**Job Description: Volunteer Helper(s) on Dyke Nook Care Farm**

**Location:** Dyke Nook, Sandford, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria



Dyke Nook is a small 14-acre Rare Breeds farm with cows, goats, sheep, chickens, and a small vegetable area plus polytunnel, established in 2021 with a view to being a resource for Christian witness and ministry in the Eden Valley, Cumbria.

The farm is now operational, presently day to day management maintained by owner occupier Karen Baxter, with more long-term decisions taken together with prayer partners. Additional help is required with its operations so that time can be given to improved work/rest life balance for Karen and developing the vision to further the ministry element of the work.

The vision comprises using Dyke Nook as a farm to support the well-being of individuals by involving them in tasks like animal care, gardening, and maintenance, fostering a connection with creation promoting mental, physical, and spiritual health, in a Christian context.

It is also hoped that Dyke Nook could become a project that engages churches in this very rural part of Cumbria in joint Christian outreach.

**Term:** Full time residential position for an initial 3 months minimum, with the potential for this to develop into a longer-term ministry role.

**Role Overview:** As a Volunteer Helper(s) at Dyke Nook community farm, you will play a vital role in supporting the daily operations of the farm and contributing to the vision for its use as a place where people can visit to participate in meaningful activities and receive Christian support.

You will assist with various tasks, including animal care, gardening, maintenance, and engaging with visitors. This role is perfect for individual[s] who are passionate about nature, animals, and helping others.

**Key Responsibilities:**

* **Animal Care**: Feeding, grooming, observing, and monitoring the health of farm animals.
* **Gardening**: Planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting vegetable crops.
* **Maintenance**: Assisting with general farm upkeep, including cleaning, and repairing facilities.
* **Visitor Engagement**: Welcoming visitors.
* **Team Collaboration**: Working alongside others to ensure smooth farm operations.

**Benefits:**

* Opportunity to work in a beautiful outdoor setting.
* Gain hands-on experience in animal care and farming.
* Make a positive impact on the community.
* Develop new skills and knowledge.
* Opportunity to shape the development of the ministry aspect of the farm.
* Board and lodging provided.

**Person Specification: Volunteer Helper(s) on Dyke Nook Care Farm**

**Essential Criteria:**

* **Committed Christian.** A Christian faith and a sense of God’s calling to work using farming.
* **Passion for Nature and Animals:** A genuine interest in working with animals and plants.
* **Reliability:** Consistent attendance and commitment to agreed work
* **Physical Fitness:** Ability to perform manual tasks and work outdoors in various weather.
* **Team Player:** Willingness to collaborate with others, in a small team and in the working and living situations.
* **Communication Skills:** Ability to interact positively with visitors and team members.
* **Flexibility:** Adaptability to changing tasks and schedules.

**Desirable Criteria:**

* **Experience:** Previous experience in farming, gardening, or animal care.
* **Initiative:** Proactive approach to identifying and completing tasks.
* **Empathy:** Understanding and compassion for the needs of visitors and animals.
* **Driving Licence:** This is a rural community with poor public transport.

**Practical factors:**

**Work hours:** This is a full-time volunteer role. Animals need feeding, milking etc. from early morning until evening and there are always jobs to be done. Hours need to be flexible by agreement with Karen but on average around 40 hours work a week is to be expected with one day off in addition to Sundays. If the volunteer(s) need to be away at weekends it should be possible to arrange rotas so that every other weekend is free. Only essential caring tasks are done on Sundays.

**Living situation:** The volunteer(s) will have their own room in the farmhouse or if preferred in a caravan. Other spaces are shared with Karen and her mother who lives at Dyke Nook. Meal preparation is shared.

**Participation:** The volunteer(s) are welcome join in with Karen’s village church and house group, or to take part in other church activities in the local area. Penrith with a range of different churches is eighteen miles away.

**To apply or to arrange an introductory phone call or visit**: Email Karen Baxter karen@veritascollege.org explaining why you think God has called you to this role and setting out how you meet the criteria above.

