

# Fire hit Hinchliffe's Farm Shop getting ready to re-open

Jul 9 2010 by Joanne Douglas, Huddersfield Daily Examiner

A FARM shop devastated by fire will be back up and running within weeks.

Hinchliffe's farm shop was one of the buildings destroyed in a blaze late on Monday.

But the family behind one of the town's best-known businesses hope to be back open within weeks – in a portable building.

Simon Hirst says they are looking at temporary buildings which would be suitable for use for up to a year.

And he said it's about getting staff back working and the farm shop up and running as quickly as they can.



He said: "We've been down here all the time since it happened trying to get things sorted.

"We've got a couple of store rooms, we're using makeshift offices and we're hoping to have the farm shop back open in weeks.

"We want to open as soon as we can and our insurers want us open quickly, but at the same time we don't want to rush into making a decision over a temporary building because we could be in it for a year."

The farm shop and restaurant at Sunnyside Farm, Netherton Moor Road, were lost in Monday's blaze.

About 200 chickens died, but all other livestock – including goats, chickens and alpacas – survived.

Firefighters were able to cool propane gas cylinders at the site to prevent them exploding.

The family had submitted plans to expand the shop with large extensions to the front and rear.

Now they expect to draw up plans for new buildings to see the business into a new era.

Simon, whose grandfather started the business, thanked the 100 firefighters who attended the incident.

He added: "We've been farming in this area since the 1960s and have suffered the occasional barn fire before, but nothing as bad as this.

"It was heartbreaking to see businesses we've spent years building up devastated in a matter of hours.

"But we are already working on a plan to have the farm shop up and running again, hopefully in a couple of weeks."

The fire-hit buildings will have to be demolished and re-built.

It is hoped the restaurant can also be re-opened in a temporary structure, possibly in a modular marquee with a satellite kitchen, before building begins.

Simon added: "Our farm shop was one of the first in Britain to open in 1974 and has enjoyed the support of local people ever since.

"We want to re-open the shop as soon as possible to minimise the impact on our loyal customers."

The family have constructed temporary versions of the shop at agricultural shows and festivals in the past and it's hoped they can apply the same technique at the farm.

About 60 people worked at the Sunnyside Farm businesses.

Simon added: "Our staff have been brilliant.

"Everyone who heard about the fire came out on the night wanting to help, although there was nothing they could do.

"We have people still working for us who babysat me when I was little. You couldn't ask for more devoted workers.

"We're looking to keep everyone on, to help us get the businesses re-opened as soon as possible.

"Although we're all stunned by what's happened, we're determined to create a better, stronger business out of the devastation."