

## Stonebridge City Farm



Opened in 1979, Stonebridge City Farm, based in the St Ann's area of Nottingham, operates a free visitors' centre, with animals, gardens, own produce, a café and shop, as well as providing training opportunities for adults with learning disabilities, young people not at school and other disadvantaged groups.

Located on land cleared of slum dwellings in the 1970s, the idea for the farm came from urban farms in Holland and the Kentish Town City Farm in London. The site is now accessible to all and includes green space and sustainable buildings, including a barn built by volunteers and youngsters working on a Youth Opportunities Scheme three decades ago.

The current animal population of the farm includes seven goats including a raspberry blowing Toggenburg goat, two cows, a Shetland pony, three pigs, three sheep, a tortoise, terrapin, rabbits, guinea-pigs, chickens, geese, ducks, turkeys,

cockatiels, a parrot, budgerigars and a cat.

Visitors are encouraged to interact with the animals, including young rabbits, guinea-pigs, ducklings and chicks, and bags of food are available to feed the larger animals.

The farm gardens only use a very small amount of organic pesticides and include areas for food production and wildlife, as well as flowers, a pond area, nature walk and an orchard. Plants and produce, including high quality vegetables, herbs and fruit, are sold, as part of the Big Lottery Food Scheme, through the farm shop and used in the café.

The shop also sells high quality manure, honey from the farm beehives, fresh eggs and jam made from the fruit grown at the farm. They have a range of farm related souvenir products that have been developed as well as pocket money toys. The café serves healthy seasonal food, including homemade cakes.

As part of its training opportunities, the



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farm offers supported placements at a modest cost and educational courses, including working with Enable and other training agencies to deliver qualifications. Throughout the farm, the aim is also to deliver training leading to recognised qualifications, including animal care, horticulture, catering, retail and customer service.

The farm has received funding from the Big Lottery Fund Local Food to grow and encourage others to produce their own healthy fruit and vegetables. They also run farm-based bee keeping programmes and produce their own honey. Over 600 people who share the farm's passion for healthy living have signed up to this project, known as Green Street, which includes:

- Encouraging people to grow at home, including advice or a visit from the farm's Outreach Advisor to provide practical help and a supply of fruit plantlets.
- A beekeeping programme providing advice and guidance on starting a bee colony.
- An expanding community of food growers providing instant advice.
- Volunteers on the farm producing local food for the community and helping others to learn new skills, including a Sunday drop-in gardening day.

In the past the farm has benefited from a variety of funding sources including grants from organisations such as Nottingham

*“When I’m feeling really down the best place to be for me is Stonebridge City Farm, I start to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Keep up the good work, you all do a brilliant job” Suzi*

City Council, Nottinghamshire County Council, Big Lottery Fund and BBC Breathing Places. It has also received donations from companies including Boots, LloydsTSB, Severn Trent, Barclays Bank, Experian and Capital One. In addition to revenue from the provision of services, it earns an increasing income from the café and shop, and is moving towards becoming a sustainable business.

Stonebridge is one of the oldest city farms in the UK. In the last three years it has been awarded a Green Pennant Award, now the Green Flag Community Award, the national standard for parks, run by the Civic Trust. Further awards followed over the years with bronze and gold medals in the RHS Nottingham in Bloom Competition and winning the outstanding award in the East Midlands in Bloom Finals in 2011.

For further information on Stonebridge City Farm visit [www.stonebridgecityfarm.com](http://www.stonebridgecityfarm.com).