agricultural land, and can sign up for tasks that suit each person’s interests on the day.

It’s a flexible arrangement that combines getting our hands dirty with the day-to-day work of a farm, while enjoying the benefits of a community of shared interest.

It has given me a true appreciation of the journey that our produce takes from the soil to our homes. I love the fact that I can get involved at the growing stages, and the fact I feel some ownership from my share in the farm provides a real sense of satisfaction.

Most of all, this is time for me to enjoy. The farm is an inherently beautiful place in all weathers – yes, even the rain! We enjoy community events, from barbecues to outdoor pizza ovens, and have recently welcomed people in to visit the farm with the first open days. The farm has also been featured on *Countryfile* as an exemplar for a community farming project.

For more information about The Oak Tree Low Carbon Farm, visit www.the-oak-tree.co.uk

For more information, visit www.healthysuffolk.org.uk