



## December 2014 – Appeal for land

Beacon Farms is a pioneering social enterprise that aims to safeguard some of the UK's highest quality soils, provide local food and support a new generation of farmers and growers to get started in their chosen career.

### Opportunity for landowners near Bristol

**Are you looking to sell or lease agricultural land near Bristol?** Beacon Farms is seeking to purchase or long-term lease between 20-80 acres of land with at least some Grade I and/or Grade II soils.

This will enable us to:

- establish a new market gardening business to supply local produce to Bristol
- support a new generation of farmers and growers on to the land.

**We currently have access to finance to buy land (although this is time limited)** so please get in touch if you are interested in discussing this opportunity or if you have any suggestions of land that may be available.

We would be extremely grateful if you might consider meeting with us to discuss what we believe is a viable, professional and exciting project with food and farming at its heart.

Call us 07816858053 (Bonnie Hewson) or email [hello@beaconfarms.co.uk](mailto:hello@beaconfarms.co.uk)

### What could you help Beacon Farms achieve?

**You can help us to enable passionate and capable people to learn how to establish viable food producing enterprises whilst respecting the soils they care for.** We will ensure the best and most versatile land is appropriately used to run productive market gardens – protecting it to grow food in a sustainable way, now and in the future. We aim to provide both a place of learning and support for growers, and good-quality local food, helping to reconnect our community to land, food and soil.

Our charitable financial backers would support us to bring any land we buy into community ownership that would then be subject to an asset lock to ensure it is always kept as food growing land. **As a landowner you have the ability to unlock this project and bring about long term benefits for the area.**

The land we occupy will be used to:

- produce food for the local area via organic and sustainable methods;
- provide pioneering, practical learning for new entrants into market gardening;
- provide a variety of short courses relating to the skills of food production and processing, in collaboration with the Winterbourne Medieval Barn;
- engage the community in habitat management and supporting their local farm land;
- ensure the appropriate use and care of high quality soils;
- protect and conserve the land now and in the future.

## Our structure

Beacon Farms Limited is a social enterprise incorporated as a Community Benefit Society with Co-op UK Community Finance Rules. It has a board of directors (see **Founding Directors** at the end), a core group and working groups. It will be able to issue shares to members and protect land through an asset lock.

## What are Beacon Farms' aims?

*Beacon Farms is a learning organisation with its roots firmly planted in the soil: we aim to grow good food and build a strong community, whilst providing opportunities to learn from the land.*

Our Core Objectives
1. LAND: Protecting high grade agricultural land, so that it can be used now, and in the future, for the production of horticultural crops for local urban populations.
2. GROWING: Making land available for new growers and groups wishing to develop small-scale commercial enterprises to produce food for the local area using organic and sustainable methods and to sell into local markets.
3. LEARNING: Providing training, and access to accredited qualifications where appropriate, in sustainable production methods and growing techniques, appropriate technology, and all aspects of running a sustainable horticultural business.
4. CARE: Ensuring that habitat conservation is undertaken and land is maintained for the health of all.
5. COMMUNITY: Working with the local community and customers to ensure that the enterprise is supporting their local food needs and providing opportunities for them to engage with the land.

## Beacon Farms on the Blue Finger

Our main area of focus is land on the 'Blue Finger' in and around the Winterbourne Medieval Barn (although we will consider all opportunities near Bristol). Our hope is to work in partnership with the Winterbourne Medieval Barn Trust to develop a project with the historic barn as its hub and through this partnership to bring back viable market gardening to the Winterbourne area, safeguarding the high quality soils of Bristol's 'Blue Finger' for food production.

The '[Blue Finger](#)' is a hugely important piece of high quality agricultural land coming out of the north fringe of the city of Bristol. This area of highly fertile Grade 1 land was historically used for Bristol's Market Gardens. We have been looking at land in this area for some time and are interested to hear from landowners in this area. We want to re-establish a market gardening landscape and develop a strong growing community in collaboration with existing projects in the area.

## The Founding Directors



***Phil Haughton (Chair)***

Phil is Director of the Better Food Company and original co-founder of The Community Farm, Chew Magna. A former Trustee of the Soil Association he has been working within the local and Organic food scene in Bristol since the early 80s.



***Richard Spalding***

Richard is a human geographer teaching at UWE Bristol. A trained horticulturist, he specialises in rural community regeneration projects and has worked for a decade as a driving force behind Winterbourne Medieval Barn Trust of which he is a Vice President.



***Bonnie Hewson (Company Secretary)***

Bonnie is an project manager and previously manager of the Soil Association's Community Supported Agriculture work. She has been involved in several community and urban growing projects and is passionate about local resilience in the food system.



***Rob Sexton (Financial Director)***

Rob is a qualified chartered accountant (ACC); he is currently financial director of Yeo Valley and was previously CEO of Soil Association Certification Ltd and COO for the Soil Association. He has worked across a wide range of sectors including the third sector, enterprises and corporations.

## Contact details

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[www.beaconfarms.co.uk](http://www.beaconfarms.co.uk)

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