

# HANDS OF HOPE - 2030

## Building a Sustainable Future

A four-year transition strengthening community impact, collaboration and financial resilience

## HOPE FARM COMMUNITY GARDEN



**A stronger Hope Farm: busier, better connected and more financially resilient - generating more of its own income while enabling more people to benefit.**

Supported by The National Lottery Community Fund and running alongside the National Lottery Heritage Fund-supported Dig for Victory programme.

# FROM CONSULTATION TO A SUSTAINABLE MODEL

**Hands of Hope has reached an important stage in its development.** Over the next four years, we will build on more than a decade of community engagement and investment at Hope Farm to create an organisation that is stronger, more sustainable and increasingly able to generate the resources needed to support its communities for the long term.

## How we reached this point

**Our direction is evidence-led and community-informed.** Consultations with residents, beneficiaries, volunteers, schools, health and voluntary organisations identified strong demand for accessible nature-based activity, social connection, practical skills, support for young people and intergenerational opportunities. Earlier consultation found 80% of community stakeholders likely to engage, almost half interested in volunteering, 75% of health and voluntary organisations willing to collaborate or refer, and 95% support for a broad range of site-based offers.

**By June 2024, Hope Farm had the physical foundations to respond:** an accessible community kitchen and cookery school, Victorian glasshouse, classroom, organic market garden, Edwardian walled kitchen garden, heritage orchard, woodland, wildflower meadow, apiary and other learning and nature spaces across 22 acres.

## What the 2024/25 review told us

**The next challenge was sustainability.** During 2024/25, Hands of Hope reviewed established models in environmental education, community growing, cookery, horticulture and social enterprise. The learning reinforced two conclusions: Hope Farm has unusually strong assets from which to develop earned income, and long-term reliance on grant funding alone creates organisational vulnerability.

**The purpose of generating earned income is to protect and expand our charitable work - not replace it.**

## The Hope Farm Initiative

This work led directly to our application to The National Lottery Community Fund's Reaching Communities programme. We are delighted that the application has been successful.

**The successful four-year Reaching Communities investment gives us the time and capacity to make this transition carefully.** The Hope Farm Initiative will develop the staff, systems, commercial partnerships and delivery model needed to create resilient unrestricted income, while expanding community programmes that connect people to nature and each other.

| WHAT CHANGES                                                                                                                                                                        | WHAT DOES NOT CHANGE                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A stronger professional team; better operational systems; increased use of Hope Farm; carefully tested commercial and education offers; deeper business and community partnerships. | Our charitable purpose; equitable access; support for people facing disadvantages, isolation or barriers to participation; environmental stewardship; collaboration with local organisations. |

# 2026-2030: WHAT WILL CHANGE

## Building the right team

The transition requires clearer separation between organisational development, site operations and programme delivery. We expect the emerging structure to include:

- **Transition / organisational development:** time-limited leadership capacity to implement the new model, systems, partnerships and route to CIC/social enterprise operation.
- **General / Centre Management:** day-to-day responsibility for Hope Farm operations, people, facilities, visitor experience and coordination.
- **Heritage, horticulture & environment:** professional stewardship of the growing and natural assets on which many programmes depend.
- **Community, education & engagement:** high-quality programmes shaped by need, referral partners and participant feedback.
- **Enterprise & commercial partnerships:** development of appropriate earned-income opportunities, including corporate experiences and fee-paying activity.
- **Apprenticeships & volunteering:** structured routes to learn, contribute, develop skills and increase local ownership.

## Commercial partnerships with a social purpose

Hope Farm can offer businesses something distinctive: meaningful team experiences rooted in sustainability, biodiversity, food, wellbeing and community impact. Potential programmes include growing, harvesting and cooking, conservation activity, environmental learning, practical team challenges and structured volunteering.

**The principle is simple:** commercial activity should create unrestricted income and useful partnerships that make more community access possible.

## Dig for Victory: community collaboration at scale

Running alongside this organisational transition will be Dig for Victory – Stories, Skills and Sustainable Food Heritage, supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

This three-year programme provides an extraordinary opportunity to connect Hope Farm with communities across Rother, Hastings and West Kent. Hope Farm will act as the central living-history hub while a network of 40+ Dig for Victory Gardens and Spaces is developed with schools, care settings and community organisations.

|        |            |            |                 |
|--------|------------|------------|-----------------|
| 3,000+ | 300+       | 150+       | 40+             |
| people | activities | volunteers | community sites |

The programme will also capture 60 oral histories, collect 100+ recipes, reach 30 schools and 600+ young people, distribute 300 Grow Kits and culminate in 2029 with a 90th anniversary celebration. Crucially, it takes Hope Farm out into communities as well as bringing communities to Hope Farm.

# THE ROAD TO 2030

| 2024/25                                                                                                          | 2026                                                                                                         | 2027-28                                                                                                            | 2029                                                                                                        | 2030                                                                                                                  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>LISTEN &amp; LEARN</b>                                                                                        | <b>INVEST &amp; BUILD</b>                                                                                    | <b>TEST &amp; GROW</b>                                                                                             | <b>SHOWCASE &amp; EMBED</b>                                                                                 | <b>SUSTAIN</b>                                                                                                        |
| Community consultation and best-practice review confirm need, opportunity and the case for a mixed-income model. | Reaching Communities transition begins. Recruit key capacity, strengthen systems and launch Dig for Victory. | Pilot commercial, education and public offers; expand community collaboration; increase visitors and partnerships. | Dig for Victory 90th anniversary; established regional network; successful offers embedded into operations. | A mature CIC/social enterprise model with diversified income, strong community access and reduced reliance on grants. |

## What success will look like

By the end of the four-year transition, our ambition is for Hope Farm to have:

- a skilled, sustainable staff team with clear accountability and operational leadership;
- a thriving and well-supported volunteer community;
- significantly increased and more diverse use of the site;
- strong community, school, referral and commercial partnerships;
- proven earned-income streams providing greater unrestricted income;
- a CIC/social enterprise model capable of supporting the charitable mission for the future;
- continued grant partnerships where they add value, particularly to protect equitable access and enable innovation.

**We are moving from having built an extraordinary community asset to creating the organisational and financial foundations that can sustain its impact for the next generation.**

## A partnership opportunity

We want this next chapter to be collaborative. We welcome conversations with community organisations, funders, businesses, schools, public-sector partners and others who share our ambition for healthier, more connected and more sustainable communities.

**HOPE FARM 2030 • COMMUNITY • HERITAGE • NATURE • ENTERPRISE**