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CONKERS
FARM

From small seeds, big ideas can grow

Our Vision

A woman with her hair in a bun and sunglasses on her head is leaning forward to pet a pig. The pig has black and white fur and is standing in a wooden enclosure with straw bedding. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting an outdoor farm setting.

**“A community farm
with a difference”**

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Our Vision

Seeing waste as an asset

As a society we need to start taking action about our environment in a more collaborative way. It's been easy for us to think that our waste is somebody else's problem for too long, not really understanding what happens to it, the effect it has on our environment or the financial implications. We have to take action and teach people from grass roots about food waste, carbon emissions, renewable energies, recycling and what really happens with the food we throw away.

At Conkers, we want people to see waste as an asset. As a community we create waste and whilst some of it is unavoidable much of it isn't. How many people realise that it can be used to generate renewable energy, to provide heat and power to their homes, schools and businesses? In time, we believe that technologies will evolve in a way that will allow the processes of anaerobic digesters (more on this later) to be scaled down so that we can manage our own waste which will provide energy directly to our homes, schools and businesses.

How will we do this?

We are a community farm. Somewhere we can connect people and involve everyone. We will run school workshops, in line with the national curriculum, teaching students how the process works by getting involved at a practical level. We want students to take an active role in how we use the energy and bi-products created to run our farm. To grow crops, care for the livestock, and learn how they fit into to the energy cycle.

Through demonstration, we understand that students are more likely to gain a better understanding of how the farm works and we will offer educational workshops that tie into Key stage 1 learning all the way through to university students. A visual, interactive, hands-on approach that will be tailored to offer education programmes for primary, secondary, SEND, college and university students.

Your waste. Our energy!

We want to use the food, paper and cardboard waste produced by local businesses and schools to create biogas and green electricity to run our community farm. We want to involve schools, the local community, businesses and organisations to demonstrate on a small-scale what can be achieved together. Collective activities to help demonstrate a more circular economy of **'make - use - reuse and recycle'**.

As an example, if we are able to partner with a school we would be the first UK school/farm collaboration working in this new energy efficient way. A partnership that will create savings on the schools energy bills (as our surplus can be fed back into the schools supply), reduction on paper and waste collections, reducing their carbon footprint and providing great public relations for the school as they will be a leader, eco-friendly and proactive to a changing environment.

Getting involved

We believe that by encouraging our local community to get involved in the farms initiatives then people are more likely to take ownership and responsibility and in turn create a great community space that we can all be proud of – like our motto ‘the heart of our farm lies in its people’.

Enriching the community

We want to support the entire community by helping to tackle isolation in the elderly, reach out to the unemployed and homeless and provide SEND students with a great place to get involved by creating a community hub enriched by opportunities in training, mentoring and voluntary work. A place that connects people from all backgrounds.

The waste to asset cycle

We will help change people’s attitudes about waste. We want to demonstrate to schools, business and the community how we can treat food and other waste as an asset. Rather than simply make, consume and throw away, we can reinvest our waste into new energy and new growth. **Waste as an asset not a liability:**

Money Savings

Stored energy can be used without the need to purchase energy

Consume

Restaraunts, Schools, Homes and Business’



**Waste
as an
Asset**

Conversion

Converting waste to stored BioGas and Electricity

Produce Waste

Food, Cardboard, Paper (Biodegradables)

Waste Collection

Biodegradables from Schools, Homes, Restaraunts and Business’



**“Conkers allotments will
promote healthy eating
with ‘plot to plate’
workshops”**

About Us

First and foremost we are a community farm.

Conkers will be a learning hub through which we can demonstrate waste to energy schemes. In addition to this we will run workshops on site to educate schools, colleges and universities in-line with curriculums, NVQs and degrees on subjects ranging from animal welfare, science, habitats, engineering, farming, agriculture and renewable energies. Bespoke learning for all age groups.

Who we want to partner with...

We aim to partner with local schools and businesses in Stevenage to use their kitchen, paper and our farm's animal waste to create biogas and green electricity to provide energy to our community farm.

On a small scale and through educational workshops we will demonstrate how this can be done by teaching the science and processes behind **anaerobic digestion**.

Conkers is registered as a Community Interest project (Reg no. 10244306).

“Conkers farm will not be a landfill site or a commercial farm. It will be a community farm which underpins our core values – Evolution, Energy and Education”

What is Anaerobic Digestion (AD)?

Anaerobic Digestion is recognised by the government as one of the best methods for food waste recycling.

Anaerobic digestion means 'absence of oxygen'. Biogas is naturally created in sealed tanks which can be used as a fuel in a combined heat and power unit to generate renewable energy. For every tonne of food waste recycled by anaerobic digestion as an alternative to landfill, prevents between 0.5 and 1.0 tonne of CO2 emissions entering the atmosphere.

Another benefit is that the residual can be used as a biofertiliser for our farm:

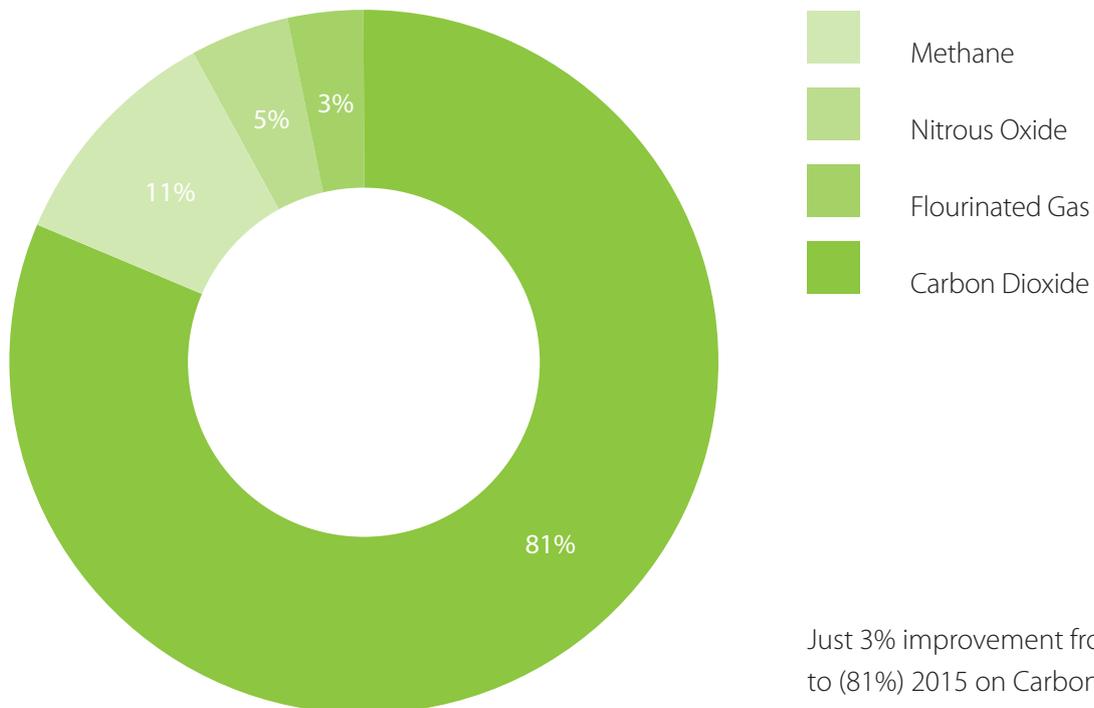


Current Issues

- **7.3m tonnes** of household wasted in the UK
- **£13billion** of edible food thrown away from homes. (*WRAP 2015*)
- Most domestic, commercial and industrial food waste still ends up in landfill where it rots, giving off **methane**, a powerful greenhouse waste.
- **A third of all food** bought is wasted costing families on average **£720 each year**.
- Burning fossil fuels is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions. (*Biogen*)

Greenhouse gas emissions by gas, UK, 2015 (%)

(Department for Business, energy and industrial strategy)



A top-down view of a large pile of food waste, including banana peels, tomato skins, and various vegetable scraps, set against a dark background. The waste is colorful and textured, with some items appearing to be in the process of being broken down or composted.

“We aim to provide a great platform of innovation on which we can build a sustainable future, starting at a local level through education and demonstration. Rethinking the way we use waste”

What Conkers can do on a small scale

As a society, we produce waste and we can't escape that.

Of course it's important that we work together to reduce waste levels here in the UK. There are many on-going initiatives such as consumer awareness, supermarket responsibilities and better recycling options for homeowners, businesses and schools.

Conkers farm can start by demonstrating on a small scale what we can achieve from a simple waste to energy programme. *Your waste. Our energy.*

In the long term

We believe that in time society will evolve so that every home, business and school will be powered by renewable energies.

Fast moving technologies will enable small scale AD units to be attached to our homes, schools and businesses reducing Co2 emissions, waste collections and creating energy savings for every consumer, business and school in the UK.

Changing Environment

The UK needs to start educating our younger students in waste and how it effects our environment and this can only be done by providing places in which people can become truly aware of what each of us can do to reduce waste and Co2 emissions to start creating a change environment.

Conkers farm will reach out to the entire community and be inclusive to all its residents. We can help the council reach their objectives by providing an environment that will:-

- Reach out to children and young people by providing an environment that will enhance their learning. Studies show that working with animals is particularly good for SEND students and young people with behavioural difficulties.
- We will work with other charities/organisations to help address mental health and behavioural problems
- Work with the elderly residents to improve lifestyles and independence. Allotments will encourage community cohesion.
- Improve employability – offer NVQ schemes to improve career prospects
- Set up mentoring programmes between businesses and schools
- Create Job opportunities
- Offer volunteering opportunities to local people
- Improve the profile of the town.



“Now is the right time to start implementing places where people can learn about renewable energies, recycling waste and how we can generate energy from it by using the farm as an example of what can be achieved when we all work together. A new outlook.”

Why Stevenage?

Stevenage has just marked its 70th birthday and was part of Lewis Silken's vision for new towns. When the town was first built it had revolutionary aspects such as the first pedestrianised walkways in the country.

Today there are around 90,000 residents in Stevenage but the town is in need of regeneration. A lot of businesses were sold off to the private sector about 30 years ago which has made it hard for the town to find new investors.

Stevenage can be a leader again.

Conkers Farm will create an environment that is inclusive, educational and a place where collaboration will encourage community cohesion.

Reports have shown that Stevenage does fall behind in education, health and wellbeing compared to other towns in Hertfordshire and nationally, but we strongly believe (and in line with its motto) that 'the heart of its town is its people' and working together we will provide a space that is sustainable, offers new technologies, provides education for all stages of schooling and reaches out to the elderly, SEND and vulnerable groups to improve people's lives.

We have a number of businesses in Stevenage (which include large corporations such as GSK, Fujitsu, Betfair and Airbus) - we will turn to them to support this project. If the government were to provide the necessary funding we can help the council meet their targets and through collaboration with schools, businesses, residents we can create an environment that we can all feel proud to be part of for the next 70 years.

What do we need to make this happen?

We need help and support on best practice. We need to ask the experts for their advice in order to create a farm that offers an environment where our visitors and students not only understand about animal welfare but also the importance of renewable energies and technologies and how it can be used effectively.

There will be planning implications, communication to the public, consultancy, due diligence, environment and Council considerations.

We have the concept, understand that there is a requirement for the farm but greatly need people to invest in us, whether that's their time, skills or through funding.

We need capital investment to set up the farm, however once established Conkers will run like any other business with the necessary skillset to ensure it is well managed, sustainable and accountable for all of its activities.

If we are able to partner with a school in Stevenage (i.e. situated on land they own) there would be opportunities of reducing their energy bills, waste collection costs in addition to great public relations for the school and a reduction in carbon emissions.

How you can help

If you think you can help us by donating your time, advice expertise or you think you can help with funding, please contact us at:

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Or visit our website www.conkersfarm.co.uk or **Follow Us:**



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