

Biodynamic Land Trust 2021 Annual Report





Report of Activities

- Overview of Activities 2020-21
- Brambletye Fields as part of Tablehurst Farm
- Huxhams Cross Farm – Apricot Centre
- Oakbrook Community Farm – taking on independence
- Springham Farm
- Old Parsonage Farm
- Associate Farm Membership – building connection
- St Giles Community Farm – our first Associate Farm

Overview of Activities 2020-21

In 2020-2021 the Biodynamic Land Trust committed to continue to implement the agreed Strategic Plan 2018-2021 in 'stewardship' mode, which includes -

- Support to the development of activity, team and infrastructure planning at Oakbrook Farm and its developing Community Benefit Society "Oakbrook Community Farm CBS".
- To work with our tenanted farms as needed and as possible.
- To respond to enquiries and land projects as possible.

Our successes

- Oakbrook CBS is now fully in place and taking forward the vision for Oakbrook Farm.
- We have the fabulous addition of Springham Farm to the Trust.
- With the help of local support we have been able to provide financial support to Old Parsonage Farm on the Dartington Estate in Devon.
- The Associate farm initiative has acquired it's first associate farm, St Giles Farm in the New Forest. This was planned to be the venue for this AGM but will host a farm open day tomorrow to share the success of the farm with Trust members, farm tenants, friends and guests.

This success has been possible through the generous contributions of shareholder members and supporters.

Tablehurst's Brambletye Fields



- Replacement mains water pipework running from Weirwood Reservoir through the fields to the village of Forest Row – has finally finished including the ancillary legal work.
- Tablehurst farm continues to feed the locality and supply excellent biodynamic produce to parts of London.
- The farmers and processors continue to develop and innovate with a small Jersey cow milking herd and local milk dispenser, with trials in ‘minimum till’, under-cropping, mulched vegetable growing and more.
- The farm run workshops in lactose fermentations, have a small bakery, butchery and other enterprises alongside the shop.
- During lockdown they developed a delivery system for local keyworkers and vulnerable local residents’ food supplies.
- Our Brambletye fields support the bigger picture and are again beautiful, mixed herbage, wildflower meadows.

Huxhams Cross Farm – Apricot Centre



- The Apricot team have developed space for nature to thrive both as part of the farmed land and as special spaces, **so biodiversity is appreciated and increasing.**
- **More polytunnels** have gone up and pods introduced so that farming, growing, teaching, farm club, and wellbeing services can all do their work. The **Wellbeing services have continued** in a variety of forms while under lockdown restrictions.
- The **water systems** have developed and become fully functional collecting, saving and distributing water to crops as needed with a great pond near the barn.
- The **demand for local food** became extreme with last spring lockdown so not only did the team continue their bag deliveries, they also developed a local food hub, gathering supplies of more vegetables, bread, water and more, developing it to **feed 200 families** a week and delivered on two separate days over a wide local area.
- After markets were able to re-open, this settled down a bit, but this farm with its partners is still feeding a similar number of families through deliveries and market.
- Future Farmers: the team also provides training and apprenticeships of different forms for several young people each year and runs a variety of courses.
- There is onsite research into soil health and carbon capture on the farm.

Oakbrook Community Farm

Oakbrook now has its own legal entity and management system – a community benefit society which holds the different activities together and develops the farm infrastructure.

- This has a board of directors which includes the farm subtenants. They are seeking further funding having fundraised £124,000 but needing at least twice that for barns, tracks etc.
- All-weather tracks now have planning and funding and are being developed across the site.

Key tenants and activities are doing well :

- Stroud Community Agriculture has reduced its 6 acres to 1 acre for just the Starter Farm. This year it is Nell who has been the starter-grower.
- A new Zero-dig project has recently taken on part of this arable land to develop a vegetable growing project using new approaches and will be monitored to see what methods works best and if biodynamics will make a substantial difference.
- Stroud Micro Dairy is milking 15 cows and supplying milk to 300 members; with Ellies Eggs and the Bee Observatory complementing the use of this pastureland with additional land rented over the south boundary for cows' grazing and feed.
- The Orchard Agroforestry project is getting going with fruit trees and a tree nursery onsite.



Springham Farm

With the help of a long term supporter of our work, we acquired a 229 acre farm in Sussex last December - Springham Farm. The place is quite run down and needs a lot of investment and loving care which our tenants Springham Grove LLP are giving over a period of years.

For now :

- Have registered for conversion to organic certification and plan to take that further into Biodynamic/ Demeter certification in due course.
- The land is recovering and showing great biodiversity of plants and wildlife, particularly in the meadows.
- Have arranged for visiting livestock to trial mobile/rotational grazing systems.
- Have renewed the full perimeter fence and installed waterpoints for livestock around the farm.
- Are starting a regenerative zero dig garden.
- Are working on repairs and necessary improvements to the buildings.



Old Parsonage Farm

Old Parsonage farm is a 450 acre farm, part of Dartington Hall Trust. Tenants Jon and Lynne Perkin have formed several partnerships with the Apricot Centre Huxhams Cross farm:

- A 60 acre agroforestry field with lines of apple and pear trees and elder trees (belonging to a 3rd partner) and the arable strips are part of Old Parsonage crop rotations and is all registered organic and biodynamic.
- A flour mill, also in partnership with local artisan bakery.

The Land trust formed a relationship with them when they were seeking some temporary financial support.

- Local support and the Trust came together and the Farmer expressed an interest in working on developing his farm in connection with the Trust and its activities.
- A loan agreement was made and an advisory and support/enabling process agreed.

This is an unusual situation for the Trust and it is only through the local support that we have been able to offer and carry through this process.

Once the funds have been repaid both sides have expressed the intention to continue the mutually supportive relationship.



Associate Farm Membership – building connection

The future of a farm is very precious, whether it is a secure tenancy of biodynamic land or other tenure. If it produces food, cares for nature and provides jobs and can be community connected, the BD Land Trust is interested.

Connection can take the form of Associate Farm Membership; benefits include:

- Being part of a family of developing farms.
- An annual visit from the Land Trust which offers support, connection and relationship building and sharing of good practice.
- Working towards '**beacon status**': looking at what the farm and people offer and what steps they wish to take to develop it further. For example, improving soils, enterprises, community involvement, training, festivals etc.
- Being featured in the Land Trust newsletters and reports as part of our family of farms.
- Sharing and inputting to the Land Trust's development.



St Giles Community Farm – our first Associate Farm

St Giles Community Farm in the New Forest

- Claudia Weiss and Eden Cormack are building a balanced biodynamic farm organism. This combines food production with care for the natural world and the involvement of people.
- There are 30 acres with 4 Shetland cattle, 3 cob horses and 3 Ouessant sheep, small numbers of geese, ducks and chickens, and bees.
- They run a small vegetable box scheme and have established a market garden. This year, they grew heritage wheat and rye, which did exceptionally well in a very challenging growing year.
- The People Factor is important and a number of the community are involved in different ways.



Income & Expenditure Account

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ended 31st March 2021

	2021	2020
Income /Turnover	£27,103	£15,207
Cost of Sales	<u>(£6,475)</u>	<u>(£5,182)</u>
Gross Surplus	£20,628	£10,025
Less Overheads		
Selling & distribution expenses	(£904)	(£5,185)
Administration expenses	(£17,219)	(£18,925)
Establishment expenses	<u>(£719)</u>	<u>(£426)</u>
Operating Surplus	£1,786	(£14,511)
Other interest receivable	<u>£13,055</u>	<u>£10,713</u>
Surplus for the financial year	£14,841	(£3,798)

Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31st March 2021

	2021	2020
Fixed Assets		
Tangible assets	£3,381,166	£1,002,621
Investments	<u>£171,555</u>	<u>£169,595</u>
	£3,552,721	£1,172,216
Current Assets		
Debtors	£169,307	£183,784
Cash at bank	<u>£149,385</u>	<u>£142,446</u>
	£318,692	£326,230
Current Liabilities		
Creditors amounts due within 1 year	<u>(£51,207)</u>	<u>(£107,279)</u>
Net Current Assets	£267,485	£218,951
Non-current Liabilities		
Creditors amounts due greater than 1 year	<u>(£2,417,000)</u>	<u>(£22,000)</u>
Net Assets	£1,403,206	£1,369,167
Capital and Reserves		
Called up share capital	£348,653	£329,453
Other Reserves	£983,340	£983,340
Profit & Loss Account	<u>£71,213</u>	<u>£56,374</u>
	£1,403,206	£1,369,167

BDLT Strategy 2021-2026

Associate Farm membership and Land Projects



The Biodynamic Land Trust
stewarding farmland for a living, working countryside



Opportunities for 2021-26

To help secure further land for Biodynamic Farming.

- Where land becomes available potential funding streams and community support will be explored to allow time to seek funds and carry out community fundraising.
- Much can be achieved in supporting farmers acquire tenancies or secure their land for long term biodynamic use.
- Succession planning is becoming an increasing concern amongst farmers and the Trust is looking to assist with this through the Associate Farm Membership initiative and other pathways.
- To continue to work with the Biodynamic Movement as a whole to identify and progress movement wide initiatives, including celebration of 100 years of biodynamics in 2024.

Sustainable income systems – working for the future, securing land - Thank you for your support

Sustainable Income:

In 2020/21, some 20 supporters donated approx. £3,000 and along with other donations this provides important support to development work, responding to enquiries and with mission development such as:

- Working with farmers and land-owners whose land **may** become part of the Land Trust's holding for community benefit
- Responding to **potential community farm projects**
- Working with **entrant farmers and growers** seeking land
- Ongoing development of new forms for supporting community farming, such as the **Associate Farm Membership**.
- There are a number of **potential projects** being worked on that we hope will lead to more land and jobs and more BD food production.
- Being endlessly creative so as to **find new ways to secure land for biodynamic organic farming for local communities.**



Thank you

Thank you to all for your continued enthusiastic support for the BD Land Trust.

For more information see:

- www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk
-  @BDLandTrust
-  @biodynamiclandtrust