Farm Diversification Plan - Badgers Hollow, Thakeham

History:
Historically the land was used as part of a wide land ownership being run as a dairy Farm. No sign of this portion of land (now named Badgers Hollow) being used for this nature was or is evident. There were no fences to contain animals and no shelters for animals on site and no water connection to provide water to animals. The land contained piles of farming waste both from animals and from wider farming practices such as plastic sheeting and tyres etc. Obviously in separating this land from the wider ownership this is no longer a valid use of the space.

Within the blue line boundary the field area to the South East had been left for a large number of years now providing a diverse mix of vegetation with a young woodland pasture developing, as shown in the ecological survey, young oaks indicate that this is over a period of around 10-15 years. In order to maintain this ecological improvement this needs to be managed gently and would destroy vast habitats using this space for farming.

The central field (where the red line boundary sits) leaves around 3 acres of usable agricultural land.

Potential Farming uses / Problems of 3 acres:

- According to UK farming guidelines 3 acres could house 1-2 cows or 3-6 sheep. This clearly is not enough to provide a sustainable income.
- Advice is to move away from single crop farms, in addition the equipment needs of arable farming are prohibitive with such a small area to grow in.
- UK government basic payment schemes only support farms of over 3 hectares.
- The heavy clay means that although perfect for holding water much work is necessary to make this a usable growing medium, this is challenging without machinery, over an area of 3 acres.

Farm diversity:

- In response to these issues having a mixed use farm suits the small space, our experience in permaculture farming leads us to using the space in a gentle, more natural farming approach having areas of forest garden, growing a variety of fruits and vegetables with intense support for soils, areas to hold water to improve diversity of the site and having a small number of animals to support the soil health further.
- In consultation with experts / ecologists from Wilder Horsham, Ouse and Adur Rivers Trust, Knepp Wildlife foundation and The Woodland Trust this vision of creating a diverse space, where plants / animals and water were nurtured, supported the vision for the area from those sources and confirmed our view of what the land should be helped towards by us. We have been supported with a grant for some of this work from Wilder Horsham.
- This would lead us to be able to support the water retention projects, Weald to waves project, engage with the community, help educate on small permaculture farming practices and enhance resource management on site. However it did lead us to a

problem with the finances of the project and the limitation of only interacting with the community within a short distance from us.

Solution:
In reading around Farm diversity the points that are advised are:

- To address financial instability and create multiple revenue streams.
- To increase resilience to climate change
- To improve engagement and education; something we are very passionate about.

Cabins:
The addition of the cabins on site achieve points one and three. They will provide an additional income stream to the growing and selling of fruit and vegetables. Plus they will allow people from further afield to engage with our community, learn and gain the physical and emotional benefits of staying on a site such as this. In addition, supporting tourism in the area and therefore local businesses.

The vision of the pond/lake to improve the ecology on site addresses point two, increases resilience to climate change. In addition the wider area around the forest garden and cabins being nurtured into a diverse wildflower meadow supports climate change and more immediately native wildlife.