



**THE FARMING LIFE CENTRE**  
SUPPORTING FARMING & RURAL  
LIFE IN THE PEAK DISTRICT

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**PAST • PRESENT • FUTURE**

Providing health, well-being and business support to the rural community through befriending, social groups and activities, workshops, farm walks, training events, talks and one-one support.

*Find us every Monday at the Agricultural Business Centre  
in Bakewell*

[www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](http://www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)

**Dear FLC Friend,**

Christmas and New Year may have come and gone, but life on the farm didn't take a break. From feeding stock during cold snaps to ensuring water supplies remain unfrozen, there's no pause for farming—no matter the season. A well-deserved warm cuppa and time with family is a powerful reminder that community and rhythm sustain us.

We've had the first snowfall of winter, blanketing fields in serene white and transforming the landscape into a picture-perfect scene. The stunning scenery is a reminder of the beauty of rural life, even as it brings its own challenges for livestock care and daily tasks. Now is the time to check fencing, ensure animals have adequate shelter, and keep water supplies from freezing. Resilience is key when farming through the colder months.

Winter may slow the pace, but farming never stops. The rise in inheritance tax relief is great news for farming families, meaning most farms won't face extra tax and giving more breathing space to keep the farm in the family. It's a good time to review your will and succession plans before April so everything is in place for the future. With the Sustainable Farming Incentive reopening and lambing just around the corner, this season brings both challenges and opportunities. Here's to a productive winter and a lamb-filled spring ahead!



*Rachel Metcalfe*

## **NEW PROGRAMME FOR THE FARMING LIFE CENTRE**

### **Exciting Announcement**

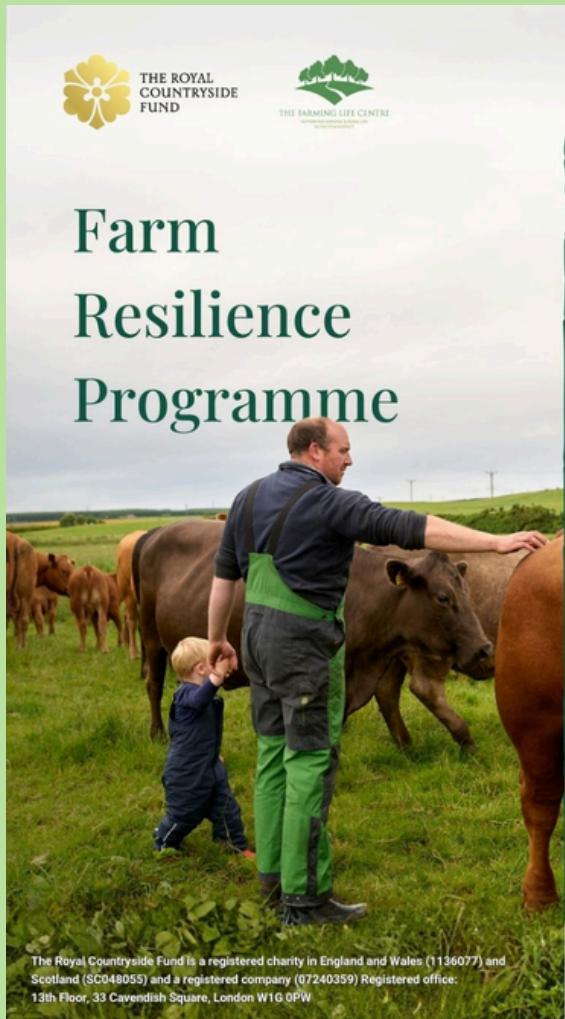
**The Farming Life Centre is thrilled to partner once again with The Royal Countryside Fund to implement the Farm Resilience Programme for farming families throughout the Peak District.**

**This collaboration enables us to provide practical, straightforward support during a period when many farms are facing considerable changes and uncertainties.**

**It is designed to assist you in taking a clear and confident assessment of your business.**



**THE ROYAL  
COUNTRYSIDE  
FUND**



# Farm Resilience Programme

The Royal Countryside Fund is a registered charity in England and Wales (1136077) and Scotland (SC048055) and a registered company (07240359) Registered office: 13th Floor, 33 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0PW



Farming is changing and it can feel hard to keep up. The Farm Resilience Programme supports you with the whole farm and whole family in mind.

This programme is FREE and open to everyone in your family or farm business. You'll receive a tailored business health check, and three practical workshops to help you:

- Make sense of what's changing around you.
- Explore current and future business and environmental opportunities.
- Build a practical plan that suits your short-term goals and long-term business strategy.

We're not telling you how to farm. We'll work with you to see what options are available so you can feel confident in planning your farm's future.

To find out more, please contact  
Alice Bettney  
alice@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk  
or call 07904691457

Or scan the QR code:



[www.royalcountrysidefund.org.uk/farmresilience](http://www.royalcountrysidefund.org.uk/farmresilience)

Made possible  
thanks to...



## Through a series of friendly, informative workshops, you'll have the opportunity to:

- Understand your farm business in greater depth
- Explore new ideas, opportunities, and diversification options
- Develop practical plans that support both your family and the long-term future of your farm

It's a chance to share experiences with other local farmers, and access expert guidance in a supportive, relaxed environment.

If you would like to find out more or would like to register your interest, please get in touch with Alice.



07904 691457



alice@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk



## Farming Help

Farmers in need can access free, impartial and confidential support.

## Farming Help

03000 111999

Confidential help for all in the farming community

Helpline is operated by The Farming Community Network

and is open from 7am to 11pm every day of the year.

[Find out more](#)

Farming Help is a collaboration between The Addington Fund, The Farming Community Network and Forage Aid. The Royal Countryside Fund is proud to support communities in times of emergency through this partnership.



## Winter Round-Up: Staying Warm, Staying Together

Our Peak Women group continues to thrive through the winter months, offering a warm, welcoming space for women in farming and rural communities to stay connected during the darkest time of the year.

Winter can be challenging on farms, with long hours, harsh weather and limited daylight, so these sessions provide a much-needed chance to step away, share experiences and support each other. The group focuses on wellbeing, resilience, and enjoying time together through seasonal activities, guest speakers, practical workshops and plenty of conversation. As always, Peak Women remains a supportive, uplifting community where friendships grow, ideas are shared, and no one feels they have to face the winter season alone.

### Oompah, Mince Pies & Magic Moments

We rounded off the year with a truly joyful Christmas celebration, brought to life by a fantastic local Bavarian oompah band who filled the room with music and laughter. We'd like to give a heartfelt thank-you to The Cowshed for their wonderful support of the group throughout the year—it means so much to us all.

The evening was made even more special with mince pies, mulled wine, and a selection of fabulous raffle prizes generously donated by our members. It was an amazing night of community, celebration, and festive cheer, and the perfect way to end another busy year together.



If you would like to find out more contact Alice:  
[alice@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](mailto:alice@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)

## A Yuletide Treat for Our Rural Social Groups



Our Rural Social Groups had a fantastic time celebrating the season with some wonderful Christmas meals, joined this year by members of our Walking Group and our amazing volunteers, whose support makes such a difference. Together, we enjoyed festive gatherings at the Bull's Head in Monyash, Hartington Farm Shop, and the Boars Head Hotel, near Ashbourne, where everyone was warmly welcomed and treated to fabulous food and friendly hospitality. It was a heart-warming reminder of how important it is to come together—sharing laughter, stories, and good company during the winter months.

## Befriending at The Farming Life Centre

At The Farming Life Centre, the Befriending project has become an important source of support for older people living across our rural communities. Whether someone has a farming background or simply lives in a remote area, the project offers regular companionship, conversation, and a friendly face to those who may be feeling isolated or disconnected from everyday community life.

The project pairs older residents with volunteers who understand the culture, humour, and pace of rural living. These aren't formal appointments or check-ins. They are genuine friendships built on cups of tea, shared memories, and the kind of everyday conversation that makes people feel seen and valued.

For many older people, these visits help them reconnect with their identity and their past. Stories flow easily when both people understand the realities of rural life from long winters and busy lambing seasons to the pride of keeping a home, a farm, or a smallholding going through the years.

Loneliness is a growing issue in rural areas, especially for those who live miles from neighbours or family. The Befriending project has become a lifeline, offering companionship, emotional support, and a reminder that they remain an important part of the community. Volunteers often say they gain just as much from the friendships. The exchange of stories, the laughter, and the sense of continuity between generations enrich everyone involved.

One of the most powerful aspects of befriending is the way it honours the knowledge and experience of older people.



**GAMES AFTERNOON**

**FUN FOR ALL  
FREE FOR EVERYONE!**

**Activities Include**

- Dominoes
- Board Games
- Puzzles
- Tea and Cake

**2ND TUESDAY EVERY MONTH**  
02:00pm- 04:00pm  
Hartington Village Hall  
Hartington Derbyshire  
**Join Us!**

Join us for a fun game drop in session with friends and neighbours. For more information please get in touch with Donna on 07777 168 857 or email below.

Contact us  
donna@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk

**The Farming Life Centre**

Rural life shapes character, values, and identity. When someone takes the time to listen and appreciate that history, it reinforces dignity and self-worth. Many participants say the project has given them something to look forward to again a reason to put the kettle on, a chance to share memories, and a feeling of being connected to the world around them.

The success of the Farming Life Befriending project shows what can happen when rural communities come together with compassion and creativity. It strengthens social ties, supports wellbeing, and helps preserve the stories and traditions that make our countryside unique.

Most importantly, it reminds older people that they are not forgotten. They are valued, respected, and still very much part of the fabric of rural life.

**If you would like to find out more please contact Donna**

Donna@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk  
07777 168857

## Digital Support at The Farming Life Centre

The recent sessions held in Castleton were a great success, bringing local farmers together to explore valuable, practical information to support the day-to-day running of their farm businesses. Participants engaged in focused discussions, heard useful advice, and picked up new tools and ideas to help streamline operations and strengthen financial and business planning. The sessions created a positive space for farmers to share experiences, ask questions, and learn from one another, making them both highly informative and genuinely encouraging for those juggling the many demands of modern farming.



# DISCOVER DIGITAL

Help using a computer

 **DERBYSHIRE**  
County Council



### Get Connected with Confidence with the Farming Life Centre

#### Digital Support for Rural Derbyshire What's It All About?

Helping people in rural communities gain skills, access, and confidence to use digital technologies—no matter your age, income, or experience.

#### Learn to use:

- Weather monitoring apps
- Livestock management systems
- Online marketplaces for produce, livestock or services
- Government portals for subsidies & compliance
- Time-Saving Digital Practices - tools that reduce admin time, automated record-keeping or voice-to-text apps.

#### Find out more about:

- Digital Financial Management: Apps for budgeting, subsidy tracking, and digital banking.
- Environmental & Carbon Accounting: digital tools for soil management and carbon tracking. to support sustainability.
- Farm Management Software

#### 1:1 Home Visits by arrangement

Tailored support for those with limited transport

**Where?** War Memorial Hall Bradwell

**When?** Wednesdays  
10am – 12 noon  
28th January until  
the 4th of March

#### Get in Touch

**Email:** [tiffany@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](mailto:tiffany@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)

**Phone:** 01629 810903

**Website:** [www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](http://www.thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)

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IN THE PEAK DISTRICT



### Workshops to Support Farmers in a Digital World

Alongside our community sessions, we're developing a series of practical workshops designed to help farmers build confidence with digital tools and strengthen day-to-day farm management.

These sessions will create space to learn new skills, ask questions, and explore technology that can make running a farm business easier, more efficient, and better connected. Whether you're looking to improve record-keeping, plan ahead using weather and mapping tools, or explore new ideas for the future, these workshops aim to offer something useful for every type of farm.

- Digital mapping and field planning
- Livestock management apps
- Farm business planning tools
- Environmental and land-management tools
- Social Media Basics
- Cyber safety for farm businesses

If you would like to find out more please contact Tiffany  
[Tiffany@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](mailto:Tiffany@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk) 07483 372757

The Farming Life Centre continues to rely almost entirely on grant funding to deliver its services, with recent support including grants from The National Lottery Community Fund and The Police & Crime Commissioner Fund that help sustain projects like Rural Befriending and wider initiatives. Behind the scenes, a significant amount of time is spent researching, writing and managing these applications, and this workload is growing as the wider charity sector faces increasing financial pressures, rising costs, and tougher competition for grants.

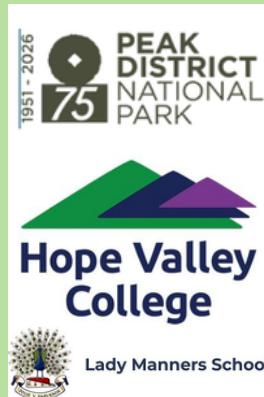


In the current climate, securing funding is more challenging than ever, and without successful grants our charity simply could not continue offering the vital support our farming and rural communities rely on.

We're delighted to share some recent successes that are helping us strengthen and expand our work. Thanks to support from **Foundation Derbyshire**, we are preparing to launch a brand-new group, Peak Men in Ag, which will sit alongside our much-loved Peak Women group and offer a dedicated space for men in farming to connect and support one another. We are also very grateful to the **Nineveh Charitable Trust**, who have awarded £4,000 to help us grow our Tots on Farms sessions and children's holiday activities, enabling more young people to enjoy hands-on learning and time outdoors. Funding from **Derbyshire Voluntary Action** through the Warm Spaces initiative has allowed us to run welcoming community sessions in Bradwell and Ashford in the Water, offering comfort, connection and support during the colder months. In addition, we're pleased to have received a generous contribution from the **Bakewell Rotary Community Chest**, which is helping us set up a brand-new Games Group in the Bakewell area, creating another warm and sociable space for local residents to come together. We're incredibly thankful for all this support, which makes a real and lasting difference to our rural communities.



## Funding Bright Futures in Our Rural Communities



We're delighted to share that funding from Farming in Protected Landscapes, through the Peak District National Park Authority, is enabling us to continue running our vibrant Farm Club sessions at Lady Manners School and Hope Valley College. This support allows students to hear from inspiring speakers across the farming, food, and environmental sectors, opening up conversations about real-world careers and opportunities beyond formal education.

Farm Club provides a unique space where like-minded young people can connect, learn together, and explore the huge variety of pathways available in agriculture, land management, and the wider rural economy. This continued funding helps us nurture the next generation's curiosity, confidence, and aspirations—something we're incredibly proud to champion.

# Children & Young People

We've had an exciting couple of months with our Kids' Project. Our Kids' Christmas party was a huge success, with over 30 attendees at Sheen Village Hall, where we boogied the afternoon away. We were extremely lucky to have Altrad Belle, Sheen kindly give up their time to bring Santa and his sleigh to visit our club. Every child even received a gift, which made the day extra special.

We also have some exciting news — we're trialling a new kids' club in the Tideswell area, so keep your eyes peeled for our February date.

Our in-school Farming Clubs have got off to a great start. We enjoyed a fantastic talk on diversification from Hope Valley Ice Cream and were lucky enough to sample some of their delicious ice cream too!

Thank you to Altrad Belle and Hope Valley Ice-Cream for giving up their time and so generously supporting our work. Your contribution makes a real difference, and we're incredibly grateful for your continued help within our rural communities.

We're delighted to have received funding from Farming in Protected Landscapes to support our in-school Farming Clubs. This funding enables us to continue working closely with schools and inspiring the next generation to connect with farming and rural life.



Our Tiny Farmers' Club will return in March, once the weather is a little warmer.



## Beavers in Derbyshire?

### Do you Farm along a river?

Beavers are returning to Britain, and the possibility of "Wild" release is currently being explored in Derbyshire. The Farming Life Centre is hosting a meeting along side the NFU and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust for Farmers to be able to engage, ask their questions and voice any concerns they have.

This meeting is to provide an opportunity to discuss beaver activity, management options and to consider the potential challenges and opportunities that could occur if we were to live alongside beavers again in Derbyshire. At the **Agricultural Centre, Bakewell on 10th February, 7 pm–9pm**

Food Provided so please book on with Alice on [alice@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk](mailto:alice@thefarminglifecentre.org.uk)



## The new SFI offer for 2026

DEFRA recently confirmed that the SFI scheme will reopen in 2026, in two phases:

**June:** Applications open for smaller farms or those without existing ELM agreements.

**September:** Open to all eligible farmers.

The revamped SFI is designed to be simpler, fairer, and more transparent, with a clearer range of actions and defined budgets.

There will still be a broad offer to suit different types of farms and plenty of choice, with greater emphasis on actions that support sustainable food production.

This will include:

- limiting how much land can be put into actions that take land out of production. Previously, there were 10 'limited area' actions in SFI. We are exploring whether more actions should be limited to a small proportion of the farm so they work alongside food production
- reviewing payment rates for actions that take land out of production where uptake has been particularly high.

Now's a great time to review your baseline data, explore potential environmental-actions (like soil health, herbal leys, hedgerows), and plan your farm's offer ahead of the windows.

## Mandatory sheep carcase classification and price reporting introduced



A new mandatory system for sheep carcase classification and price reporting is now in force across England. Designed to bring consistency and fairness to the sheep sector, the regulations standardise grading based on conformation and fat cover, aligning sheep with existing beef and pork systems.

Abattoirs processing over 2,000 sheep per week must register with the Rural Payments Agency and report prices to the AHDB, giving farmers clearer, more reliable information to support breeding, finishing, and marketing decisions.



## Inheritance Tax Relief Update

From 6 April 2026, the UK Government will increase the Inheritance Tax (IHT) relief threshold for qualifying agricultural and business assets from £1 million to £2.5 million, per individual. This change means married couples or civil partners could pass up to £5 million of qualifying assets, alongside existing nil-rate bands.

This is excellent news, with around 85 % of estates now expected to pay no additional IHT. It offers breathing room to review wills and succession plans before April, ensuring farms stay in family hands.

## Animal Welfare – What's Happening?

DEFRA's Animal Health and Welfare Strategy is all about keeping livestock healthy and well cared for while supporting farm businesses. The focus is on prevention first – stopping disease through good biosecurity, vaccination, and strong husbandry practices. There's also a push for better housing, handling, and transport conditions, plus linking future farming payments to welfare improvements.

Farmers will see more support for training, advice, and practical tools, as well as new technology to make welfare easier to manage. Clearer labelling and transparency are also on the way, so consumers know the standards behind British farming.

What does this mean for you?

- Keep up good biosecurity and health checks.
- Plan housing and handling improvements where possible.
- Look out for funding opportunities tied to welfare actions.

# Next Walk



Organised by our walk leaders, Pauline, Kay and John.

Thursday 1:15pm for 1:30pm start

## Tissington Trail

Meet close to the Herbert's Tearooms in Tissington village.  
A walk along the beautiful Tissington trail followed by coffee and cakes at Herbert's cafe

Feb  
12  
2026

## No Walk in March

No formal walk this month due to holiday of walk leader



Children under 6 are now being offered the MMRV vaccine instead of MMR as part of the NHS routine childhood vaccination programme.

This replaces the existing MMR vaccine and adds protection against chickenpox, alongside measles, mumps and rubella. You don't need to do anything – your GP will contact you when your child is due.

## Need urgent dental treatment?

Extra urgent dental appointments are now available

Contact NHS111 if you need urgent dental care



Need urgent dental care? Urgent dental appointments are now available across Derby & Derbyshire – no dentist registration needed!

Call NHS 111 if you don't have a regular dentist. They'll guide you to urgent care if needed.



JANUARY  
2026

From January, under-6s will be offered MMRV instead of MMR, adding chickenpox protection.