



**Farming  
the Future**

**2024**

**Annual Report**







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# 2024 Reflections

## A note from Bonnie Hewson, FtF Director

Each year, this report offers us an important moment: to pause, reflect, and share with you—the philanthropic community powering Farming the Future—what we are learning, building, and achieving together. For some of you, this will be a first introduction to who we are and how we work. For others, it will be a continuation of a journey you already know well. Either way, our aim is the same: to deepen our shared understanding of what it takes to create a just transition towards agroecology and food sovereignty in the UK.

This has been a year of consolidation and growth. With a dedicated staff team in place, a maturing governance structure, and a clear Theory of Change guiding us, Farming the Future is now operating from stronger foundations. We have welcomed new donor partners and Ambassadors, strengthened participatory processes with our funded partners, and continued to explore what it means to resource systemic change at scale.

While our ambition continues to outpace available resources, the strength of our partnerships is already bearing fruit—positioning us as a trusted collaborator, a convener of diverse voices, and an organisation recognised for sharing learning generously across the field. We stand at a critical juncture. The political, social, and ecological pressures shaping the future of food and farming in the UK are intensifying, and philanthropy has a unique role to play in shaping the response. To realise the potential of agroecology, we need bold, collective investment—not just in projects, but in the movements, infrastructure, and narratives that will sustain long-term transformation.

This report is structured to help you navigate our work, our learning, and our reflections from the past year. We invite you to explore it, to challenge it, and to see within it the growing opportunities for philanthropy to drive systemic change. Most importantly, we invite you to stand with us in strengthening the flow of resources into the UK’s food and farming transition—because the stakes are high, and the moment for action is now.

## Developments in the Food and Farming Sector

2024 was a year of political change in the UK, with the shift from Conservative to Labour government placing food, farming, and land use firmly under the spotlight. Issues of food security, health, poverty, biodiversity, and climate targets are no longer fringe debates—they are now core to policy conversations. There have been encouraging signals around support for smaller farmers and land-use frameworks, though visible action remains limited.

At the same time, tensions persist. False dilemmas are still being drawn—between farming and nature restoration, or between dietary shifts and farmer livelihoods. Populist narratives are increasingly weaponising farming concerns, creating an urgent need for new, positive stories led by farmers, landworkers, migrant workers, and citizens themselves. Encouragingly, campaigns such as Riverford’s [Get Fair About Farming](#), [Stop Farmwashing](#), and the Food, Farming and Countryside Commission’s [The Food Conversation](#) are demonstrating that the public appetite for a fairer, more sustainable food system is strong.

There is growing alignment across NGOs and infrastructure organisations making the case for food systems that work for climate, soil, nature, and people. Yet confusion remains around language, strategy, and ultimate vision. While local initiatives—from shifts in procurement practices to radical proposals like basic income for farmers—are emerging, broader debates too often ignore the deep economic and social shifts required for alternative food systems to thrive. Meanwhile, scrutiny of industrial agriculture, corporate capture, and the risks of “Big Ag” continues to intensify, with international linkages strengthening campaigns for change.

Perhaps most importantly, conversations about food security and resilience are gaining momentum. Work such as [Tim Lang’s civil food resilience report](#) for the National Preparedness Commission has opened up space for systemic thinking about local food systems and preparedness—discussions that will only grow in urgency in 2025. The sector is alive with possibility, but the challenge remains: ensuring resources flow to the infrastructure, movements, and narratives that will make systemic transformation possible.

## Developments in Philanthropy

Across philanthropy, collaboration is growing—but much of it remains focused on narrow pathways to climate and biodiversity gains, such as shifting diets, ending factory farming, or habitat restoration. These are vital, but insufficient on their own. Farming the Future and our donor partners have played a critical role this year in convening funders—such as Rothschild Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn, and Sainsbury’s Family Trust—around the wider regenerative agriculture agenda.

Together, we are beginning to explore both how to bring new funders into this space and how to coordinate more strategically among those already active, through pooled funds, joint research, and shared field-building.

There is still a profound knowledge gap in philanthropy around the systemic impacts of the current food system and the transformative potential of agroecology. Reports like *Where the Green Grants Went 9* reveal just how little funding reaches UK food and farming, despite its central role in climate, biodiversity, and justice. While new initiatives—such as [Banking for Change](#) convenings and experiments with foundation endowment releases—signal progress, the infrastructure that sustains farmer networks, new entrants, and systemic food systems change, remains woefully underfunded.

This gap is also an opportunity. Agroecology sits at the intersection of the most urgent issues of our time. By investing in it, philanthropy can deliver multiple wins—across climate, nature, equity, and resilience—while helping to shift the economic and cultural foundations of our food system. Farming the Future is committed to co-creating the case for this investment: drawing together evidence, narratives, and lived examples that illustrate what is possible when philanthropy backs systemic change with courage and vision.

In 2025, our focus will be to sharpen this case, grow the community of funders committed to food and farming, and help channel resources into the infrastructures and movements capable of delivering a just and lasting transition.





# 2024 Highlights



THROUGH FOUR  
FUNDING  
STREAMS



- 1** New Growth Grants
- 2** Exploring Collaboration Grants
- 3** Collaboration Grants
- 4** Field Building

PRESS FEATURES

CLICK TO READ



EVENTS

- 3** Panels for funders we participated in
- 18** Events attended by our core team





# About Us

*Farming the Future pools resources to fund collaborative approaches that support a shift to regenerative farming and local food resilience.*



## Vision

We strive for a less extractive, more socially just economy—one that places the wellbeing of people and planet at its centre. At the core of our work is a focus on the health and resilience of the whole system.

## Purpose

Our purpose is to flow resources towards transformational change within the UK's food and farming systems—and to do so in a way that models the change we seek by working in movement-informed, participatory, collaborative and trust-based ways.

## Mission

Our mission is to channel more—and better—funding to the diverse network of people and organisations building a future where nutritious food is produced through nature-friendly, agroecological farming, and where access to food is fair and universal, rooted in the principles of food sovereignty.

## Theory of Change

At the centre of Farming the Future's theory of change are the movements and networks driving the transition towards agroecological and regenerative food systems in the UK. These movements bring together farmers, growers, communities, researchers, and advocates who are developing practical solutions, building fair and sustainable food economies, and influencing policy to create the conditions for systemic change.

This ecosystem comprises a diverse range of organisations and initiatives committed to transforming the food system to one that restores ecosystems, supports livelihoods, and ensures equitable access to healthy, nutritious food. Farming the Future focuses its resources at the intersections of these efforts—where collaboration among farmers, citizens, scientists, policymakers, and environmental groups can generate collective impact.

For these movements to succeed, cross-sector collaborations must be supported to pursue complementary strategies – as well as the capacity and skills needed to collaborate well.



This work includes the establishment of collective infrastructure like seed networks and agroecology training programmes, the development of new models of food distribution and land stewardship, advocacy for public policies that enable and protect agroecological approaches, and the development of positive shared narratives.

**Through our funding, convening, and strategic partnerships, Farming the Future aims to strengthen and connect these multi-sector movements across the UK, building the capacity, coherence, and influence required to accelerate the transition to a just and regenerative food system.**





# The team behind the work

**We work collaboratively with our Ambassadors, funders and wider network.**

## Core Staff

Our core team provides continuity and coordination across all areas of our work. Staff play a central role in supporting each of our working circles and ensuring effective collaboration across the organisation.

While we use shared decision-making practices, the staff team has a particular responsibility for monitoring how our processes are functioning and helping to address issues as they arise.

Our core staff are:

- Bonnie Hewson, Director
- Ashley Erdman, Head of Programmes

[Find out more about our team here](#)

## Ambassadors

Ambassadors are representatives from across the agroecology sector who bring lived experience, strategic insight, and strong movement connections. They contribute to our strategy, field-building activities, and grantmaking processes, and they hold ultimate responsibility for final grant allocation decisions.

### New Ambassadors in 2024:

- Sean Ruffell (Organic North)
- Fred Price (Gothelney Farm)
- Clare Owens (Squash Liverpool).

### Ambassadors stepping down in 2024:

- Vicki Hird
- Jyoti Fernandes

## Funders

Funder Partners contribute financially to the pooled fund and commit to our shared principles through the Donor Partner Agreement. Some choose to take an active role by joining working circles and offering expertise in areas such as strategy, governance, field building, and the design of grantmaking processes. Others engage through advisory groups or the wider FtF Donor Partner Stakeholder Group, supporting learning and collaboration.

### New Donor Partners in 2024:

- IG Advisors (representing a private donor)
- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- John Ellerman Foundation

*We contributed to this fund as a way to expand our footprint in the farming and agricultural side of the environment sector.*

*It will also enable us to support smaller and different organisations than we can do through our usual grants programme.*

John Ellerman



THE KREITMAN FOUNDATION

The Roddick Foundation

[Find out more about joining us as a funder here](#)

## Our three new Ambassadors

➤ **Sean Ruffell** is Executive Director of **Organic North**, a Manchester-based organic produce wholesaler supporting growers in the UK and abroad. He works to make organic food more accessible and is active in the Fruit and Veg Alliance and the Manchester Food Board, promoting strategic, community-focused food system change.

➤ **Fred Price** runs **Gothelney Farm**, a family farm in Somerset that has been transitioning to agroecology for over a decade. He and his team are reimagining a just, small-farm future, demonstrating how farms can feed people fairly outside an extractive, commodified food system.

➤ **Clare Owens** is a social artist, urban farmer and cook, and co-director of **Squash**, a food and arts organisation rooted in Liverpool 8. She leads community-driven regenerative growing, creative participation and enterprise, including Squash's seasonal programme and the long-term, nature-led "100-Year Street" initiative.





# How we work

**We work collaboratively with our Ambassadors, funders and wider network.**

We aim to model power redistribution in how we work as a collective. Internally, we use sociocracy and work through decision-making sub-groups (“circles”) that enable shared responsibility, transparency, and distributed leadership.

## Our Decision-making Circles

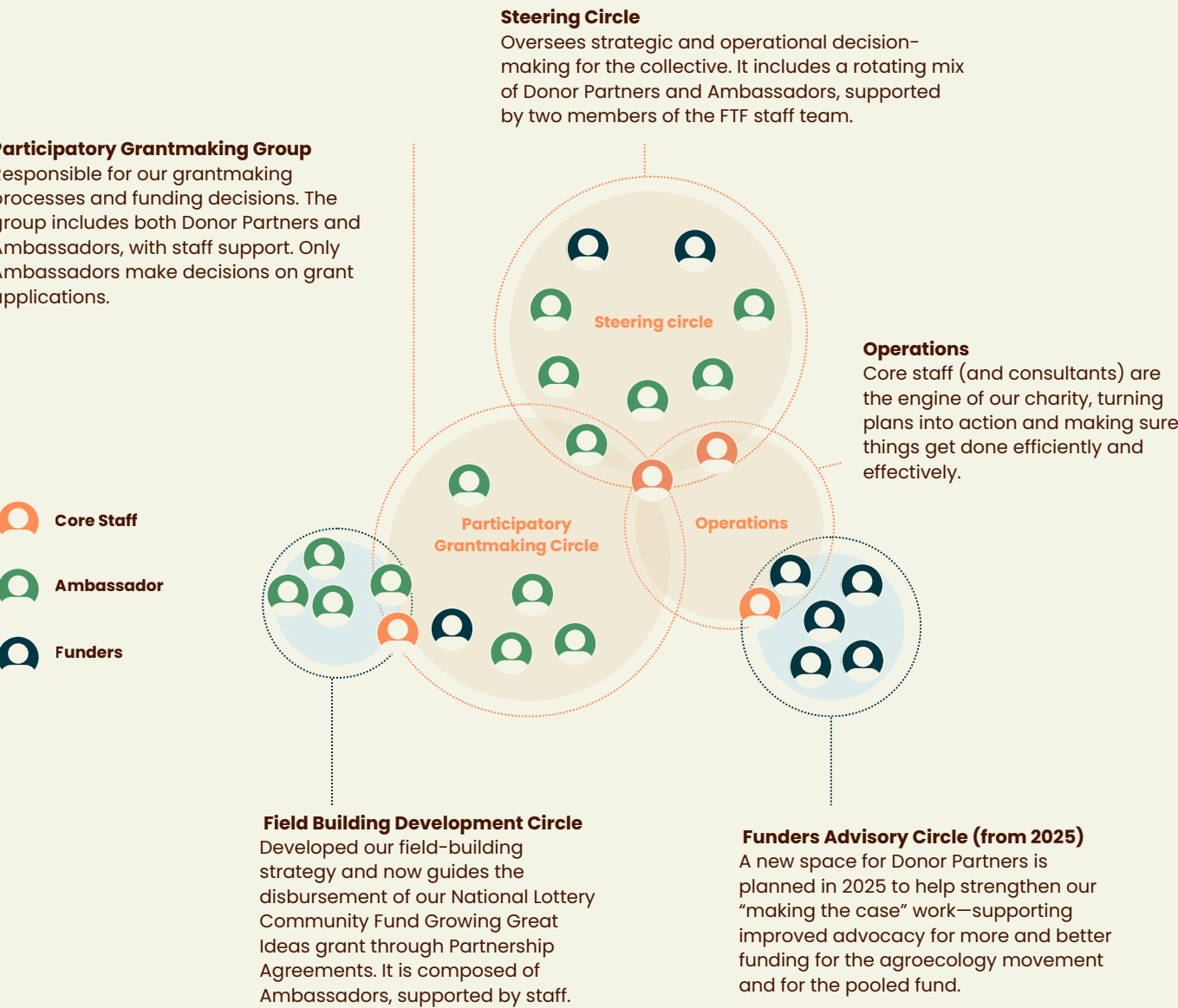
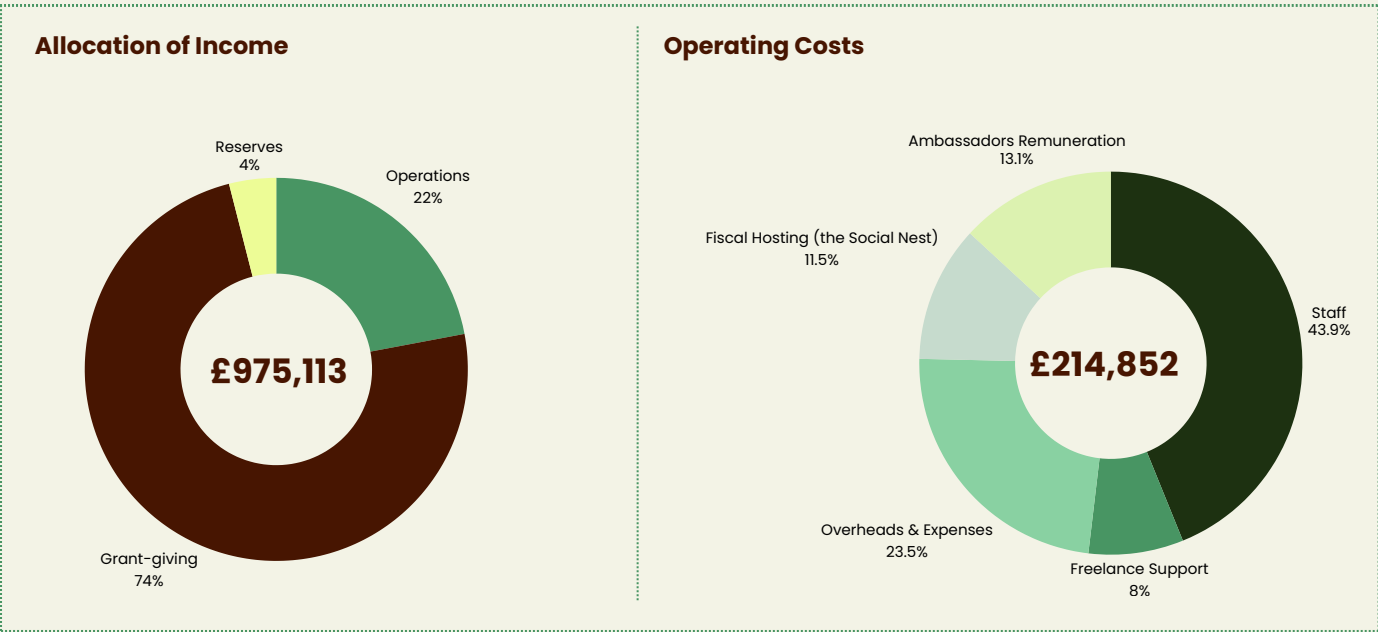


PHOTO CREDIT: JOYA BARROW

## Use of Funds: 2024

We are committed to directing the majority of our income towards grant-giving, ensuring that funds reach the Agroecological movement. We work to keep operating costs proportionate and efficient, recognising that strong internal systems enable effective delivery, and that participatory processes and convening in person both need investment. A small portion of our income is also set aside as reserves to maintain stability and resilience for the future.







# How we create change

***Farming the Future exists to accelerate the transition to fair, sustainable and resilient food and farming systems by pooling resources and amplifying the collective impact of funders, movements and communities.***

As the UK's only pooled funder dedicated to agroecology, we are uniquely positioned to support work at scale, enable deeper impact and respond flexibly to the evolving needs of the movement.

Our model allows us to listen closely to farmers, communities, and partner organisations, shaping funding decisions around lived experience, practical insight and long-term ambition. Guided by our ambassadors and funded partners, we use participatory approaches to decision-making to ensure our strategy remains grounded in the realities of those driving change on the ground. We prioritise trust-based, relational funding, maintaining regular personal contact with all funded partners rather than relying solely on written reporting.

## Our three interlinked strategies:

- 1 Resourcing the movement by supporting work that builds the enabling conditions for change through our pooled fund (p.9)**  
Investing in initiatives that strengthen the social, economic and policy foundations needed for agroecological transformation, rather than isolated short-term interventions.
- 2 Listening and responding to needs (p.12)**  
Ground our funding in the knowledge, experience and priorities of farmers, communities and movement partners.
- 3 Advocating for more and better funding (p.13)**  
Influencing the wider funding ecosystem to unlock greater, more strategic, and more equitable investment in agroecological solutions.



# Resourcing the Movement: Our Pooled Fund

*Farming the Future is the UK’s only pooled fund dedicated to supporting collaborative work towards an agroecological transition, co-initiated by the A Team Foundation and Roddick Foundation in 2019.*

Fund overview to date, from 2019

£2.66M

Funds Distributed

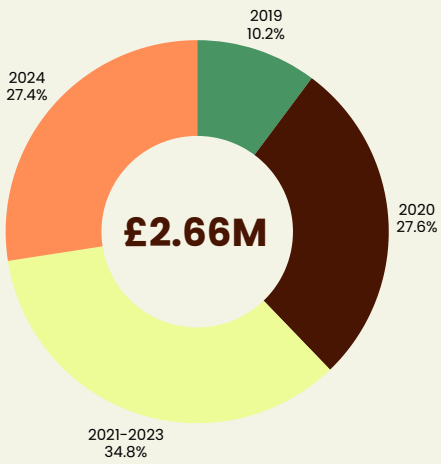
102

Collaborations  
Funded

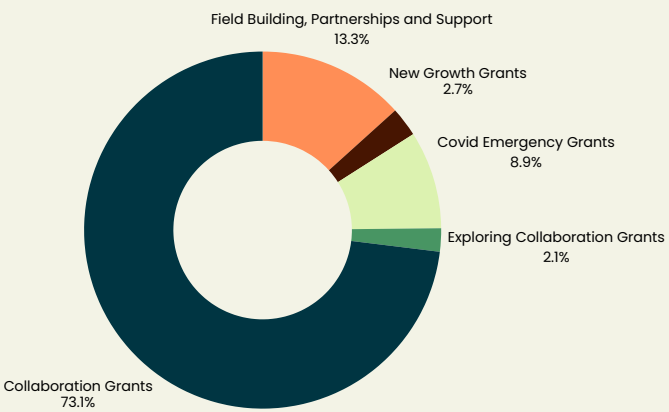
133

Organisations  
Supported

TOTAL RESOURCES DISTRIBUTED BY YEAR



TOTAL RESOURCES DISTRIBUTED BY PROGRAMME



2019

## Fund Inception

- Established by the A Team Foundation and the Roddick Foundation to strengthen collaboration between funders and the wider sector in response to the ongoing under-resourcing of the agroecology movement.
- Launched with support for 11 collaborations, distributing £268,278 in funding.

2020

## Ambassadors introduced

- Recruited sector ambassadors to inform decision making.

### COVID-19 Emergency Aid and Collaborative Grants

- Allocated £233,500 through 10 emergency grants and supported 16 collaborative projects with £481,181.

2021

## Fund Evolution

- Transitioned pooled fund management to Prism the Gift Fund.
- Distributed £551,902 through 11 collaboration grants.
- These collaborations received continuation grants until 2023 totalling £361,987

2022

## Lottery Resources Secured

- £1.5 million secured through NLCF Growing Great Ideas fund for our core costs, including £500k for capacity building for the movement through a Field Building Programme. **This funding runs to July 2026.**

2023

## Participatory Grant-making

- Strengthened our team by hiring key personnel, established foundational organisational structure.
- Implemented sociocracy governance—Ambassadors have full decision making powers over grant decisions through Participatory Grant Making.
- Co-designed our field-building programme and the next round of grants with Ambassadors.

2024

## Strategic Development

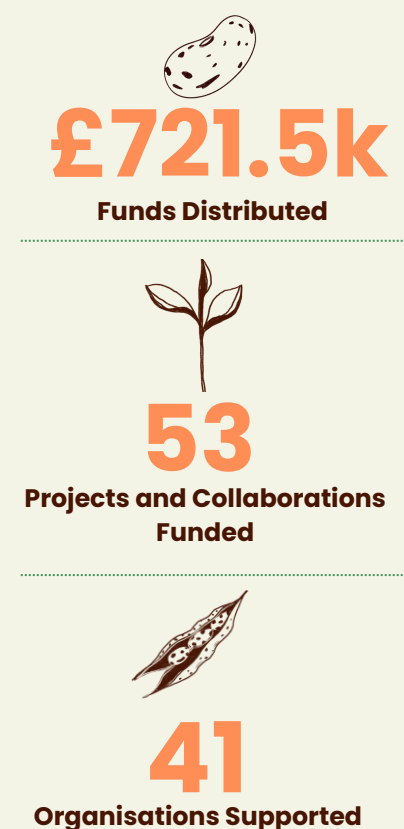
- Implemented our Field Building approach and started distributing resources through Partnership Agreements.
- Began using Social Change Nest as our pooled fund agent. The distribute our funds in line with our trust based funding approach.
- Developed our MEL framework based on reflection and collective impact approaches.





PHOTO CREDIT: ROBERT REED

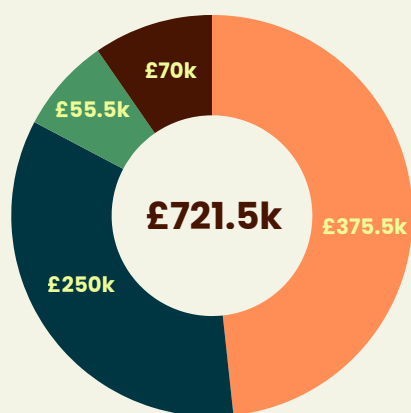
## Resourcing the Movement in 2024



### Funding breakdown

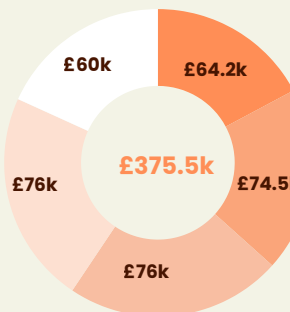
#### FUNDS DISTRIBUTED BY PROGRAMME

- Field Building
- Collaboration Grants
- Exploring Collaboration
- New Growth Grants



#### FIELDBUILDING BREAKDOWN

- Access to Land
- Movement Capacity
- Networks of Supply
- Progression Pathways
- Learning Support



**5 x £50k collaboration grants awarded over two rounds**



A full list of our funded partners is in the Appendix

### Pooled Fund Update

We continue to build our pooled fund to increase the availability of long-term, patient capital and to reduce competitive pressures within the farming sector by enabling greater collaboration and shared investment.

To support this ambition, we have developed a targeted donor pitch deck and are strengthening our communications to clearly demonstrate the strategic case for investment, the scale of opportunity, and the potential for systemic impact.

**During the year we welcomed three new funders to the pool:**

**Esmee Fairbairn Foundation**  
**John Ellerman Foundation**  
**Private donor through IG Advisors**

The overall fund total has remained stable as some long-term partners have reduced their level of giving, underlining the importance of continued funder engagement and diversification.

### New Funding Strands

Alongside our core collaboration funds, we introduced three new approaches to broaden access and strengthen collaboration across the movement.

#### New Growth Grants (unrestricted funding)

We launched the New Growth programme to support earlier-stage organisations that are often excluded from funding. The focus was on resourcing organisations directly rather than collaborations, helping them build the foundations needed to participate more fully in the movement.

We aimed to broaden the diversity of potential collaborators, and this approach proved successful: we engaged organisations with diverse leadership and a strong focus on supporting marginalised communities. The nomination process also brought many new groups into our network, with 77% of applicants new to FTF.

#### Exploring Collaboration Grants

These grants provided time and resource for organisations exploring potential partnerships to identify collaborators, build relationships, and design effective joint work. Introduced in early 2024, they create a clearer pathway into larger collaboration grants available from autumn 2024 and in future rounds.

The Exploring Collaboration funding was the most challenging to communicate. Some groups found it difficult to understand that the purpose was to resource the time needed to build relationships, rather than to deliver smaller-scale projects.



#### Food Issues Census #3

As part of our movement-building work across philanthropy and civil society, we have co-funded and supported the Food Ethics Council to deliver the third Food Issues Census. Developed with movement partners and funders, the research provides an up-to-date picture of the needs, concerns and activities of a wide range of organisations working across the UK food and farming system.

The Census gives the sector a collective voice and practical advocacy tools, while helping funders better understand how to support those working on the front line to create a fairer and more sustainable food system. The findings will be launched in early 2025. [Read more here.](#)

Where the intent was understood, the funding proved highly valuable—both in strengthening early collaboration and in helping groups submit strong applications for larger joint projects in our autumn round.

This experience highlighted that we underestimated the amount of unlearning required—both for applicants and for decision-makers—when introducing a funding strand that departs from traditional funding models.

#### Field Building

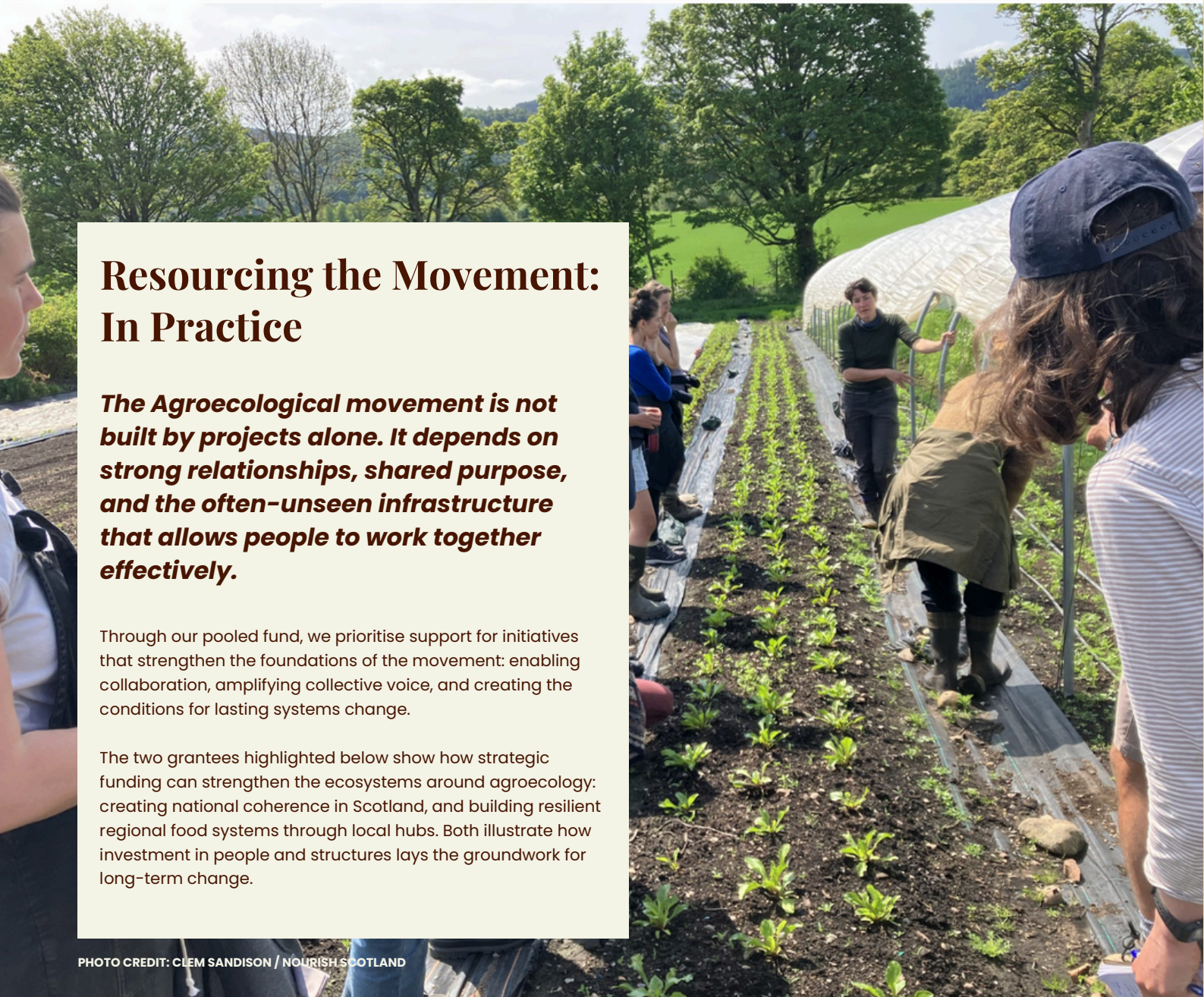
Funded through our separate lottery resources, the Field Building programme supports organisations, groups, and networks working to strengthen movement infrastructure. The work focuses on four strands:

- Movement-building capacity support (convening and shared infrastructure)
- Networks of supply
- Progression pathways for agroecological producers
- Just access to land

In 2024, we have distributed £350,700. The groups with the Networks of Supply strand are hosting a joint networking event at the ORFC in early 2025.

We are working with Shared Assets as our learning partner for this programme throughout 2024–25.





# Resourcing the Movement: In Practice

*The Agroecological movement is not built by projects alone. It depends on strong relationships, shared purpose, and the often-unseen infrastructure that allows people to work together effectively.*

Through our pooled fund, we prioritise support for initiatives that strengthen the foundations of the movement: enabling collaboration, amplifying collective voice, and creating the conditions for lasting systems change.

The two grantees highlighted below show how strategic funding can strengthen the ecosystems around agroecology: creating national coherence in Scotland, and building resilient regional food systems through local hubs. Both illustrate how investment in people and structures lays the groundwork for long-term change.

PHOTO CREDIT: CLEM SANDISON / NOURISH SCOTLAND

## Scottish Agroecology Network: Building a Unified Voice for Change

**EARLY COLLABORATION GRANT: £8,000**  
**COLLABORATION GRANT: £50,000**

Across Scotland, organisations, farmers, researchers and community groups have been active in agroecological work, yet largely working in isolation from one another and without a unified voice in policy spaces.

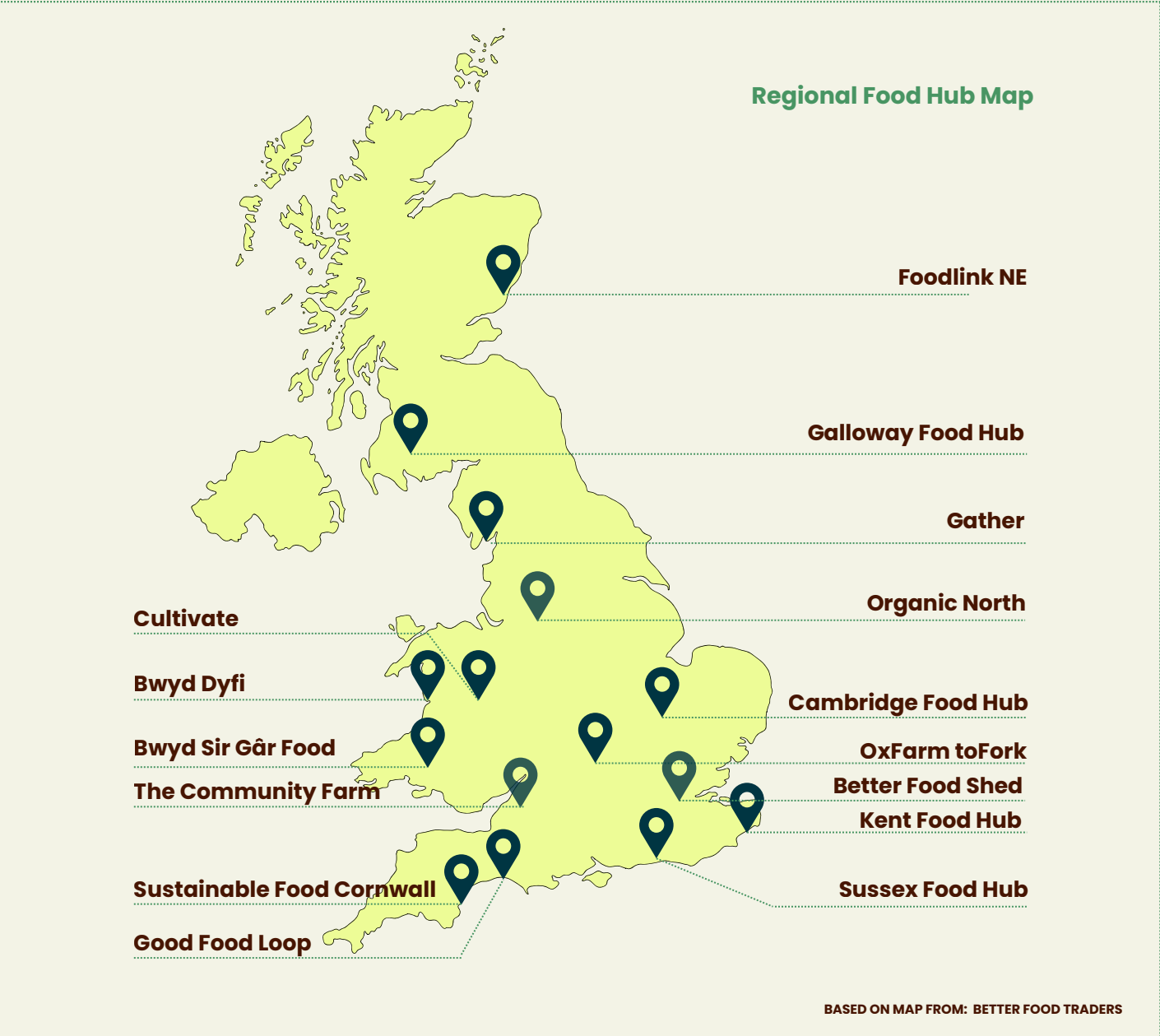
An initial £8,000 Early Collaboration grant supported our partner organisations to do what is often hardest and most essential: bring people together. This seed funding enabled relationship-building work across organisations and regions, supporting facilitated conversations about shared values, needs and ambitions. Out of this process emerged a clear identification of what the movement needed most: coordination, governance and a shared platform.

Later this year, a second grant of £50,000 enabled the Network to move from intensive listening and connection-building into establishment and growth. Funding supported the creation of formal structures, dedicated coordination capacity, and the development of communication systems that made regular collaboration possible. What had previously been a constellation of disconnected efforts began to take shape as a national movement.

The result is a stronger, more connected movement with the ability to engage collectively in policy dialogue and strategic advocacy. Disparate initiatives now have frameworks through which to communicate, coordinate and collaborate – transforming individual efforts into shared influence.

This investment has helped create lasting infrastructure for Scotland’s agroecology movement: not just a network in name, but a functioning collective with the capacity to shape the future of food and farming in Scotland.

*Partners: Pasture for Life, Scottish Crofting Federation, Nourish Scotland, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Soil Association Scotland, Propagate, Landworkers Alliance, Food, Farming & Countryside Commission.*



## Investing in Regional Food Hubs to Strengthen Local Food Systems

**COLLABORATIVE GRANT: £50,000**

This year, twelve Regional Food Hubs across the UK are receiving funded support to grow stronger, more resilient supply chains for local, sustainable food.

Delivered in partnership with *Sustain, Better Food Traders, the Soil Association and Growing Communities*, the programme provides practical training, mentoring and peer support to help food hubs expand their wholesale operations and supply public institutions such as schools and hospitals with agroecological produce.

From Aberdeenshire to Cornwall, the hubs represent a diverse mix of established organisations ready to scale, early-stage start-ups, and initiatives preparing to launch in 2025. Together, they share a common ambition: to make sustainable food easier to buy, easier to sell, and easier to access in their region.

Funding is enabling hub leaders to take part in monthly training, receive tailored business support, and learn alongside peers who face similar challenges. Each hub is also matched with an ‘accountability partner’ to support reflection, problem-solving and shared learning throughout the year.

The programme goes beyond supporting individual organisations. It is also building knowledge for the wider sector, with learning captured by NGO partners working on sustainable food systems to identify what makes Regional Food Hubs succeed and how investment can have the greatest impact.

Several hubs are contributing to national research through Coventry University’s [Procurement for Good project](#), while others are helping shape new approaches to Net Zero through an AFN Network+ funded scoping project.

This investment is already laying the groundwork for long-term change: more secure markets for farmers, better access to sustainable food in public settings, and stronger regional food economies.



# Listening and responding

***Listening to and learning from organisations and communities across the movement is central to our approach and shapes our strategy, decision-making and funding priorities.***

In 2024, we created regular and intentional opportunities for dialogue and collaboration, ensuring that those closest to the work could shape our strategy, funding decisions and how we operate as a funder. This approach has allowed us to respond to emerging needs and to support work rooted in the lived experience of people driving change on the ground.

## **Strengthening the Movement through Ambassadors**

We continued to work closely with Movement Ambassadors, who play a central role in shaping our strategy, grantmaking and learning through lived experience and sector knowledge. In 2024, we welcomed three new Ambassadors and supported two long-standing members to step back after many years of contribution, strengthening the diversity and resilience of the collective.

## **Advancing Participatory Grantmaking**

Ambassadors led funding decisions for our pooled fund, ensuring resources were directed by those closest to the work on the ground. Internally, we continued using sociocracy — a consent-based decision-making system — to support shared leadership and collective responsibility. We also designed the 2025 pooled funding round around dedicated listening spaces for Ambassadors and the wider movement, ensuring priorities and processes were shaped by diverse perspectives.

## **Creating Learning and Listening Spaces**

We convened regular Listening and Connection sessions with funded partners to share learning, explore emerging issues and reflect on our role as a funder. Highlights included:

- A “fantasy funding” session at our summer retreat, surfacing future priorities with Ambassadors
- Three online listening sessions with 40 participants from 36 organisations
- Positive feedback emphasising the value of open dialogue and involvement in shaping strategy

Insights from these sessions are already informing our approach to funding and field-building.

## **Shaping Funding Priorities through Listening**

Our funding priorities for 2025 were directly shaped by what we heard across the movement. We developed three grantmaking themes:

- New Economies for Food and Farming
- Diversifying the Movement
- Movement Infrastructure and Support

We also continued evolving our reporting approach toward more conversational and relational formats, supporting shared learning and a deeper understanding of emerging challenges and opportunities.

## **Engaging Across the Sector**

We actively listened, built relationships and contributed to collective learning by engaging across the sector through events and convenings, including:

- Oxford Real Farming Conference
- Groundswell
- Pesticide Action Network
- GrainLab UK
- Organic Trade Conference
- Pathways to Land Forum
- Agroecology Comms Network
- Urban Agriculture Consortium Policy Influencing Network

This has strengthened connections and ensured we remain responsive to developments across the field.

## **What’s next in 2025**

In 2025, we will further embed listening, participation and collaboration across our work.

We will grow and support our Ambassador collective by recruiting one new Ambassador and continuing to invest in care and shared leadership. Listening and Connection sessions will continue with partners and the wider movement, alongside one-to-one conversations to ensure sector voices shape our direction.

We will strengthen relationships and collaboration across the sector through continued engagement at key events, including the Oxford Real Farming Conference, Groundswell and Be the Earth Festival. We will also support the Justice Hub, contribute to the ORFC cross-over dinner, and work with partners to develop storytelling that makes the case for funding agroecology in the UK.



# Policy and Advocacy

***Advocating for more and better funding has been central to our work in 2024. We focused on increasing the volume, quality and equity of investment in agroecology while promoting funding practices that reflect the needs and realities of the sector.***

By engaging with individual donors, trusts, foundations and funding networks, we both grew resources for the movement and improved how those resources are distributed and governed.

## **Advocating for More and Better Funding**

We encouraged additional and more equitable investment in UK agroecology through funder networks, events, and publications, without displacing existing resources. Highlights include:

- Providing a reference supporting Shared Assets, contributing to their successful grant from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation,
- Contributing £13,000 to the Food Issues Census, leveraging a further £35,000 from other funders.
- Welcoming Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, John Ellerman Foundation, and a private donor via IG Advisors to the Farming the Future pooled fund.

## **Championing the Sector**

We elevated movement voices at key events including:

- The Philanthropy in Regenerative Farming series
- ACF Leaders Forum
- EFN Retreat
- Be the Earth Festival
- PBII Roundtable.

Our insights were published in Impatience Earth, the Financial Times, and Place Matters to advocate for a just transition to agroecology.

We also organised workshops at the Oxford Real Farming conference with Just Farmers, helping new voices from the sector share their stories, and spoke at the [We Feed the UK](#) launch, Stir to Action New Economies Festival, and the launch of Abundance's work on [Commoning the Public](#).

## **Developing a Collaborative Funder Network**

We co-hosted a Funders Commitment on Climate Change session with Impatience Earth and ACF and helped advance the idea of a Food, Farming & Land Justice Funders Learning Network alongside Rothschild Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and others.

Our engagement in UK and international funder communities—including ACF, EFN, the Trust-Based Funders Community of Practice, the Agroecology Coalition, and the Global Alliance for the Future of Food—strengthened relationships, aligned strategies, and enabled collective action.

Attending the Healthy Food Healthy Planet network event in Turin also helped us compare UK approaches to Europe, expand our network, and meet with other UK organisations.

## **Sharing Learning and Best Practice**

We translated insights from partner listening sessions into practical resources for funders, including the Movement Listening Summary for Funders and Advice for Funders of UK Food and Farming. We promoted two-way communication between donors and grantees to reduce barriers and improve practice, and updated our Donor Pitch Deck to better communicate the value of pooled funds.

## **What's next in 2025**

In 2025, we will continue advocating for more and better funding while strengthening collaboration, transparency and learning across the sector. We will develop and publish *Making the Case* resources to help funders better understand and support agroecology, while deepening engagement with current donor partners and establishing the Funders Advisory Group. Part of this work will be building internal capacity for advocacy and resource development.

We will promote and support the findings from the Food Issues Census to inform collective priorities.

We will continue representing the UK Agroecology movement at national events and expanding storytelling and communications that highlight the movement's impact, needs and lived expertise. Alongside this, we will co-develop a UK Food and Farming Funders Network with the Rothschild Foundation, EFN and others to strengthen trust-based funding, shared learning and collective goals. Our participation in UK and international funder networks will remain active, ensuring that learning from our participatory model is widely shared.

We will look to create further opportunities for open knowledge exchange between funders and movement partners, facilitate shared learning and greater transparency between donors and grantees. This includes a partnership with MyCake to develop sector financial benchmarking on resilience and co-funding opportunities.



# How our Impact Grows

*The change we support ripples across the food and farming system. From shifting power and strengthening movements to reconnecting communities with land and food, our funding creates impact that is interconnected, cumulative and built for the long term.*

The change we support does not happen in isolation. It moves through relationships, networks and places – strengthening ecosystems, shifting power, and building the conditions for lasting transformation.

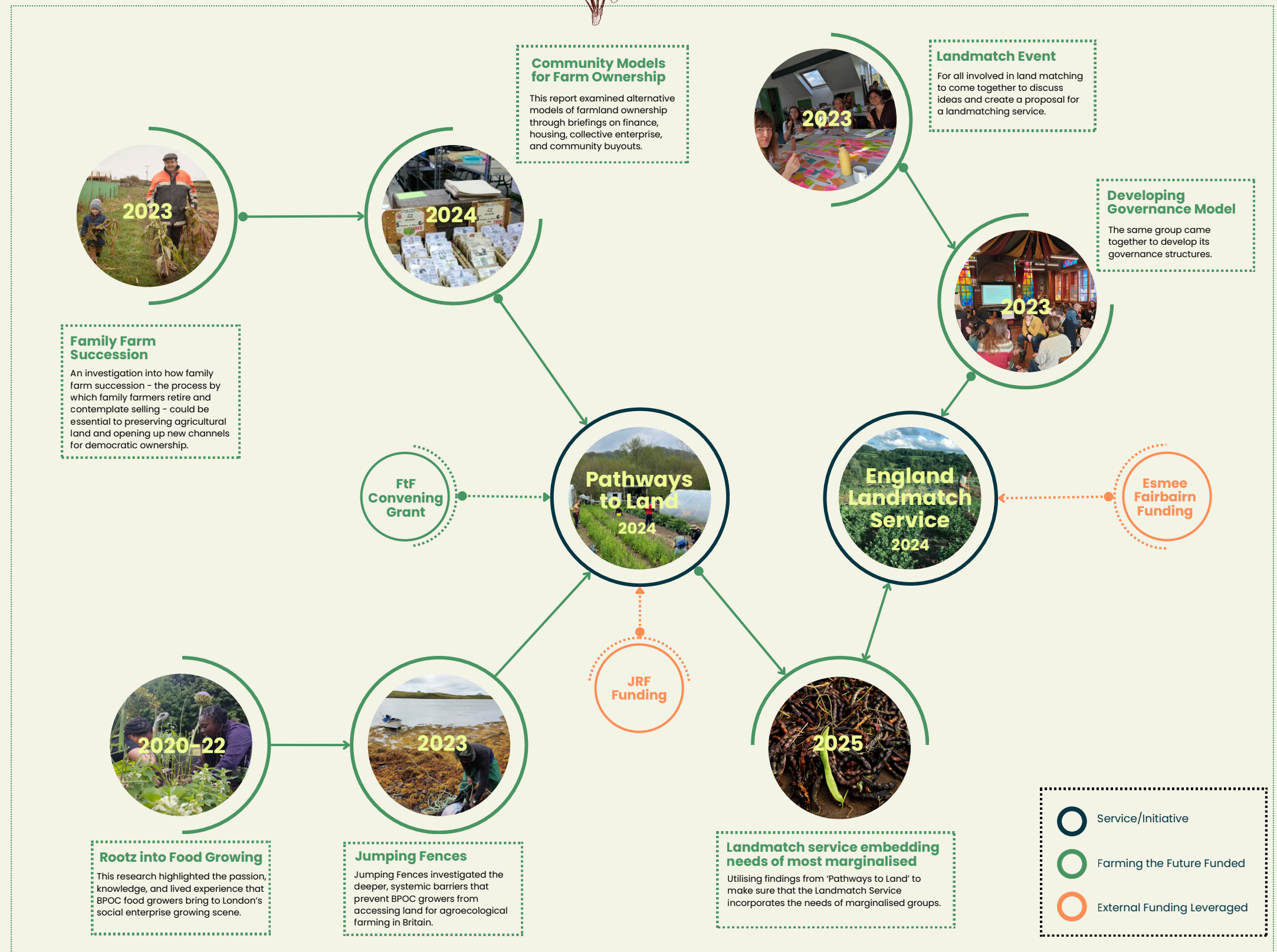
Because we work at the level of systems and movements, our impact cannot always be captured through traditional metrics or short-term outcomes alone. Systemic transitions are complex: change unfolds unevenly, emerges through collaboration, and is shaped by social, political and environmental context. Linear models of impact rarely reflect this reality.

We fund in ways that recognise the food system as deeply interconnected. Our grants help enable collaboration, strengthen leadership, and build shared infrastructure across the agroecology movement. Over time, these investments combine to produce change greater than any single project can deliver – supporting communities, influencing policy, and strengthening the movement as a whole.

In 2025, we will strengthen how we tell these stories of change. We are developing new ways to show how individual initiatives, partnerships and field-building efforts come together to create collective impact. By mapping relationships, progress and strategy over time, we aim to make visible how early investment can catalyse movement-building, support emerging infrastructure and generate effective responses to systemic challenges.

Our work on land access shows how projects feed into each other, creating cumulative impact. Early initiatives explored preserving agricultural land, opening democratic ownership channels, and highlighting the knowledge and experience of BPOC food growers. Insights from these projects directly informed subsequent work, from reports and investigations into systemic barriers to services that match land with growers.

By sharing learning across initiatives and embedding the needs of marginalised communities, these projects collectively built the infrastructure, knowledge, and pathways needed to expand equitable access to land – turning individual efforts into a connected system of support for farmers and communities.





The Agroecological Future We Seek

Agroecological principles provide a framework for designing and managing sustainable agricultural systems that work in harmony with nature. Grounded in both ecological science and traditional knowledge, agroecology promotes diversity, resilience, and the responsible use of local resources.

Agroecology is aligned with **food sovereignty**, ensuring equity, community empowerment, and local control over food systems. These principles shape a commitment to building sustainable and just food futures.

Farming the Future focuses its work on **transformational** levels of change in the UK (Principles 7–13).

TRANSFORMATIONAL

INCREMENTAL

FOOD SYSTEM LEVELS

LEVEL 5  
Rebuild the global food system so that it is sustainable and equitable for all

LEVEL 4  
Re-establish connections between growers and eaters, develop alternative food networks

AGROECOSYSTEM LEVELS

LEVEL 3  
Redesign the whole agroecosystem based on ecological processes

LEVEL 2  
Substitute alternative practices and inputs

LEVEL 1  
Increase efficiency of industrial inputs

Thirteen Agroecology Principles

- 13 FAIRNESS
- 12 PARTICIPATION
- 11 LAND & RESOURCE GOVERNANCE
- 10 SOCIAL VALUES & DIETS
- 09 CO-CREATION OF KNOWLEDGE
- 08 CONNECTIVITY

- 07 ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION
- 06 SYNERGIES
- 05 RECYCLING
- 04 BIODIVERSITY
- 03 INPUT REDUCTION
- 02 ANIMAL HEALTH
- 01 SOIL HEALTH

SOURCE: GLESSMAN (2007) AND HILPE (2019)



Fairness 13

Support dignified and resilient livelihoods for all actors in food systems, especially smaller-scale producers and landworkers, through fair prices, fair employment, and respect for their knowledge. Promote equitable access to agroecology training and solidarity spaces for diverse growers.

Economic diversification 07

Improve the diversity of farm incomes, empowering smaller-scale farmers with financial independence and value-adding opportunities that both meet community demands, reduce waste and advance viable, regenerative alternatives to the extractive agroindustrial model.



On Farm Practices 1-6

Promote diverse, low input, efficient farming eco-systems that recycle resources, enhance resilience, nurture soils and support adaptation and mitigation to climate change. Support skill sharing on nature-friendly farming practices that foster greater biodiversity, environmental and human health, and provide a more productive and sustainable, long-term alternative to extractive and exploitative practices and policies.



Participation 12

Encourage social organization and inclusive participation in decision-making by food producers and eaters—expanding opportunities to connect with our food and the land it grows on. Support decentralized governance and local adaptive management of agricultural and food systems to build community food resilience, agency and democratic voice.

Land & Resource Governance 11

Develop equitable access to land and responsible collective stewardship of resources, including supporting seed and grain sovereignty and genetic diversity of animals and plants. Advance just opportunities for food growing, and strengthen local control of assets to boost economic resilience within agricultural and food systems.



Co-creation of knowledge 09

Foster peer connection and producer-to-trader knowledge sharing in the community. Enhance institutional and scientific innovation through participatory processes and opportunities for co-creating based on local expertise and needs. Create viable pathways for diverse new entrants, inclusive skill sharing in sustainable practices, and fair access to direct markets.



Connectivity 08

Build proximity and trust between producers and consumers by promoting fair and short distribution networks that connect people and producers more directly. Shorten long and extractive just-in-time supply chains, and strengthen local economies through public food procurement and community eating.



Social Values and Diets 10

Build food systems rooted in the culture, identity, tradition, and social and gender equity of local communities. Uphold the right to good, nutritious food through affordable access and culturally appropriate, sustainable and healthy diets.



PHOTO CREDIT: JASON TAYLOR

Contact

Bonnie Hewson, Director

✉ Bonnie@farmingthefuture.uk

🌐 farmingthefuture.uk





# Appendices



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# Appendix 1: 2024 Pooled Fund Funded Partners

New Growth – £10k each (54% nomination success rate)	Exploring Collaboration – £8k each (54% nomination success rate)	Community Land Trust Network and Shared Assets	Better Food Traders, Growing Communities, Sustain, Soil Association
<p><b><u>Racial Equity, Abolition and Liberation in Landwork (REAL)</u></b> – group for BPOC members offering a much needed space for people to come together and share experiences, difficulties, solutions and hope.</p> <p><b><u>Go Grow with Love</u></b> – celebrating women of African Caribbean heritage in farming and Afro ecology and supporting them in reconnecting to the land and to develop essential long-life skills in land care, food production and food enterprise.</p> <p><b><u>Thyme Tu</u></b> – Norfolk based collective working towards a community focussed market-garden (selling vegetables and fruit), which hosts inclusive land-related events (e.g. BPOC community building, communal meals, workshops, skill shares and gatherings).</p> <p><b><u>Miknaf Ha’aretz</u></b> – organisation dedicated to re-connecting the Jewish diaspora communities to the land through the ancestral practices of food and land work.</p> <p><b><u>Raw Milk Producers Association</u></b> – co-op society promoting best practice and safe production of raw milk.</p> <p><b><u>Soil Clinic</u></b> – London based collective aiming to ‘common’ soil science knowledge and tools &amp; prioritising access to marginalised groups.</p> <p><b><u>Out on the Land</u></b> – anLGBTQIA+ collective focusses on amplifying diverse voices within the food and farming sector and creating spaces for solidarity and connection.</p>	<p><b><u>Brighton &amp; Hove Food Partnership, 3VA, Sussex Community Development Association, Food Matters, Rock Farm &amp; local councils</u></b></p> <p>Creating a regional collaboration which brings people together to increase education, health outcomes and the market for agroecological food in Sussex by connecting farmers with socially responsible buyers providing for disadvantaged communities</p> <p><b><u>Pasture for Life, NFFN, Nourish, Soil Association Scotland, Propagate, Landworkers’ Alliance</u></b></p> <p>Building the network for agroecology in Scotland by building relationships between a coalition of organisations representing expertise on different agroecological elements including farming practices, short supply chains, land justice and the right to food.</p> <p><b><u>Northern Real Farming Conf, ORC, Hodemdods, Gaia Seed Sovereignty, Foodwise Leeds, FeedLeeds, University of Leeds</u></b></p> <p>Developing value chain collaborations around agro-ecologically grown pulses (beans, peas and other legumes) for human consumption in the North of England.</p> <p><b><u>Feedback Global, Tipping Point UK</u></b></p> <p>Exploring ways to counter Big Ag’s promotion of false solutions to capture funding and expose their historic role in creating our unequal food system.</p>	<p>Engaging Community Land Trusts around buying land for agroecological farming and exploring supporting housing needs on farmland with a focus on social justice considerations.</p> <p><b><u>Nature Friendly Farming Network, FLAME, Students Organising for Sustainability, National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, Sustain</u></b></p> <p>Exploring how to centre young farmers, food activists and students voices in policy and advocacy work around a Just Transition</p> <p><b><u>Agroecology Comms Network, Parliamentarians for Agroecology, Sustain</u></b></p> <p>Providing a strategic coordination role and voice for agroecology organisations within Parliament.</p>	<p>Deliver a 12 months support programme of sector specific training, peer-to-peer learning and bespoke business advice for Regional Food Hub Managers, starting up or running a regional food hub, in order to increase sales and grow routes to market for agroecological produce.</p> <p><b><u>Worker Support Centre, Landworkers Alliance</u></b></p> <p>Campaign for decent working conditions for migrant farmworkers by supporting the expansion of the WSC model across the UK, and by building awareness for the public and agroecological movement on the treatment and experiences of seasonal workers to generate pressure for action from leading companies in food supply chains.</p> <p><b><u>Nourish, Soil Association, Propagate, LWA, Pasture for Life, Scottish Crofting Federation, Nature Friendly Farming Network</u></b></p> <p>Amplify the voice for agroecology in Scotland by bringing together our shared resources and expertise to represent, advocate for and support farmers, crofters and growers practicing or wanting to practice agroecology.</p> <p><b><u>Students Organising for Sustainability, FLAME, National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs, Nature Friendly Farming Network, Sustain</u></b></p> <p>Bring together, upskill, articulate, and amplify diverse youth voices to influence policy around a just transition in food and farming.</p>
		Collaborative Projects – £50k each (50% nomination success rate)	
		<p><b><u>Regather Ltd, Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience, Urban Agriculture Consortium, Real Farming Trust, CSA Network</u></b></p> <p>startup the implementation of an Agroecological Urbanism as a new approach to agroecological transitions, beginning with the development of seven prototype Landed Community Kitchens (LCKs) in the North of England, by linking agroecological farmers and food-sovereignty-oriented urban community kitchens.</p>	



Appendix 2: Field Building Support and Partnerships

Item	Description	Resource Type	Mar–Dec 24
Programme coordination and learning partner	To hold the threads between things, convene, curate learning and evolve the approach (50% of 50k budget)	Partnership Agreement : Shared Assets	£25,000

Capacity Support for Movement Building  
£72,000 allocated out of £124,000 budget (58%)


We Feed the UK (Gaia Foundation)	Support Hot Poets to attend ORFC to perform at the opening ceremony	Event Support	£1000
Organic Growers Gathering	OGG Support	Event Support	£3500
ORFC/OFC Dinner	ORFC/OFC combined dinner via FFCC, PFL and Hodmedods	Event Support	£5000
Real Farming Trust Justice Hub	ORFC Justice Hub Bursaries and partners costs	Event Support	£5000
Seeding Reparations	Staff time for Seeding Reparations to participate in ORFC	Event Support	£5000

Basic Income 4 Farmers	To support convening and organising	Event support via Open Collective	£5000
Emerging Farmer Network in Northern Ireland	Supporting the current food and farming groups in NI to be able to come together and discuss needs and next steps for building a network	Partnership Agreement: Cooperative Alternatives	£7000
Powering up Agroecology Open Source Expert Capacity Support Database	Stir to Action leading on convening around using Power to Change’s platform to build a capacity supporting and mentoring matching service that can offer funder-subsidised training.	Partnership Agreement: Stir to Action	£8000
Agroecology Research Collective	Providing support for bursaries for autumn conference bringing farmers and academic researchers together.	Partnership Agreement: LWA (hosting)	£8000
Agroecology Comms Network Development	Network development and training development, building more collaborations (e.g. election policy comms, linking to Just Farmers, NFFN and Farmers Footprint UK). and making the network ore accessible and open.	Partnership Agreement: Real Farming Trust	£10,000
Mobilising the Food Sovereignty Movement	LWA Mobilisations Coordinator to bring together food sovereignty movements to create pressure and momentum for political change - FGood Food Marches and collective planning for Land Skills Fair, songbook as mobilisation tool.	Partnership Agreement: LWA	£15,000



Networks of Supply
£76,000 allocated out of £90,000 budget (60%)

Item	Description	Resource Type	Mar-Dec 24
Horticulture Strategic Meet up	A two-day meet to focus on strategy for agroecological horticulture across the UK. CSA Network (lead) plus Organic North, CSA Network, LWA England, Scotland, Wales and NI, OGA, Soil Association, OF&G, Growing Communities, Sustain, Lantra, Nourish Scotland, Food Sense Wales, Food Foundation, University of Hertfordshire, University of Bristol	Event Support	£5000
Fibreshed	Fibreshed Development	Partnership Agreement : Fibreshed	£12,000
Agroforestry Coalition	Agroforestry Development	Partnership Agreement	£13,000
UK Grainlab	UK Grainlab development	Partnership Agreement : Grain Lab	£15,000
Food Hub Support Network	Better Food Traders and Sustainable Food Places to create a network for convening, learning, resource exchange, mentoring	Partnership Agreement : Better Food Traders	£15,000
Building Routes to Market	Support networks and connections that help build supply of agroecological produce and overcome barriers in infrastructure and routes to markets for small scale producers	Partnership Agreement : Sustain	£16,000



FLAME	Support for on-going events and convening	Partnership Agreement : LWA (hosting)	£8000
The Agroecology Learning Collective Development (TALC)	To support the building out of the partnerships and development of a site to help signpost to agroecology training, learning, apprenticeships and opportunities	Partnership Agreement : LWA	£10,000
Progression pathways in land skills for minoritized new entrants	Land Skills Hub events with May Project Gardens and Nature Youth Connection Education	Partnership Agreement : Peasant Evolution Coop	£24,000
Black Roots	Linking people of colour interested in progression with technical training demos, Level 2 Horticulture accreditation, afroecology development.	Partnership Agreement : Go Grow with Love	£24,000



**Just Access to Land**  
**£52,200 allocated out of £90,000 budget (58%)**

Item	Description	Resource Type	Mar-Dec 24
People's Land Policy: Land Manifesto Gathering	Land Justice Policy Collaboration to support publication and events	Event Support	£2000
Pathways to Land	Towards budget	Event Support (via Stir to Action)	£2,200
Community Food Growers Network	London Network Gatherings	Event Support	£5000
Northern Ireland Gathering	Focused around land access.	Event Support	£15,000
LION (Land in our Name)	Follow - Community Care for BPOC Earth Stewards	Partnership Agreement : LION	£8000
Shieling Project	Building bridges between rewilding and farming in Scotland through Shieling	Partnership Agreement	£10,000
Land Justice Movement Capacity Building	To support Shared Assetsland justice movement building and involvement in work across themes, sharing learning on best practice and helping us shape training etc. Supporting collective work in securing land for BPOC growers	Partnership Agreement : Shared Assets	£18,000



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