Issue No. 16

FCN THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

Winter 2024

Here for you

OUR PROACTIVE APPROACH TO SUPPORTING FARMERS' HEALTH, WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

Dr Jude McCann, CEO

Following October's Budget announcement, many within our farming community are now in a period of reflection and revaluation. This has been a very difficult year in farming and you may feel as if you are on your own facing the challenges and changes ahead. We want to remind our farming community that FCN volunteers are here 365 days of the year to listen, to support and to 'walk with' you, your family and your farm business.

This year has been a real testament to the strength and resilience of farmers, supporting one another and uniting as a force for good. Farmers are masters of adapting to change; at this time we must keep on looking forward, and focus on the positives and the things within our control.

Increasingly FCN's work is taking a proactive approach to supporting farmers' health, wellbeing and resilience. Through our FarmWell website, community events, research, partnership work and other activities we are working hard to create networks of support and to help farmers to explore their options in the face of significant change.

Our new UK-wide partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support is one example of how we are engaging with local communities – working with a wide range of stakeholders to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of cancer and to encourage people to 'Nip it in the Bud'. We are hoping to gather feedback on how cancer support in rural communities could be improved, and have included a survey link later in this newsletter. We encourage readers to take the time to fill this in.

Thank you to all of our volunteers, staff team and supporters, who continue to do great work raising awareness of FCN and helping us to reach those who may benefit from the support of our charity. Everything we do is a real team effort, and we are grateful to everyone who gets involved with our work.

Please take care during this winter season and continue to look after yourselves and the people around you. Remember: we are here to help.

For the latest news about all things FCN, continue reading…

- **Dr Jude McCann,**
  Chief Executive Officer,
  The Farming Community Network

CHARITY CANCER CAMPAIGN URGES FARMING COMMUNITY TO 'NIP IT IN THE BUD'

Farmers and people living in rural communities are being urged to 'nip it in the bud' and get checked for early signs of cancer – as part of a new UK-wide campaign by FCN, working in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support. The campaign aims to raise awareness of cancer risks, signs and symptoms, and to encourage early detection.

Farmers, farm workers and people living in rural communities can have lower access to cancer services and support due to the nature of their work and rural life, often in isolated areas.

The **#NipItInTheBud** campaign provides a range of useful resources for agri-businesses, Ag Colleges, Young Farmers' Clubs and others to download or circulate – some focused on specific cancers that farmers can be more at-risk of developing, such as skin cancer, prostate cancer or lung cancer.

Nicky Maynard (photographed) is a farmer's wife, originally from Cork in the Emerald Isle, and has lived with her husband and family in Warwickshire for the last 23 years. In January 2017 she felt a lump in her right breast but initially delayed going to the GP, as she felt fine and there wasn't a female GP available for a few weeks.

After eventually seeing a GP, she quickly received ultrasounds and biopsies and was diagnosed with breast cancer. Juggling her many roles on the farm whilst undergoing cancer treatment was stressful and she was under a lot of pressure. Friendships were incredibly important throughout her treatment, and Nicky had friends who really stepped up to the mark after finding out she had cancer. She also received support from Macmillan Cancer Support. Nicky said: "I am still not great at listening to my body, but I do force myself to go to the doctor if I am worried about something. Getting to the GP early is essential. Please don't put it off – Nip it in the Bud."

- Downloadable resources such as graphics, images and information sheets are available on the FCN website: **fcn.org.uk/cancersupport**
- We are currently running a survey to better understand current cancer service provisions in rural areas, whilst recommending areas for improvement. To access this survey scan this QR code or visit: **www.surveymonkey.com/r/W9DQM5M**

HOUSE OF LORDS RECEPTION

On Tuesday 12 November we held a reception at the House of Lords in partnership with Macmillan Cancer Support, kindly hosted by The Lord Curry of Kirkharle Kt CBE, to bring industry stakeholders together to back our **#NipItInTheBud** campaign.

Lord Curry provided an overview of why work to address health inequalities in farming and rural communities is so important and crediting the resilience of farmers while navigating periods of change.

Dr Jude McCann, FCN's Chief Executive Officer, said: "Through this partnership work we are giving our communities a platform to tell their stories; to offer hope; and to encourage others to slow down and take care of themselves. There is life with cancer. There is life after cancer. You can continue farming following a diagnosis."

FCN / LEN'S LIGHT NUFFIELD FARMING SCHOLARSHIP

Earlier this year we launched the FCN / Len's Light Nuffield Farming Scholarship with the Nuffield Farming Scholarships Trust. The Scholarship is inspired by Warwickshire farmers Andy and Lynda Eadon, who lost their son Len to suicide in January 2022. They have since made it their mission to raise awareness of the challenges of mental health in rural and farming communities and to ensure that nobody feels alone.

The recipient of this Scholarship has now been announced: Sharon May will be researching the topic of "No farmer is an island; supporting the mental health of farming families". Congratulations, Sharon - we look forward to working with you!

FCN LAUNCHES RESILIENCE CHECKLIST TO GIVE FARMERS A BUSINESS AND WELLBEING 'MOT'

In August we launched a new resilience checklist to help farmers and farm businesses review some of the common components of business and personal resilience – helping them to identify strengths and highlight areas where additional information or support may be beneficial.

The Greenzone Checklist is available from FCN's FarmWell website and contains helpful information around a wide array of topics relating to business, health, forward-planning and community connections.

Users can download or print off the checklist and examine which areas are 'in hand' and where they might benefit from investigating further.

The FarmWell website provides a wide range of resources and information in relation to all points raised in the checklist – helping farmers to explore their options and providing helpful insights or ideas.

Download the Greenzone Checklist here: **farmwell.org.uk/greenzone**

FarmWell GREEN ZONE

LEADING THE FARM DIVERSIFICATION CONVERSATION

In November FCN Chaired a well-attended panel debate at the Farm Business Innovation Show on the topic of 'Why Should Farmers Diversify?' where we discussed opportunities and challenges with a panel of experts from across the sector. The session was Chaired by Alex Phillimore, Head of Communications and Development, with FCN volunteer and farmer Zoe Legg, Anthony Pearce (Dudley Peverill Associates) and Alex Russell (Pitchup.com).

FCN CONTRIBUTES TO NEW TIAH MODULE ON EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY

FCN contributed to a new e-learning module created by The Institute for Agriculture and Horticulture (TIAH) - highlighting how diversity, equity and inclusivity can be embedded into workplace culture.
Read more: **tiah.org/en/why-inclusion-matters**

CUMBRIA FARMING AWARD FOR FCN VOLUNTEER

Congratulations to FCN volunteer Brian Armstrong for being presented with the Special Recognition Award at the Cumbria Farming Awards in August. Brian was recognised as being a founder member of the FCN group in the county over 20 years ago and was thanked for his unwavering support of the farming community over the decades. The evening raised almost £6,000 for FCN and the Great North Air Ambulance. Thank you to Brian and all of our volunteers for everything you do in support of our farming community!

HOW TO SUPPORT FCN

"I have to say that your phone calls have been a great comfort to me. It has helped me to share and not to bottle it up. I am a stronger person for having had your support."

- Farmer, Yorkshire

We all rely on farmers three times a day. With British farming under increasing pressure, FCN is here to help farmers and farming families through the challenges and changes ahead – but this will not be possible without your support.

FCN relies solely on donations and grants in order to continue supporting our world-class farmers. A donation from you, your parish, associated clubs or organisations you may belong to could help a member of the farming community access the support they desperately need. Please do help us spread the word and gather support for FCN.

We have been extremely grateful for the generous legacies to FCN in recent years. For more information about leaving a gift to FCN in your Will, visit: **fcn.org.uk/leave-a-gift-in-your-will**

There are a number of other ways you can support FCN, such as:

• **Fundraising** – celebrations could include walks, bike rides, corporate sponsorship or any other ideas you may have. We welcome organisations supportive of our work reaching out to us with fundraising ideas.

• **Volunteering** – we welcome anyone passionate about helping the farming community to join as a volunteer. There are numerous volunteering roles available, including taking Helpline calls, handling casework, fundraising and publicity. More information is available at: **fcn.org.uk/volunteering**

• **Share your story** – FCN treats all cases confidentially, but we are grateful to anyone who is willing to talk about the support they have received from FCN. Please email Alex Phillimore, Head of Communications and Development, on **alex@fcn.org.uk** if you would like to share your story (details such as name and age will be anonymised).

• **Donate** – visit fcn.org.uk and click "Donate Online" in the top right hand corner, or send a cheque, made payable to "FCN" or "The Farming Community Network", to The Farming Community Network, Manor Farm, West Haddon, Northamptonshire, NN6 7AQ.

Alternatively you can scan this QR code to be taken directly to our donation page.

If you would like to discuss how you can support the work of FCN, call the FCN head office on **01788 510866** or email **help@fcn.org.uk**. The office is open 9-5 Monday - Friday.

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF FCN

2025 will mark 30 years of FCN 'walking with' our farming community. Over the years we have helped thousands of farmers and their families through difficult times and periods of change. We have been described as a 'lifeline' by many of the people we have supported. Please consider choosing FCN as a charity to support in 2025 for any fundraisers or other activities you may be planning.

Learn more about supporting the work of FCN here: **fcn.org.uk/donate**

More information about FCN's 30th anniversary celebrations can be found here: **fcn.org.uk/fcn30**

PROUD TO SUPPORT | THE FARMING COMMUNITY NETWORK

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