



## Occombe Farm One Planet Food Project

Occombe Farm is a 150 acre educational organic livestock farm on the edge of Paignton in Devon. Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, which runs Occombe, has secured £475,000 of funding from the Local Food Fund and various charitable trusts for its One Planet Food Project at the farm.

The aim of the project is to promote sustainable food-growing and cooking in and around Torbay, based on the fact that we only have one planet to feed us.

The project will firstly set up a 4-acre smallholding under a community supported agriculture (CSA) scheme. CSA schemes involve local people in planning what will be grown on the land, helping out with the work and then sharing the harvest. In addition a new Community Kitchen will be built so that classes of school children that visit the farm and adult learners can cook with produce harvested on the smallholding. The project will also promote growing your own food, allotments, school gardens and cookery clubs across Torbay. There will be many volunteering opportunities for people who want to learn more about growing and a wide range of courses will be run in gardening and food related topics.

The project will help create other community growing sites in deprived areas of Torbay. Potential sites have been identified and project staff will work with local community groups such as resident's associations or ward partnerships, schools and Children's Centres to support local people in growing their own food for their neighbourhood.

The CSA smallholding at Occombe will be managed by volunteers and trainees, including excluded adults and ex-offenders. It will also be used as a training and educational facility for local schools and other groups and it will be open to the public free of charge.

The project means that Occombe Farm can demonstrate a wider range of food-growing and gives our visitors the chance to get more involved in food production. People will be able to plant and harvest food crops and follow them from field to plate, with cooking, baking and other food activities in a fully equipped community kitchen. Occombe is currently over-subscribed for educational visits and there is a clear need to expand the facilities and the activities on offer.

The new straw-bale kitchen will be built by local students studying construction at South Devon College. It will accommodate a class of 30 students and will also run courses for adults. This will be a base for information, events, activities and interpretation about food issues.

The Trust is employing a full-time Grower to set up the smallholding and CSA scheme and will be working closely with its partners across Torbay and the region to deliver this exciting new development for the area.

### 2. Background

Torbay has areas of significant deprivation and the project will involve people from these communities through a variety of visits, events and activities. In addition it will provide

training opportunities to disadvantaged and socially excluded people linked to growing your own food, allotments and the new community growing areas. The creation of the latter will be supported by the Occombe Grower and other project partners.

Since its opening in March 2006 Occombe Farm has become established as one of Devon's premier food, farming and education centres. It has already won awards for its innovative approach and is ideally placed to act as a catalyst for change in the production and consumption of local food.

Torbay Coast and Countryside Trust, the originators and developers of Occombe Farm, is a charity and Torbay's largest social enterprise, dedicated to the conservation of Torbay's natural heritage and environmental education. The Trust sees the development of a strong market for quality local food as being an essential conservation measure to protect Devon's countryside.

A range of partners are involved in this project including:

- Shekinah Mission
- Local Schools
- South Devon College
- The Soil Association
- Local Community Groups

### **3. Project Aims**

The project's overarching aim is to promote sustainable food-growing and cooking in and around Torbay, based on the fact that we only have one planet to feed us. Within this there are a number of inter-linked aims:

- to promote the importance of local food production to local people
- to reinforce Occombe as the focal point for local food in Torbay
- to illustrate alternative approaches to food production and land management, specifically community supported agriculture
- to increase local people's awareness and understanding of how local food production is linked to sustainable lifestyles
- to offer training opportunities linked to volunteering
- to develop an educational visits programme

### **4. Objectives/Outcomes**

Over three years the project will:

- set up a new community supported agriculture scheme at Occombe and open it to the public; visited by an average of 25 people per day for 30 months= 21,000 local people and others
- facilitate the creation of at least 2 more CSA schemes in deprived areas of Torbay based on the pilot at Occombe
- create a new local food education centre with a community kitchen built by construction students from South Devon College on work experience
- create an example of a low carbon sustainable building
- install interpretation on the growing area addressing the issues
- develop subsidised educational opportunities leading to 240 group visits with 5350 participants
- develop curriculum linked activities for Key Stage 2 and for Key Stage 3 integrated with farm visits
- run teacher training sessions promoting local food agenda

- promote awareness of local food through various media and holding 27 free public events and 18 courses at Occombe and giving 30 presentations to groups
- create volunteering and training opportunities for 45 volunteers and 6 long term trainees, including ex-offenders and other disadvantaged groups
- operate a long term trainee scheme with 6 trainees on 9 month placements achieving NVQ Level 2s
- run an after school Local Food club for disadvantaged parents and children and a Cookery Club at weekends and in the summer holidays
- create a new website for the project designed by media/IT students from South Devon College
- promote growing your own food and allotments through training courses at Occombe and at other sites

## **5. Activities**

Examples of the type of activities envisaged:

- local people purchase veg shares or receive them in exchange for volunteering
- Children from local primaries visiting the project help with sowing, planting, weeding, harvesting on the smallholding. They follow the produce from fork to plate using the educational kitchen to prepare meals, bake bread etc
- Children help feed the animals on the smallholding and learn about the differences between organic and conventional production
- Key Stage 3 students use the smallholding to look at how much land people in the UK rely on and how patterns of consumption might have to change if the earth's resources are not going to be depleted
- local people attend free events at Occombe celebrating local food, linked to seasonality and traditional skills
- volunteers attend training courses on smallholding, vegetable and fruit growing, cookery skills and other skills
- local people attend food related courses such as allotment keeping, breadmaking, preserves or beekeeping
- young people attend a Cookery Club at the farm promoting cooking skills, healthy eating and an understanding of local food in a fun way
- community groups supported in setting up community growing areas in their local area

## **6. Costs**

Costs include:

- Construction of the new education centre which contains an community kitchen, changing room, store, toilets and office space. This will be a timber frame, straw bale insulated low carbon construction built in partnership with South Devon College.
- Set up of a 4 acre growing area at Occombe including landscaping and rainwater harvesting system
- Workshop/mess room and equipment for the smallholding
- Employing a grower to manage the growing and volunteers
- Costs of developing curriculum linked educational activities and materials
- Training costs for volunteers and trainees
- Costs of putting on events and marketing the project
- Equipment costs for setting up 2 more community growing sites