

# Belmont Staff Press Release

The appeal decision hearing held 21<sup>st</sup> June 2011 by Diane Lewis an inspector appointed by the secretary of state for communities and local government has finally come back with a decision on 27<sup>th</sup> September to decline our appeal.

We, the staff of Belmont Farm, feel so let-down by Barnet Council and the planning authority and feel we have been unjustly set upon. How is the council now going to provide 15 jobs for us in the present job desert? Especially when in this current financial depression a business focused toward community adhesion and education, providing apprenticeships and work experience, all fitting towards the BIG SOCIETY OBJECTIVES – sitting within an ever declining child friendly borough – is privately funded and is to be closed within 6 months.

We are a farm and have always have been a farm! It has been stated that in the conclusion Belmont Children's Farm has become a primary use as opposed to an ancillary to the existing planning for agricultural or equestrian uses. Yes it has become a necessity as a main income generator for the agricultural and equestrian as farm diversification IS a necessity to survival within an ever changing business climate, we are still farming – our animals are mainly breeding stock for resale, we have no toys or gimmicks, just animals and education. And the farm has been loved by over 60'000 visitors.

We feel we should unite with Dale Farm as we understand their plight foe homes as being the same as ours for a job. If they close the farm maybe they could come here, after all we have residential planning

Does the council and neighbours prefer the car park, which has always been there, to go back to a farm storage area with hay and silage and Machinery parking? How is the closing of Belmont Children's Farm helping the community use of the greenbelt?

We are desperate for Belmont Farm to stay open and, in reading the appeal decision it is seen in our view that if we apply for new planning then this will be granted now the Inspector has corrected Barnet's unreasonable conditions. The inspector Diane Lewis has weighted the decision in this way with a large number of the council's objections getting a slap on the wrist. We the staff plan to ask the council that if an application is put in following the inspectors recommendation that it will be granted in eight weeks so as not to affect the closure of the farm and loss of jobs?

We still have so much to give to the community and London. The NFU is coming to Belmont Farm on 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> October to emphasise the need for farming and food production education.

PLEASE HELP is all we can say!

Incidentally our London Mayor forgot in the London Plan to make mention of children's farms in green belts. What is he going to do?

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