

Edinburgh councillor blogs – Councillor Gavin Corbett

Councillor Gavin Corbett represents the Fountainbridge/Craiglockhart Ward. He is a member of the Green Group at the City Chambers.

He is delighted that the appeal for funds for the Gorgie City Farm has raised so much money in just six weeks. He writes:

“I don’t imagine that there is a family in South West Edinburgh who has not been to Gorgie City Farm at some time. It is also a massive draw across the city.

It is one of these fixtures on the local landscape which has always been there and, as a result, is potentially taken for granted.

☒ *My own sons spent uncountable hours clambering over the tractor which greets visitors near the entrance. And my oldest son spent a couple of years as a volunteer farmer on a Saturday morning and seemed always to gravitate to mucking out the pigs just before he came home to be hosed down on the front step.*

But, of course, in reality, Gorgie Farm has not always been there and will only be there in the future with community support and generosity.

One of my neighbours, and longstanding Scottish Green Party member, Bill Brockie, was formerly the priest at St Martin’s on Dalry Road and was very involved in the early days of the farm in the 1970s. He has told me that funding was a constant issue back then. The farm had and retains a firm principle of making access to animals and learning about growing open to people of all background.

That makes funding just as much an issue now as it was in the 1970s.

So it was a huge worry to me when relatively new manager (and another near neighbour) Josiah Lockhart revealed that there was a huge hole in the farm's budget this year, at one point putting the farm's very existence in jeopardy.

Fortunately, since that bleak announcement, in a space of only six weeks, the farm has raised £100,000 to plug the budget, much of that coming from small donations from individuals but also from local businesses and community groups – and all the while championed by the Edinburgh Evening News. From the ashes has come some real good.

It is not all over yet, of course. That £100k buys the farm breathing space until the end of the financial year and allows the council's 3 year grant to continue, secure in the knowledge that there is a farm there to fund. But a lot still needs to be done with that breathing space: converting massive goodwill into regular giving and volunteering; getting the farm café re-opened, securing new funding for new programmes; and putting the farm on more of a social enterprise footing.

It is a big challenge but massively exciting. What has happened over the last six weeks makes me very proud of the city and the community in this part of Edinburgh. And, by building on it, we can make sure Gorgie City Farm stays at the heart of the community."

You can still donate to the Gorgie City Farm appeal [here](#).