



# SECURING LAND FOR LIFE

## A STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021



### **Vision and Aims of the Biodynamic Land Trust**

To secure land for healthy sustainable regenerative agriculture that provides fresh local food, connects communities to land, supports land-based education, nature and wellbeing, creates rural jobs and improves countryside economies.

#### **Our Mission**

- De-commodify farmland to secure access for entrant farmers and protect it from the pressures of agro-industry and land price bubbles for future generations
- Apply biodynamic ecological farmland management, as the highest quality system for soil sustainability for long term farming, for food security and health of people and planet
- Foster community activity around and on land to build employment and well-being and the rural economy.

## An introduction to the Biodynamic Land Trust

Founded in 2011, the Biodynamic Land Trust is a community benefit society no. 31448R and registered as an exempt charity no XT33649.

The Trust offers investment in land for sustainable biodynamic organic farming through community shares. As a charity, it accepts donations with or without gift aid and can accept bequests of either land or money.

Members join by investing in withdrawable, non-transferable, non-profit shares. Individuals and organisations can join and each member has one vote.

Members are kept informed of activities and projects through a quarterly newsletter and via the website: [www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk](http://www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk). Interested people can subscribe, make donations and become members through the website or via email or telephone.

The Trust is directed by a small board of volunteer directors, elected by members at Annual General Meetings. The Biodynamic Land Trust's activities are delivered by two part-time staff: an Executive Director and an Operations Manager.



### Why the Trust's work is needed

Increasingly the world-over land is being used in ways that take it out of agriculture or diminish its ability to provide food for people and support a biodiverse natural world. Industrial farming is undermining the sustainability of our world and food systems as soils become impoverished and mineralised. These soils become dependent on chemicals to support plant crops which then pollute waterways and destroy nature. All soils could be managed by regenerative agricultural methods which increase biodiversity below and above ground, and support natural systems.

In the UK it is important to increase the areas of land under regenerative agriculture systems, agroecology, organic and biodynamic, for the wellbeing of all in the future. The Biodynamic Land Trust exists to meet this need.

## Biodynamic Land Trust - public benefit for “Public Good”

As a community benefit society with charitable status our aims are recognised as serving the public good.

- A. **Land Stewardship** – As a land owner holding land in trust for the community of investors, donors and the public gives the Trust a responsibility to see that this land is well cared for so that its fertility and productivity is developed for the benefit of future generations, that nature is cared for to the benefit of the whole planet and that society supports the value of healthy agriculture. Biodynamic methods mean high quality animal welfare, plant care, biodiversity care and soil care.
- B. **Environmental** – The Biodynamic Land Trust promotes and applies biodynamic organic farming practices to all its land – these are regenerative and non-polluting to air, water or soils. Biodynamic methods mean maximum take up of healthy minerals, vitamins and trace elements in the food grown on this land.
- C. **Social** – The Trust works closely with its tenants to ensure they meet the social aims. This includes involving people through farm events and seasonal celebrations, visits, volunteering, educational activities, training places and socially responsible employment.
- D. **Health** – It is now well documented that meaningful outdoor work whether in farming, gardening or nature conservation is beneficial for both physical and mental health. Supporting community wellbeing in a variety of ways is important for the Trust and its tenants. Healthy fresh, local biodynamic organic food is also part of what the Trust farms provide.
- E. **Education** – Learning about land, nature, farming, sustainable care of our world, food, healthy lifestyle and wellbeing is integral to the work done on Trust farms. This is carried out in many different ways; open days, farm clubs, school visits, general volunteering, professional training and experience for young people.

# Our Key Goals 2018 to 2021

## Context of Business plan

In 2017 the Trust published a five year business plan based on a number of assumptions, one being that fundraising achievements would continue to grow. This growth pattern has not followed so the Trust has established this strategic plan to honour the



commitments in the Business Plan to live within its means, to manage the budget and financial planning in light of the commitments to repay loans as they become due and to honour and steward the land it has. These are outlined below. Once these goals are achieved the Directors will again refer to the Business Plan and establish next steps in the light of that and current circumstances at that time.

NB the Trust's infrastructure development programme at Huxhams Cross Farm will be completed in autumn 2018 and funding completed through re-investing founding donation funds from Orkney land that had to be sold as well as the fundraising achieved and positive responses to the April 2018 appeal.

## Goal 1 - Land Stewardship

The Biodynamic Land Trust currently stewards approximately 300 acres of land, through supportive tenancy arrangements and a custodian trusteeship.

Our goal is to maintain supportive and strong relationships with our tenants and to ensure that Trust's aims and objectives are well represented. Secure agreements and good vision-sharing with the tenants and their activities on the land they rent ensures this happens. Tenancy agreements are reviewed at agreed periods when changes can be made as appropriate and in consultation with the tenants.

## Goal 2 - Sustainable development of the organisation

The organisational income of the Trust is assured at a maintenance level through rent payments and interest on investments in other ethical community benefit societies: Ecodynamic CBS, Stockwood CBS. Investments are also held in the Seed Co-operative. There is no return on this investment due to the agricultural and research nature of the enterprise.

Our goal is to find additional resources for organisational income so that facilities such as the website can be improved and promotional work can be carried out.

## Goal 3 - Beacon farms

Our goal is to develop our current projects to beacon farm status:

- **Tablehurst Farm** is already a beacon farm so no work is needed from the Trust. Regular newsletters and reports are issued by Tablehurst Cooperative that substantiate this diverse activity and the meeting of Trust aims and 'beacon' status.
- **Huxhams Cross Farm** is becoming a beacon farm – currently the tenant is developing this through:
  - A diversity of farm enterprises: vegetable and herb growing, soft and top fruit growing, egg production, cereal and field bean growing, rare breed cattle for conservation grazing and fertilising the land,
  - Caring for biodiversity and nature conservation,
  - On-farm education for all ages, including school visits and farm club,
  - Professional farming and horticulture training – at apprenticeship, volunteer levels and through specific courses,
  - Community engagement through a box scheme and local market

*“A beacon farm is one that practices respectful and regenerative agriculture, has multiple and diverse enterprises, respects and cares for nature and the environment. It provides the local community with healthy fresh food, opportunities to interact with nature, the seasons and the farm and enables learning from the land. It offers training for land-based work, farming and growing, it improves the local economy. If possible it also offers aspects of wellbeing and therapeutic services in the cultural setting of the farm.”*

- Volunteer engagement with farm and land-based activities,
- Mental health and well-being services on the farm and involvement in farm activities
- Adult and child learning offer in farming and growing, nature, countryside, healthy life-style and nutrition related skills.



This diversity of enterprise supports community engagement, full and diverse use of the land, builds respect for nature and the land and increases the viability of a relatively small plot of land to considerable levels of employment, training provision and biodiversity.

- **Oakbrook Community Farm** is working towards becoming a beacon farm. It needs support to:
  - Enable the establishment of basic farm and community buildings over a number of years
  - Continue the development of a multi-enterprise approach to cover elements such as: diverse farming enterprises, community engagement and volunteering, on-farm education, wellbeing and therapeutic activities
  - Enable the farm to have its own community and legal structure that facilitates its own development as a beacon farm and reports annually on its activity to the Trust
  - Promote the farm and its achievements as they progress and become established.

### Other goals - as funds and time allow - more land for regenerative farming ...

- The Trust works enthusiastically with all enquiries and progresses them according to possibilities and the Trust's policies.
- Build a Land Fund to support future projects through encouraging investment to secure land.
- Seek funding to support spreading our message so the Trust can communicate with more people on the importance of regenerative biodynamic agriculture and securing more land. This approach is vital for nature and people as demonstrated by the Right Honourable Michael Gove when he said "unless changes are made in agriculture we may have only 30-60 harvests left".

Income & Expenditure	Budget 2018/19	Budget 2019/20	Budget 2020/21
<b>Income</b>			
Land rent	£7,801	£8,381	£8,795
Investment income	£15,249	£11,622	£10,935
<b>Core income</b>	<b>£23,050</b>	<b>£20,003</b>	<b>£19,730</b>
General shares & donations	3500	4500	5000
<b>Total income</b>	<b>£26,550</b>	<b>£24,503</b>	<b>£24,730</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
<b>Core operations</b>			
Staff	£19,911	£13,281	£13,281
Non Staff	£11,278	£10,979	£11,277
<b>Core Operations Total</b>	<b>£31,189</b>	<b>£24,260</b>	<b>£24,558</b>

**The Biodynamic Land Trust works to secure and preserve land for healthy soil, farming, communities and sustainable local food, one farm at a time.**

Biodynamic Land Trust, Painswick Inn, Gloucester Street, Stroud, GL5 1QG, UK  
[www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk](http://www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk) [info@biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk](mailto:info@biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk) Tel: 01453 367233