



APRICOT
CENTRE

ANNUAL REPORT

2021/2022

WHO WE ARE

The Apricot Centre is a regenerative farm, education establishment and wellbeing service for children and families. We believe there is a fundamental link between the wellbeing of soil, food and habitats and the mental and physical health of communities.

In 2012 the Biodynamic Land Trust (BDLT) approached The Dartington Hall Trust to establish a community-owned biodynamic farm. To date, over 150 people have invested in the farm. The first tenant recruited by the BDLT to develop and run Huxhams Cross Farm was The Apricot Centre, which was then based in East Anglia and had already developed this unique business model. Our tenancy started in September 2015. Whilst we no longer run a farm in East Anglia, our wellbeing service remains active there as well as in Devon.

The Apricot Centre aims

produce local sustainable food

create a regenerative & biodiverse farm

be net carbon zero and resilient to climate change

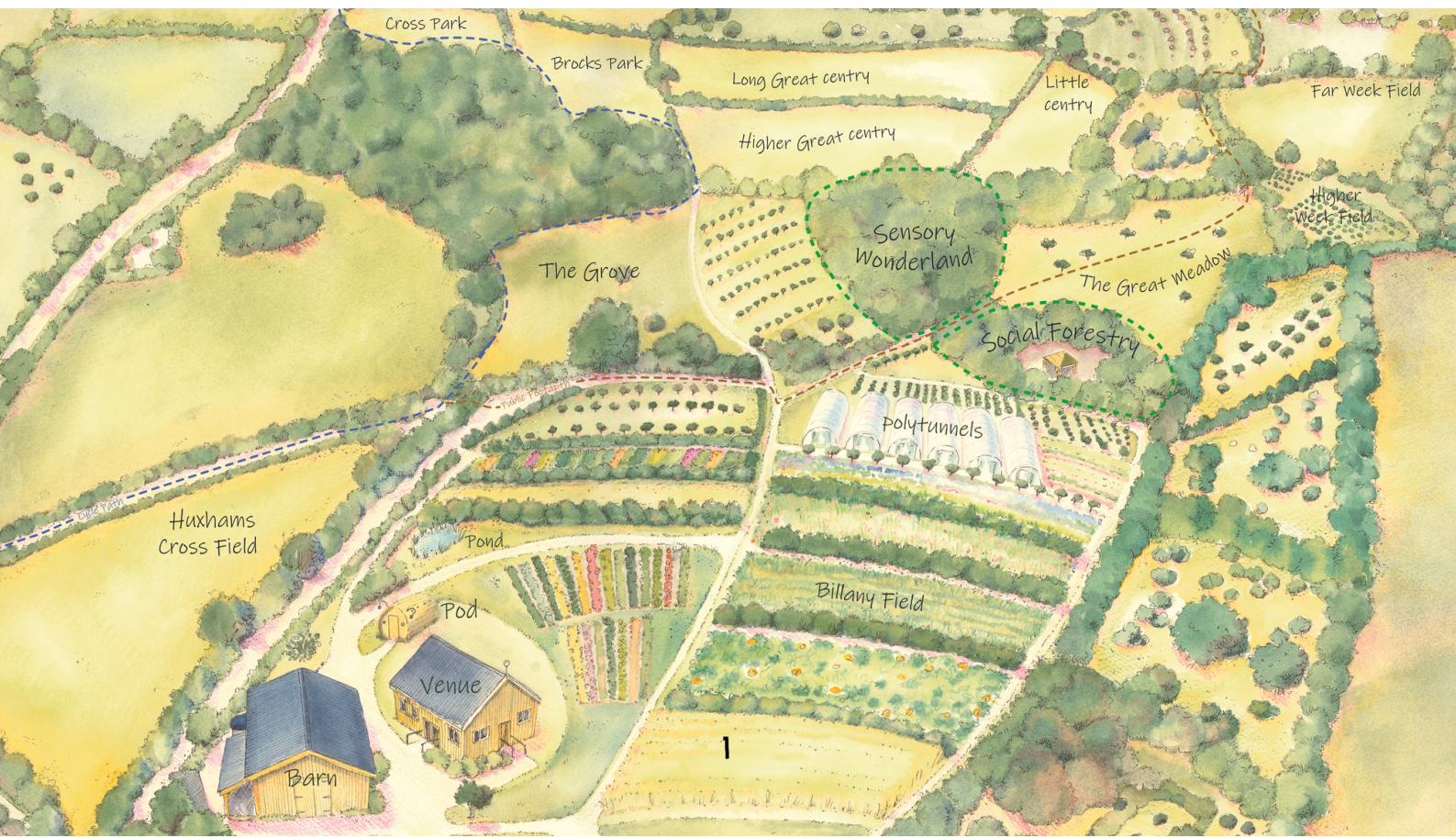
provide for and support the mental wellbeing of families and children that visit the farm for therapy, education or recreation

provide training and consultation

create an economically resilient business

support the wellbeing and professional development of its team

collect data and undertake research on the effectiveness of these models



MESSAGE FROM DIRECTORS

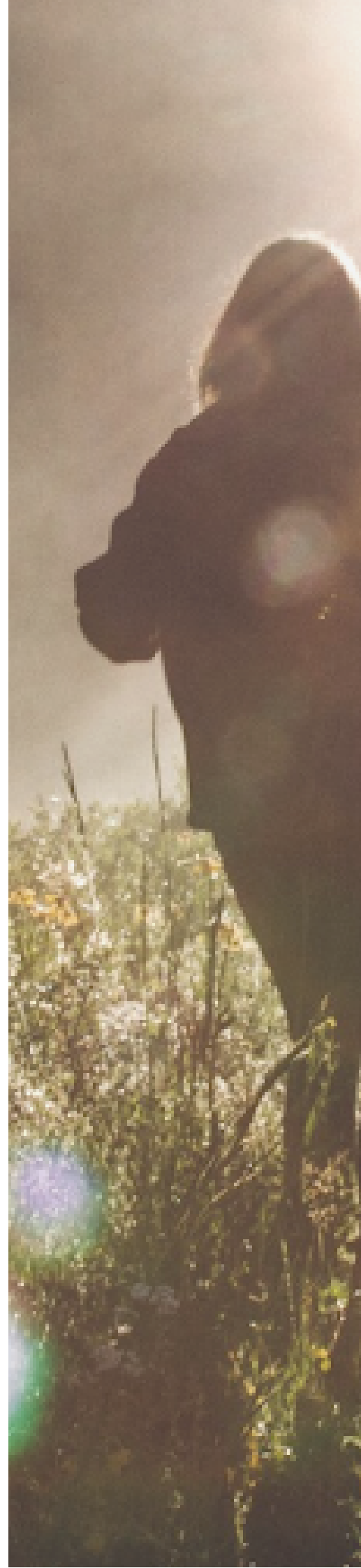
Our planet and its 7.8 billion inhabitants are experiencing a climate emergency, a global pandemic, political and economic instability. The impact of this on people's health and wellbeing is huge.

Earth care, people care and fair share have never been more important.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) goal to reach net zero emissions by 2050 is an enormous and vital task. To do this we must reimagine our food and farming systems to reduce emissions and restore the natural organic cycles of the soil to capture and store carbon. No single approach has all the answers.

Since the early 1990s Apricot Centre Director, Marina O'Connell, has been studying and developing regenerative food systems. This year she was approached by Hawthorn Press to write a book, *Designing Regenerative Food Systems and why we need them now*. The book is a toolkit of tried and tested agroecological methods that can be woven together to transition industrial food production into a regenerative agricultural revolution.

In this report we are excited to share the innovative developments we've made this year in response to the problems our world is facing. These include our new school for regenerative agriculture, collaborations such as Reclaim the Grain and work supporting minority ethnic groups, refugees and asylum seekers to name but a few.



WHAT HAPPENED JANUARY - DECEMBER 2021

HUXHAMS CROSS FARM

Huxhams Cross Farm is a regenerative, low-carbon and biodiverse farming system. In the 7 years that we have been here we have transformed the soil into beautiful, productive and profitable land. We have achieved this by weaving together a variety of approaches; permaculture, agroecology, agroforestry, regenerative agriculture, biodynamic and organic food production. We are rethinking food production to create a resilient local food system that meets the challenges of climate change, biodiversity loss and producing enough food.

WE GREW

70 varieties of vegetable
18 varieties of fruit

WE HARVESTED

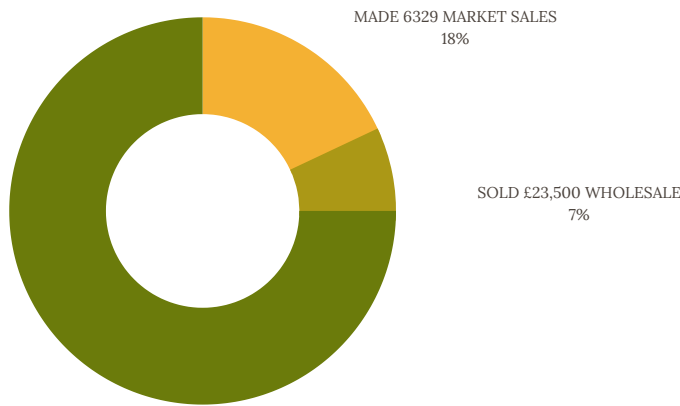
24.6 tonnes of fruit and vegetables
34,525 eggs

WE MADE

30+ products such as jams, relishes, chutney and flour

WE SOLD

All of our products within a 30mile radius of the farm



DELIVERED 8000 VEG BAGS
75%

MADE 6329 MARKET SALES
18%

SOLD £23,500 WHOLESALE
7%



10 TONNES
OF CARBON
SEQUESTERED
PER HECTARE
PER YEAR

of which we use 50%

ON THE FARM

2021 was characterised by a challenging cold Spring, followed by a cool and wet summer and a warm and dry Autumn / early Winter. This had a big impact on fruit and early sown vegetables. Seeds planted from June did well as did the new peaches in the polytunnel that fruited in their first year! It was a great year for flowers and they sold very well at the market. We also managed to dry a lot to sell through the winter.

Our 150 White Leghorn chickens and two cows, Damson and Daffodil, have had another happy year on the farm. We managed to rotate the chickens around the farm more frequently this year which enabled more crops to benefit from their manure. We used the cow manure and herbs grown on the farm to make the full array of Biodynamic preparations.

We joined a new collaboration called the Good Food Loop which enables us to sell our produce to other local food retailers and buy quality produce from other growers for our customers.



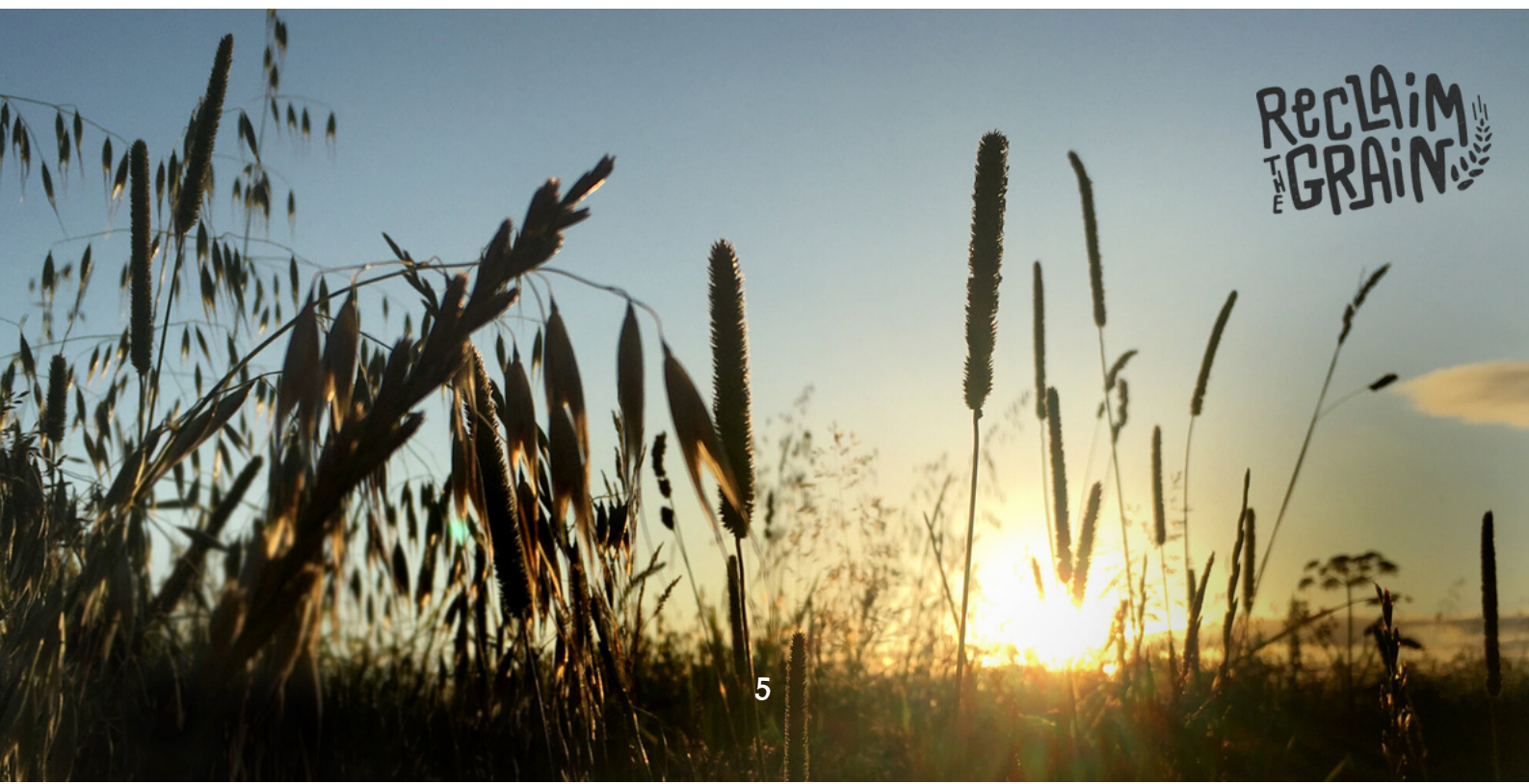
DESIGN CONSULTANCY

Demand for our design consultancy service continues to grow. We pull together our expertise in permaculture, biodynamics, regenerative farming, agroforestry, horticulture, livestock management systems and business planning. This year we delivered designs and facilitated collaborative design processes for 10 sustainable farms, smallholdings, large gardens and community spaces.

10 DESIGNS
DELIVERED TO
TRANSFORM
2692 ACRES
INTO
REGENERATIVE
LANDSCAPES

WHAT IF WE RELOCALISE GRAIN PRODUCTION?

Grains have become a commodity worldwide. Most bread in the UK is made with imported flour, however it can be grown locally using regenerative practices. Dartington Mill CIC and the 'Reclaim the Grain' brand is a collaboration between the Apricot Centre, Old Parsonage Farm and The Almond Thief Bakery. Each organisation brings part of the diverse skill set required to grow, process, mill and bake highly nutritious and quality food products such as flour, oats and other grains. The Mill exists as a 'business for purpose' that does not profit from its operations, but exists to support the people and farms involved. The Apricot centre sells freshly milled flour to customers.



FARM PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

After two years of navigating our way through the global pandemic which led to increasing, yet often erratic sales, we are excited about a significant expansion to the farm. We have secured a tenancy for 25 acres of adjoining arable land from the Diocese of Exeter. This will enable us to increase production of grain and vegetables over the next few years. We plan to expand the infrastructure of the farm including the purchase of a secondhand cold store and construction of a new processing room and polytunnel with heated benches for propagation. These developments will help us create new products as well as improve our ability to raise our own plants.

Whilst egg production has been challenging due to avian flu, the chickens work well in our system so we hope to increase our flock. We have significantly increased our fruit production so hope for bountiful future harvests. Our cut flowers were a huge success at markets so we have increased the growing area and recruited a new member of staff to manage this and fruit production.



WELLBEING SERVICE

People care, earth share and fair share are at the heart of everything we do at the Apricot Centre. These values encourage a holistic therapeutic approach guided by feedback from people and nature. Our approach to wellbeing is about discovering what makes us feel 'well' in ourselves, our communities and our relationship with the natural world. We support children, adolescents and families who are dealing with the complex life circumstances that are common in adoption, fostering and care as well as those with special educational needs.

There are often conflicts and difficulties at a young person's edges, that when explored with awareness and creativity, become the seed of their potential.

Our team of 23 therapists and practitioners across Devon and East Anglia delivered 3,623 wellbeing sessions, including process oriented child psychotherapy, psychology, creative psychotherapies, attachment focused therapies and wellbeing and mentoring activities at the farm.

**3623
WELLBEING
SESSIONS
SUPPORTING
236 YOUNG
PEOPLE AND
THEIR FAMILIES**



NATURE CONNECTION

The farm provided a beautiful setting for a variety of social forestry and nature connection activities:

Root and Rise Working with young people who are leaving the care system.

Veterans group Nature recovery for veterans who have experienced trauma.

Alternative Provision Supporting 6-18 year olds who are out of school and/or are experiencing social and emotional challenges.

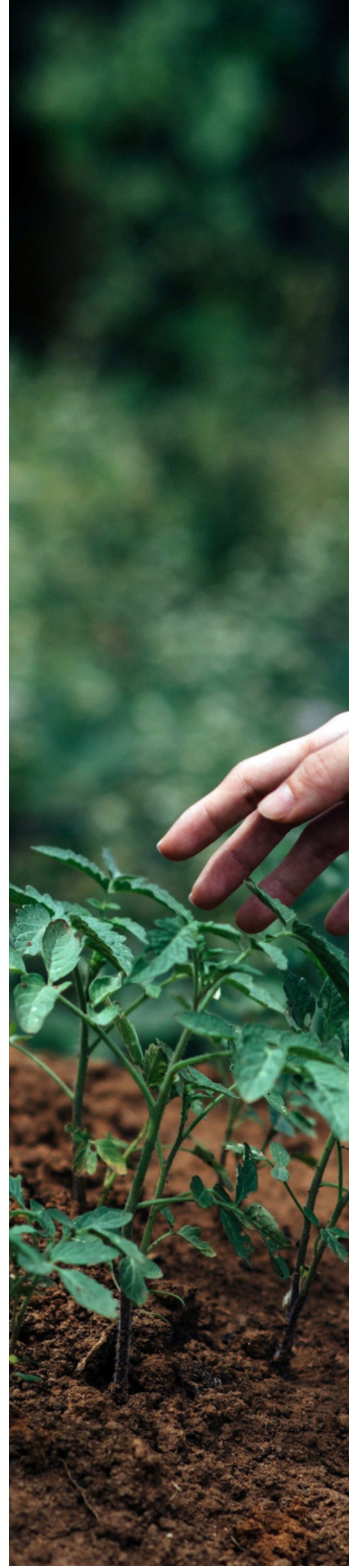
Art in Nature Nature activities for young people living with special guardians.

Creative Roots Nature workshops for fostered and adopted children and their families.

Community Interventions Exploratory work around building resilient communities to develop their understanding and support around trauma and attachment.

ADOPTION SUPPORT SERVICE

In June 2021 the Apricot Centre became a registered Adoption Support Service registered with Ofsted. This led to a number of positive developments for the service including the appointment of a Quality Assurance Manager. We also recruited two new Directors in order to diversify our skill set and provide additional scrutiny. Our Service Manager successfully completed the Level 5 Diploma in Leadership and Management and our senior team delivered an in-depth evaluation of our work which led to the implementation of a number of activities to strengthen the service, including; risk management, a performance dashboard, and safeguarding.



WELLBEING SERVICE PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

We are a busy service, very much in demand, but also faced with funding uncertainties. We have contracts in place with local and regional authorities as well as statutory services such as Children's Services and Child in Need teams. 2022 is a year to further diversify the business to build our resilience. We have increased referrals from statutory agencies and are also seeing an increase in private referrals which will enable us to better support our local community.



Promoting Communities of the Soil at Plymouth University

NEW PROJECTS

Communities of the Soil

We are working with Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities including asylum seekers and refugees in Plymouth. This project uses permaculture design to co-create urban nature spaces for wellbeing, food growing and nature connection.

Sensory Integration in Nature

We are piloting a sensory integration group approach for young people and parents. This will take place in the 'Sensory Wonderland' woodland area at the Farm. We hope this will become an important part of our wellbeing offer.

Food & Mood

We are researching and piloting approaches to working with young people and their families focussed on food, mental health and wellbeing in Devon and East Anglia.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Sharing our skills and knowledge with individuals, groups, schools and businesses is vital to the development of more resilient local food systems and happy communities.

This year we delivered courses in agroforestry, biodynamics, permaculture design certificate, the economics of permaculture and the permaculture diploma. We also gave bespoke training at the Oxford Real Farming event, Schumacher College and Landworkers Alliance.

An exciting development is our new School which offers students a year long Level 3 traineeship and land based learning programme in Regenerative Land Based Systems: food and farming. Most of 2021 was spent writing the curriculum, registering with Crossfields Institute and developing partnerships with 14 placement

hosts including River Cottage, Riverford field kitchen, Baddaford and Shillingford Organics. We also carried out a competitive application process to recruit our pilot group of 23 students who started the fully funded programme in January 2022.

Alongside the new School we partnered with ten food producers to become a Gateway organisation for the UK Government's Kickstart scheme, supporting young people to find decent employment. At a time of climate emergency, when so many young people are experiencing climate anxiety, our 47 placements aimed to inspire and empower the next generation of food producers with skills and knowledge in the area of regenerative agriculture so that they can be part of the solution.



1000+
PEOPLE
JOINED US
FOR
TRAINING
AND
EDUCATION



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Apricot Centre is a Community Interest Company (CIC). This means that we exist to benefit the wider community, rather than generate profit for shareholders. We go about this by sharing surplus produce locally via the Food in Community initiative, inviting groups to see our farm and ensuring our wellbeing service and courses are accessible for people from all walks of life.

This year we hosted a wide variety of tours, talks, markets and events at our farm enabling 1200 people from our local community to come and learn about nature connection and regenerative food production. Following the release of our 2020 Impact Report we had visits from the UK Government Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, our local MP and Devon Environment Trust. Our team have also engaged with and delivered talks at a number of national forums including the Biodynamic Land Trust AGM, Permaculture Gathering, Permaculture Association, Oxford Real Farming Conference and Landworkers Alliance.

The release of Marina's Book, 'Designing Regenerative Food Systems' in February 2022 is an exciting opportunity to engage with a wider audience and has already opened doors to podcast cast interviews, conferences and panel discussions.

"I had a fantastic evening at the community Celebration of Regenerative Agriculture where you showcased all the amazing activities that you are doing at the farm. This work is so needed for the land, for the people and for the community. I left feeling like something good was happening". Community member.

INCOME STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER 2021

	2021 (£)	2020 (£)
Turnover	819,227.10	679,286.61
Cost of Sales	422,155.30	324,591.52
Gross Profit	397,071.80	354,695.09
Expenses	346,274.29	283,704.79
Net Operating Profit	50,797.51	70,990.30
Bank interest received	7.84	175.55
Other Expenses including depreciation	25,146.06	31,220.86
Net profit	25,659.29	39,944.99

A BIG THANK YOU

We couldn't do what we do without the commitment of our staff, Directors, Friends Group, volunteers and local community. We'd also like to thank the organisations we've partnered with and those who support us financially.

Our partners: The Biodynamic Land Trust, Dartington Hall Trust, Good Food Loop, Old Parsonage Farm, The Almond Thief, Diversity Business Incubator, Schumacher College and all of the farms we have worked with through the School for Regenerative Land Based Studies and Kickstart Scheme.

Our supporters: Devon County Council, Devon Environmental Foundation, Badur Foundation, Torbay Community Development Trust, Department for Work and Pensions, Lifeworks and Rural Payment Agency, Totnes Arts Society,

Thanks to Dilly for the beautiful illustrations of our farm.



**CULTIVATING
SUSTAINABILITY IN
LAND, LIVES AND
LIVELIHOODS**



WWW.APRICOTCENTRE.CO.UK