SECURING LAND FOR LIFE

A Strategic Plan 2021 – 2026



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.

THE BIODYNAMIC LAND TRUST
OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY 2026

OUR GOALS

1 LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP AND SECURITY OF EXISTING FARMLAND

Ensure alignment with the wider biodynamic movement, encourage development of ‘beacon farms’, continue to operate with a strong board of directors and staff

2 SECURING FURTHER LAND FOR BIODYNAMIC AGRICULTURE

Acquire further land, offer tenancy support to existing tenants, engage wider stakeholders and organisations

3 EXTENDING THE TRUST’S FAMILY OF FARMS, ASSOCIATE FARMS & SUCCESSION

Provide mutual support for Trust ‘Family of farms’, encourage associate farm membership and succession planning

4 SUPPORT THE PROJECTS ON THE TRUST’S FARMS TO DEVELOP BIODYNAMIC BEACON FARM STATUS

Provide support for development of Trust farms, encourage enterprise stacking, and work with individual farms to identify their opportunities and challenges.

5 PROGRESSING CLIMATE FRIENDLY FARMING

Ensure best practice on our farms in line with mitigating climate change, encouraging biodiversity, and re-localisation of food supply, promote sustainable farming concepts in line with biodynamics

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

Community Benefit Society number 31448R - Exempt Charity number XT33649 Member of CoopsUK

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Tablehurst Farm Shop and Cafe

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 engagement with and 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 both land and money.

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

Members are kept informed of activities and projects through a twice-yearly newsletter and via the website: www.biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk . Those interested can subscribe, make donations and become members through the website or via email or telephone.

The Trust is directed by a board of volunteer directors, elected by members at Annual General Meetings. The Biodynamic Land Trust's activities are delivered by a small number of part-time staff, including 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.

Industrialised farming is undermining the sustainability of our world and food systems as soils become impoverished and mineralised. These soils become ever more dependent on chemicals to support plant growth 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.

The Trust responds to the need to nurture the world biome and preserve land for sustainable and regenerative farming that supports food sovereignty. Strives to provide current and future farmers with access to land to feed their communities. And aims to support children, families and all those seeking access to the countryside, farms and gardens in order to connect to nature, learn about where food comes from and nurture their own wellbeing.

The Trust supports the community desire 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 with the support of community investment.

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 landowner 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. It also contributes to carbon sequestration in soil.

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** – 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.

Why is Biodynamic Farming More Important than ever?

Global and national events during 2020 further emphasise the need for sustainable farming, producing high quality local food.

The UK's departure from the European Union has raised many concerns regarding our food standards in the future. What will the future standards be? Will the UK lower standards in order to close 'beneficial' trade deals with other countries, particularly with the USA?

Biodynamics offers food certified to the Demeter standards. These standards are independently defined and ensure a recognised level of food production and food quality which cannot be compromised by weakening government food standards. This makes it increasingly essential that the Demeter standard is made more available in the UK.

The Covid 19 pandemic has highlighted the degree to which the global community has integrated and become dependent on food and resources from across the world. Yet our food security is ever more dependent on locally produced food. Our biodynamic farms across Great Britain have supported this need, continuing to supply fresh high-quality food to local consumers.



Planning and orchard at Huxhams Cross Farm, Devon

The Five-Year Strategy for April 2021 to March 2026

Five-Year Strategy Summary

The Biodynamic Land Trust aims to further develop its important role in securing land for long term Biodynamic farming, caring for the land, supporting farmers and engaging communities.

The initial momentum for community investment was through a substantial supporter donation. This investment has subsequently grown through the tremendous support from those taking up shares, giving donations and supporting the trust in many ways. This continued support will be essential in achieving this plan and delivering the exciting opportunities for biodynamics that it offers.

As of December 2020, the Trust has land at Brambletye Fields, forming part of Tablehurst Farm in Sussex; Huxhams Cross Farm in Dartington, Devon; Oakbrook Farm in Gloucestershire and Springham Farm in East Sussex. The Trust has invested in and is the custodian trustee of Stockwood Community Business Society in Worcestershire which includes Rush Farm.

The wider Trust family of farms includes an engagement with Old Parsonage Farm in Devon and our Associate Farm Member, St Giles Farm in the New Forest, Hampshire.

In establishing this portfolio the Trust has acquired substantial knowledge, experience and sector-wide respect. The Trust continues to maintain its important relationship with the Biodynamic Association and is an active participant in strategic work taking place to develop further activity of the whole biodynamic movement.

The objectives for the next five years look to build on this success and in doing so contribute to the growth of Biodynamic farming and growing in the UK.

Key factors underpinning the continuing success of the Biodynamic Land Trust are associated with the integrity of the Trust and the respect and profile that has been established both within the biodynamic community itself but also within the wider agroecology movement. It is this that encourages those involved in Biodynamic farming to look to the Trust for support and long-term security of their own investment in the land.

2021 – 2026 Goals and Objectives

The following goals and objectives are proposed for 2026 for the BD Land Trust.

Goal 1: Long-term Stewardship and Security of Existing Farmland

This primary priority is to protect the land already acquired and the livelihoods associated with that land. To achieve this, it is necessary to ensure the underlying stability of the Trust:

> *Objective - Strong Finances:* To ensure this, it is essential that the Trust maintains tight control over finances. The income from land rent provides a basic income for the Trust and rents are intentionally set at levels which support the farming tenants, as farms are developed. The Trust will continue to supplement its rental income through its ethical investments and to seek regular financial support from shareholders and donors in order to provide the level of stewardship proposed.

Objective - Regulatory Compliance: The Trust will continue to employ a dedicated operations manager and through the quarterly board meetings will ensure that all legal and regulatory requirements are addressed.

Objective - Alignment with the Biodynamic Association and Biodynamic Movement: The Trust will continue to keep operations closely aligned to the Biodynamic Association. The Trust is already sharing office space and facilities, using equivalent staff employment terms, employing the same bookkeeping provider and working together on attendance at promotional events. The Trust will continue to take an active part in driving forward the biodynamic movement as a whole.

Objective - Strong Board of Directors: It is important that the Trust continues to operate a strong board of Directors with a broad skill set. The Biodynamic Association continues to be the custodian trustee with a nominated representative as a director on the board of the Trust.

Objective - To maintain the confidence and enthusiasm of shareholders, donors and supporters. The Trust will continue to keep all supporters up to date with progress and activities, maintaining a professional website, the issue of a regular newsletter, and the maintenance of a social media presence appropriate to the nature of the Trust. The commitment to regular donations by supporters is a valuable and important contribution to stewardship and provides confidence in the Trust's income, allowing longer term financial planning.

Objective: Custodian Trustee. To continue as custodian trustee, supporting Rush Farm, through the Stockwood Community Benefit Society.

Goal 2: Securing Further Land for Biodynamic Agriculture

The Trust will seek to secure further land in a number of ways, including land purchased by the Trust itself or working in collaboration with other individuals or groups to establish or retain biodynamic farms.

Objective - Acquisition of Further Land. The Trust will maintain the materials, plans and non-staff resources necessary to be able to react to land acquisition opportunities when they arise. This will include links to other areas of the biodynamic movement where their support is required.

Where specific initiatives are agreed, the Trust will work with the project and may provide some financial support to establish the initial organisation and project framework to take the acquisition forward. A fundraising strategy and execution will be undertaken and funded by the project itself in cooperation /coordination with the Trust.

Land projects will be assessed in relation to the Trust's aims and the potential of the project to engage and work effectively with the community and the Trust to secure the land in question or other aspect of the project. (see "How we work" doc).

Objective - Tenancy Support: The Trust aims to make use of its knowledge and experience in the application of farmland tenancy, laws, regulations and agreements to assist existing and entrant farmers. This can be of great assistance to those looking to set up a farm or

horticulture project for the first time and can provide re-assurance of the long-term viability of approach. Many of the Trusts enquiries are of this nature, advice can be given as to the pros and cons of the various structural approaches. The enabling of those seeking land; the Trust will, where possible, connect people with viable land options and vice versa.

Objective - Engaging wider Stakeholders and Organisations: The Trust recognises there are many charities across the UK working on similar challenges to this organisation around securing land and access to land for new entrant farmers. For our work to have the greatest impact we believe it's essential to collaborate and build partnerships with others by aligning similar goals. Our aim is to be working more closely with organisations that are "on the ground" testing and contributing new ideas and creative approaches to these challenges. The sharing of knowledge and resources, and learning from each other in mutually beneficial ways is a core part of our approach to drive impact and to reach a wider audience and ultimately secure more land for healthy food growing.

Goal 3: Extending the Trust's Family of Farms, Associate Farms & Succession

The BD Trust is encouraging farms to take on "Associate Membership". This relationship provides a link between the farm, and the biodynamic movement via the Trust and allows the Trust to offer support in ensuring that biodynamic farmland continues as such.

Objective - Provide mutual support: The Trust will work to develop a culture of sharing and learning for the mutual benefit of all. This will include Trust owned farms, Associate Member Farms and other farms in partnership with the Trust.

Associate Farm Membership: This relationship will provide the opportunity for mutual marketing and promotional support. The Associate Farm will be asked to make a small regular contribution to the Trust to cover the additional costs involved in engaging with them, making the activity self-funding.

Objective - Succession Planning: The Trust will continue to offer to take on land ownership offered through behests. The relationships established with our Associate Farms is to be used for that purpose when an existing farmer is unable to continue or wishes to plan for that time. The Trust will maintain guidelines that will allow a prompt, effective and appropriate response to these circumstances.

Succession planning: The Trust can also support general succession planning and support transition for farms to be taken on in a way that reflect the Trust's vision and aims.

Goal 4: Support the projects on the Trust's farms to develop Biodynamic Beacon Farm Status

A beacon biodynamic farm is one that practices respectful and regenerative biodynamic agroecological agriculture, has multiple and diverse enterprises, respects and cares for nature and the environment. It applies a comprehensive approach and uses the biodynamic preparations effectively for the land and growing on site. 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.

Objective - Provide support for development: provide interaction with the Trust staff and the other Trust farms to enable sharing and learning and encourage development.

Objective - Engage and participate in the wider Biodynamic movement: engage with the rest of the Biodynamic movement to support further development of beacon farms.

Objective - Develop a clear picture of the farm individuality / ecosystem and how it can develop with each farm and farmer. Seeking to define what are this particular farm's opportunities and challenges and how these can be worked with for future harmony and balance with nature, farm and people. Each farm has its own story and own context.

Objective - Data Collection: work with farms to collect data on biodiversity to show the effect of biodynamics and the transition to beacon status. The Trust aims to build a picture of different models and the data collection is to support this process and help build into the Family of Farms initiative/profiles. This is about building data to create origin stories of each farm, distinguishing the different viable models across different places in the UK and to demonstrate how each one is developing their own ecosystem, biodiversity and individuality and how the soil and nature is regenerated through this work. This will help to build the developing story of each farm's unique ecosystem and its contribution to regenerating nature in harmony with producing healthy food.

Objective - Enterprise Stacking: Encouraging farms to explore creative ways of building collaborative partnerships and increasing productivity from the same piece of land through enterprise stacking. There is a diversity of appropriate management systems that underpin enterprise stacking that can benefit and influence farm economics, community development and nature regeneration. Enterprise stacking can be done within one land enterprise (farm), in a cooperative way or through engaging separate enterprises to work on the same farm/site even using the same land. E.g. as an arable farm with a Shepherding unit and then a free-range poultry unit 'stacked' on the same land.

Goal 5: Progressing Climate Friendly Farming

Biodynamic farming has the highest potential to achieve climate mitigation by forming carbon sinks through practices that build up soil organic matter, maintaining permanent pastures and developing thriving diverse hedgerows and tree species. Living soils are the foundation of biodynamic farming with minimal mechanical disturbance, no chemical inputs and effective crop rotations. Soils will exhibit a nourishing humus layer that maximises carbon storage and provides the highest nutritionally dense food. Sound and respectful animal husbandry and appropriate feed minimise negative animal effects on land and climate. In addition to ecological contributions, social and human capital needs will be met through community engagement, education and wellbeing improvements for farm workers and the public as well as investments in the rural economy including training and job creation.

Objective - Practicalities we can achieve on our farms: good biodynamic practice reflects an understanding of how to use good tillage and crop rotations to improve and enhance soil and carbon sequestration as well as biodiversity. Developing an understanding in working in harmony with nature, including minimising antibiotic use and to using natural processes for animal and plant health.

Objective : Connecting practicalities on farm with local and rural economies: climate-friendly food production feeds into a re-localisation of food supply. This means Trust farms strive to build into and connect with local food systems, keeping food miles low. Establishing community connection with local food and building relationships with neighbouring farmers is an important part of this process. Re-localisation of food seeks to be affordable and accessible for local communities whilst ensuring the farm can generate a viable income and an economically sustainable business. (Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) is a strong model for achieving many of these objectives, including circular economy principles, community engagement, yearly food production and sustainable income generation.)

Objective : Promoting Sustainable Farming Concepts in line with biodynamics: biodynamic farms use healthy processes in line with the organic and Demeter standards. Farms do not use antibiotics, vaccinations or anthelmintics as prophylactics in such a way that medication is used only when needed, plants and natural minerals can be used along with good care to support animal and plant health. A precautionary approach is taken in Demeter standards to preserve and protect genetic heritage and biodiversity. For this reason, GMOs are excluded on the principle that technological fixes will not fix our food system or improve biodiversity.



Conservation grazing - Stroud Micro Dairy cows and SCA bull at Oakbrook Farm

End