

The Land Needs Us

Land Whispering

4 JANUARY 2018 – OXFORD REAL FARMING CONFERENCE

PROGRAMMED TO BE 13.00 – 13.45

Introductions – who we are

Welcome ...

Participants tell your neighbour, as you get settled till we start

- What is your name
- What drew you to **The Land Needs Us** session?

The Land Needs Us

Land Whispering as a tool for raising awareness - workshop and forum.

Chair: Elisabeth Winkler Speakers: Gabriel Kaye (Biodynamic Land Trust) and Dan Powell (LandBase)

Recognising the needs of the land and the need in us for connection to land, nature and farming brings up the question **“How do we meet these needs?”** This is quickly followed by other questions such as **“How can we save land for healthy nature and healthy food?”** and **“What can I do to stop the destruction of soil life, plant life and insect life on so many of our farms of today?”**

- *Join us for an hour of connection to land and what it means to each one of us.*
- *Explore raising awareness of the need to secure land for healthy farming now for future generations,*
- *Share how we can communicate these important messages to create a call to action to secure land for healthy farming and saving places as havens for nature and real food growing in the midst of the industrial farming takeover of our countryside.*
- *We will work in groups then share key messages which we can all use regarding land issues.*

Introducing the Biodynamic Land Trust

Stewards land for a living working countryside

Preserves land for healthy soils, food and people, one farm at a time *(started in 2011 – it now has 2 developing farms and two other groups of fields supporting larger farms and is long-term steward to Rush Farm which is part of Stockwood CBS)*

- De-commodifies farmland - securing land for the long term
- Fosters ecological and biodynamic farming
- Supports farmers to find land and with succession issues
- Builds community through bringing investors together, fostering activity on the land and linking the two ... *For more information see our documentation/website*

Introducing LandBase

Inspired by current initiatives such as Land Workers Alliance and Oxford Real Farming Conference

Established in early 2017 by Dan Powell, and others, to facilitate land related skills sharing and training opportunities

Based in Monkton Wyld Court in West Dorset, but can operate where required

Progress to date.....Courses run on fruit, market gardening

Co-ordinated a skill share meeting on Land Access in October 2017

2018 we are working on more courses on demand and co-ordinating with Regen AgUK on farmer workshops in Holistic Management.

Land memories - *activity*

• What is your earliest memory of connecting to the land? *purple*



• What does Land want? What does Land need?

blue



keep the post-its to put on the flip charts later

What does the land want?

Love – Care

Recognition of what it gives us

Support, so it can be a source of

- Space for nature and life from soil to plants and animals
- Well being for people
- Protection from destruction, pollution, exploitation.



What does the land give us?

AND - What do we want of the land?

- Grounding?
- Food?
- Health?
- Wellbeing – land we can walk on and feel nourished?
- Livelihoods – living on and working the land?
- A healthy biodiversity and nature for the planet?

Land and People in Mutual Support for a Healthy Future and Vibrant Rural Economy

Need to **raise awareness** of:

- Care needed to maintain soil fertility and water purity
- Sustainable, regenerative (non-polluting) farm practices
- **Small to medium-sized mixed farms:**
 - More productive for food per acre, so feed local communities better
 - More jobs per 100 acres so enliven rural economies better
 - Better for public access, volunteering and local education.

A community farm for every community

Biodynamic Land Trust vision and aims

- Community ownership
- Activity before profit
- Ecological farming (organic, biodynamic).

Benefits & Owning Land in Community

Land Trusts can bring land back into community ownership (commons) and can:

- **Secure land** in the long-term (stewardship on behalf of the community via a Trust)
- Encourage **shared responsibility** through individual investment and membership
- Engage personal **connections to land**.

This means this land is not owned by corporations, wealthy landowners or government seeking mainly profit.

Land can be bought by community shares and held in trust by an organisation such as the Biodynamic Land Trust and others, so together we can secure land for healthy, sustainable farming.

Outcomes of Community-owned land

1. **A sense of connection** and responsibility from individuals when land is owned by us, the community, in trust for the farmers to work and care for
2. **Well-being for nature** – enshrined in the tenancy
3. **Well-being for people** – through engagement with the land, nature and farming & healthy food
4. **Well-being for communities** – volunteering, local food, connection builds relationships, relationships and activity support mental health and general wellbeing.

What is a Land Whisperer?

A communicator between people and land

Someone who:

- Understands and connects to what the land needs
- Communicates what the land needs to groups, individuals and communities
- Brings people together to secure land for healthy respectful farming
- Understands what community gains from the being connected to land

"A practical response to a feeling of love for the land and people and a wish for a healthy sustainable future."

Inspiration

1. **Terre de Liens** (France) Since 2003 has:

Mobilised 12,000 citizens & secured 2,400 hectares in organic, biodynamic and peasant farming, & 120 farms. Built effective regional groups to spread message to local communities.

2. **BioBoden cooperative** (Germany) founded 2015 – 33 farms

Acquires land as well as farms for sale & leases them to organic farmers on long-term basis at affordable prices. Encourage citizen investment and citizen responsibility to create a healthy planet and sustainable local food systems.

We can work together in the UK - to secure land for healthy, organic, biodynamic, farming – and offer more tenancies for entrant farmers too.

The Land Needs Us

You are Land Whisperers! *Activity*

In groups (3-5):

If you had ONE key message to enthuse

and ONE method to deliver it and engage people on :

- needs of land and *our* need to connect with land
- importance of securing land for sustainable, organic, biodynamic farming, local food and jobs

Share in groups and put key points / messages on the flipchart pages – share with all at end

Thoughts - the Questions!

1. Recognising the needs of the land & the need in us for connection to land

- A. Recognising the needs of the land – sharing them – *what is the message? How do you explain?*
- B. Recognising the importance of connection to land for our wellbeing – *what is the message that engages people?*

flip chart pages

2. How can we save land for healthy nature and healthy food?

How do we do it?

One way is by using organisations such as the Ecological Land Coop, the Agro-ecological Land Trust, the Biodynamic Land Trust and others, to so we can invest in community shares to buy land for ecological farming.

- *How do we get the message out to a wider public that it is important?*
- *How do we get people to invest?*
- *What is the key message....?*

Flip chart page

3. What can I do to stop the destruction of soil life, plant life and insect life on so many farms of today?

Persuade many people to help secure land for ecological, organic, biodynamic farming.

- *How do we get people to support this? To put some hard-earned cash into saving land?*
- *What is the key message that will persuade them to donate or invest?*

Flip chart pages

The Land Need Us / You

Land Whispering and securing land

Thank you for participating

Stay in touch – gabriel@biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk

More information on <https://biodynamiclandtrust.org.uk/get-involved/land-whispering/>
and other pages

f: [biodynamiclandtrust](https://www.facebook.com/biodynamiclandtrust)

Twitter: [@BDLandTrust](https://twitter.com/BDLandTrust)

Do join us in sharing the important message about securing land for sustainable farming and growing.

DREAM : If everyone in the world (on average) subscribes to saving 2,000m² of agricultural land (1/2 acre = approx. £5k in the UK) for ecological, organic, or biodynamic farming, there would be more healthy sustainable farms in the future, nature would thrive and we could feed the world.