

*"I'm also among people of different ages and abilities. I'm given respect and my advice about animals and farming is actually asked for - and I get to do some farming, in the fresh air, again - preparing feed, feeding the animals, growing veg and plants, mending fences or benches, countryside crafts, and whatever else needs to be done."*



## What do we do and what services do we deliver?

The club is set out to offer something very different to traditional day centres, in that it offers the things that are very often taken away. For 2 afternoons a week, on a Tuesday and Thursday, supported by staff and volunteers so that they can get the best out of their time in the safest of ways, the men are involved in the sensory input of the work environment that farming gives, being as active as their mobility will allow. They do all sorts of tasks such as feeding the animals, making things out of wood in the workshop, tending a small allotment and polytunnel, basic maintenance and repairs arising on the farm or in the garden, and importantly, benefit from access to the outdoors no matter what the weather so they can feel the change in the seasons.

They also take part and compete in rural games like horseshoes or skittles which helps them to keep their mobility and through which we see the men's competitive nature returning, which motivates them to do more. They share knowledge and experience with one another, eat, sing, and celebrate the seasons and events with other members of the community, participating in the same things as everyone else. In particular they benefit hugely from social interaction and camaraderie that is otherwise so often denied them.



## Contact Us

Visit our website for more information.

Make an appointment to visit us, speak to one of the team and arrange a taster session.



Contact us by email or telephone.

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Email: [admin@countrymenuk.org](mailto:admin@countrymenuk.org)

Facebook: [countrymen.org](https://www.facebook.com/countrymen.org)

Countrymen Club, Rylands Farm, Boys Hill,  
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CountrymenUK helps men to retain their identity despite the demands of ill health, getting older, isolation and other challenges.

[www.countrymenuk.org](http://www.countrymenuk.org). Registered Charity No. 1184921



## Our Vision

For all men to have the opportunity to access outdoor work-related spaces like farming, carpentry or allotments when they become less independent.

## Our Aim

Our aim is to provide creative and innovative work-related activities to men of all ages who are unable to access the countryside independently.

*“I was depressed and isolated. I missed the life I once had in the countryside and had little contact with people outside my family. That’s all changed now. I love being outside again. It brings back memories. It’s become a new adventure for me – a healthy adventure. And I’m surrounded by people who share my interests.”*



*“I farmed all my life until Parkinson’s got me. I thought that was the end, but it wasn’t. The club has helped me get out of the house. It’s given my wife the respite she needs, and we can both see the difference in my outlook on life, my general health and fitness, and my mobility.*

## How it all started

The countrymen club started in 2011 when local farmer John Stockley developed Parkinsons and needed support to access the environment he lived for - farming and the countryside.

John wanted to be part of a community, not just around older people. His wife needed reassurance that he would be safe and happy, not just placed in a provision to give him respite. Knowing his love of the land, a farm was the most suitable place but there was nothing available throughout Dorset.

We have found over the years that John was not alone in wishing to access the countryside and in finding the club beneficial. We have a number of ex- servicemen, sportsmen and businessmen who would all define themselves as a country man or a man who enjoys the country.

## The difference we make

The club is about what the men can do, not what they can’t. The difference we want for the men is to make them feel a sense of purpose, of belonging and of regaining an element of independence, with an ability to smile again. The sessions at the farm provide the men with the feeling that they have not lost their identity or have become the illnesses that could define them.

## Why it’s important

Everyone deserves access to fresh air and exercise and to be able to experience the senses that each different season brings. Our results show that the club enhances quality of life, both for men who attend and equally for their carers. It has been found that the greatest benefits are socialising with like-minded men, taking part in activities related to past work or hobbies and having experienced mentors working alongside them who are not traditional ‘carers’.

