

Achray Farm Gate – Winter 2019 (Issue 6)

Welcome to Achray Farm on the route of The Great Trossachs Path. Please walk or ride through with care.

Updates – Winter 2019

In early March as the most significant snow of the Winter rapidly melts with the strong sun it's time to reflect on the last few months. Winter is a time for **re-energising** the land, plants and the animals. In the darkest days it's not light until after 9am and we are locking up the hens and ducks just after 3pm – that's a lot of sleeping and recovery time for us also. The **(pregnant) goats** have an electric light and night vision in their new home. **Lime pointing** and new roof & doors have transformed the stone outbuildings with frost-free days allowing the works to complete in December. All the buildings at Achray Farm are **listed** and so **renovations** are lengthy & done with traditional materials. Huge thanks to the National Park who have supported us with the **Built Heritage Grant** scheme. In January, young people from the **Travel & Tourism Course at McLaren High** in Callander visited to learn about and understand what we have done.

An internal dairy has been fitted out and pens lined up for **kidding** time. The local vet's "NCT for Goatherd" session has prepared us, with backup from the vet and the farmers at the Woodland Trust down the road.



Scotland's warmest **February** on record, and very few frosts and low snowfall, has seen all our trees and berries budding to go. We look forward to the second year of everything established and in production. An additional 30 **raspberry** and 90 **strawberry** plants have been planted, a windbreak is being established on last year's mulch beds and scything continues to keep the rushes at bay and the **willow** healthy.

Accommodation

The "Old Farmhouse" is now available to book through **AirBnB**. Sleeping up to 6 with two bathrooms it has been sympathetically renovated throughout with a new kitchen and dedicated access & biomass heating.

History

There has been a farm, smallholding or settlement on this site for as long as there have been maps of Scotland. The census shows a population of shepherds, gamekeepers and water workers. The area was also popular with the 19th Century romantic poets and artists such as Walter Scott; the "Highland Funeral" by Guthrie was painted here. Information boards around the village explore many of these themes.

Our Plans

We are working to develop Achray Farm as a modern productive regenerative enterprise, growing to suit the conditions and following permaculture principles to meet and raise local food issues and awareness. We obviously have some considerable buildings to renovate into usable space (some working, some husbandry and some to provide accommodation) as we grow. We maintain an "Open Farm Gate" policy.