

Bouygues E&S Delivers Social Value to the Inclusive Farm – Supporting and Nurturing Diversity and Local Communities

2 years ago



At [Bouygues E&S](#), we are committed to offering solutions that provide a positive impact on social, economic and environmental activities – all of which can make a real difference to communities across the country. As part of our CSR programme and testament to our drive to help nurture diversity and our communities, we have been supporting Mike Duxbury's Inclusive Farm project in Bedfordshire: a working livestock farm created to give people with disabilities a route into agriculture.

Despite losing his sight at just six years old, the farm's co-founder, Mike Duxbury, set out to fulfil his dream of a life and career in farming. After gaining a degree in agricultural business management and a stint working for a national animal feed company, Mike took the leap to set up the Inclusive Farm: one of the UK's first working farms dedicated to training people with disabilities for a career in agriculture. Every week, students from the inclusive learning department at Milton Keynes College studying animal and horticulture spend a day at Inclusive Farm.

The farm has been constructed for people with a wide range of physical needs. Each animal enclosure has a different facade, with distinctive shapes cut into fencing so that Mike can move around the farm independently thanks to a combination of touch, sound, and texture of the enclosures.

Hearing the inspiring story on BBC's Country File, Nikki Mortimer, Performance Administrator and one of our social value ambassadors at Broomfield Hospital, reached out to Mike to see how Bouygues E&S could get involved with the farm. Electricity and running water were yet to be installed on the site, meaning Mike would have to carry containers of water to the animal enclosures.

Thanks to a donation from the Bouygues E&S CSR fund and a call out for volunteers, we have been able to support Mike in obtaining a survey from Anglian Water to allow for the installation of water mains on site. Last month, Bill Kesby and Wesley Peterson from the Bouygues E&S Mobile Solutions team volunteered their time to install the system, also providing all the pipework and equipment. This work included digging

trenches and laying the pipes, ready for Anglian Water to supply the site with running water. Nikki, Nicole Fox, Personal Assistant, and her daughter were also on hand to help with painting one of the out buildings. As a result of our support, Mike will now have a fully functioning irrigation system on the farm to assist with keeping his livestock.

Nikki, said: "Meeting and spending time with Mike and Ness at the Inclusive Farm is a real privilege and eye opener. Mike is a man who will not use the word can't as he believes that anyone can, but we just need to work out how. Having explained his idea for the design of the farm by constructing the layout in lego, his partner Ness then assisted with getting the plans prepared. All the animals on the farm have an amazing level of trust in Mike, especially when he carries out their welfare checks. He is, beyond doubt, one of the most inspirational, kind and down to earth people I have ever met and working with Mike and Ness to progress the Farm is an absolute honour and pleasure."

Lee Beard, Regional Director for Bouygues E&S, added: *"Mike's mission is to raise awareness of diversity, inclusion and sustainability."*

Meeting Mike in person and hearing his story was an incredible experience and really opens your mind to focusing on what people can do, rather than thinking about what they can't. This is Mike's message to the world and he really is a shining example.

We at Bouygues E&S have just completed the installation of the pipework in readiness for a mains water supply for Mike to support hydrating and cleaning his livestock. There will be many other ways that we can support this amazing project and I look forward to us building a long-term relationship with him."

This is just the beginning of a long partnership with the Inclusive Farm, and as such, we recently explored the possibility of installing solar panels on the farm as a way of providing sustainably sourced electricity to the site. Global renewable energy company, Low Carbon, whose Fox Covert Solar Farm is located nearby to the Inclusive Farm and are aiming to create 20GW of renewable energy by 2030, has offered to donate solar panels to assist with this endeavour and help the farm become more sustainable.

Head of Sustainability and ESG at Low Carbon, Harriet Parker, said:

"The Low Carbon team are delighted to have the opportunity to be involved in this brilliant initiative through our partnership with Bouygues E&S. By providing Mike with solar panels we can help him power his farm and look after his livestock with electricity produced from sustainable sources. Mike's story is an inspiration to everyone in the farming sector and we are proud to be making this small contribution that will help him reduce the carbon footprint of the Inclusive Farm as we all look to take meaningful action in the fight against climate change."

Beyond this exciting development, we also hope to be able to offer volunteering opportunities to colleagues across the business to support Mike in the upkeep and maintenance of the farm.

Mike Duxbury, co-owner of Inclusive Farm, concluded:

"The people I have met at Bouygues E&S are very passionate about Inclusive Farm and are a great reflection of the company's ethics and commitment to supporting local communities. The water mains that Bouygues E&S is installing is a game changer, especially as every penny we have gets put back into the farm for animal feed and maintaining high standards of health and safety, as well as my time supporting

people in need. The accessibility of water means we have more time to improve the farm and the project – not carting water for 2 hours a day out of a bowser – little things like this make a real difference. The support from the Bouygues E&S team and their client, Low Carbon, has been amazing, and I look forward to a long-term partnership where together we can raise more awareness about diversity and take action to make impactful change for the greater good of all communities.”