

# **Zoo expresses interest in Gorgie City Farm**

**Three private organisations, including The Royal Zoological Society of Scotland, are among groups understood to have expressed an interest in taking over Gorgie City Farm.**

The operators of the farm – one of the last left in Scotland – announced recently they would have to close due to rocketing operational costs, and a lack of funding.

LOVE Learning have run the three-acre council-owned site since 2019 when the farm was also in financial difficulties. They will now walk away, with the farm closing to the public on Monday.



Gail Porter at Gorgie City Farm when it was taken over by LOVE . Photo Martin McAdam

However, there is hope for the valued community space which holds pigs, ducks, sheep and a range of other animals, as the council confirmed that “a number of organisations” have come forward to express an interest in its future running.

It is understood these include Edinburgh Zoo, Five Sisters Zoo and East Links Family Park.

The Save Gorgie Farm Campaign was to hold a meeting on Wednesday night to discuss the way forward.

And Council leader Cllr Cammy Day said he would meet with interested parties in the coming days to “hear exactly what they have to say and their ideas for the site”.

Cllr Day added the local authority would also “look to see if there is any way of keeping the animals on site until a decision is made on its future”.

But the level of funding required to save the farm from

closing for good is unlikely to be met by the council.

“The council is weeks away from setting a budget that’s being cut by £70 million by the SNP-Green government,” Cllr Day continued.

“So all the directors are struggling to fund their current priorities.

“We’re not saying the council might not put something in – of course we’ll play our part. What we couldn’t commit to is providing hundreds of thousands of pounds to any project in the city because of the dire financial situation the council finds itself in as the lowest funded council in Scotland.”

He added there were some “interested donors” who could help, alongside plans to set-up a crowd funder.

Gorgie councillor Ross McKenzie said “only the council” could rescue the farm in the short-term and added any proposals to run it as a “commercial endeavour” would “not be acceptable to the ward councillors or the community”.

“We will not be forgiven if we allow it to slip away,” he said.

“It’s vital that any new operator is committed to the values that Gorgie Farm has operated under for the past 40 years – it is a community space, an educational space, and a place where people can come to breathe and take break from urban life.

“It will be challenging to make the farm sustainable on this model, but that’s a challenge that the council has to rise to.

“The public response to the news that LOVE intend to close the farm has been overwhelming. If any of Edinburgh’s elected representatives had any doubt about the social value of Gorgie Farm then the correspondence they have received over the past week will have put them right.”



EDITOR'S NOTE – A [change.org petition](#) has attracted almost 5,500 signatures with the petitioner, Joe Jenkinson saying that the council has refused a new lease and is removing funding. Whether or not that is true is debatable and not yet checked but the farm does have an important place in the community in Edinburgh.

by Donald Turvill

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