

Potential for the development of farm land trusts in Wales

Executive summary

As part of the 'Exploring Community Access to Farms and Land' workstream of the of the [Resilient Green Spaces](#) programme [Shared Assets](#) and the [Landworkers' Alliance](#) have been exploring the potential for the development of farm land trusts in Wales. This work has been undertaken through desk research, interviews and a roundtable discussion with existing land trust organisations working in Wales.

The land trust model is poorly defined in legal terms and can operate using a range of legal structures provided these have an asset lock and operate for public or community benefit. Whilst most farm land trusts acquire land in various different ways land, they tend to favour either an active or market-based approach; whereby they raise capital and buy land on the open market or through private sale; or a more receptive and relational approach where they acquire land through donations, gifts and bequests.

Farm land trusts are already operating in Wales at a local level, and the main farm land trusts based in England that operate on a national level either own farmland in Wales or expect to do so in the future.

The main barriers identified for taking privately owned land into community ownership and management were:

- Public policy: the need for stronger rights for communities to purchase private land
- Land prices: driven by tax advantages and the perceived potential for green investment income
- Funding: lack of quick access to capital when land becomes available to purchase
- Housing: it is hard to secure planning permission for new agricultural dwellings
- Capacity: limited capacity in organisations providing support for landowners, land trusts and communities

The main opportunities identified for taking privately owned land into community ownership and management were:

- Farm succession: creating a potential supply of farms that land trusts could acquire
- County farms: farm land trusts should be given first refusal when public farmland is sold
- Public, charitable and church land: provide opportunities for management for the public good

There are challenges inherent in establishing a new land trust and there is a strong existing ecosystem of organisations who are already collaborating both in Wales and across the UK to develop the capacity of land trusts and communities, and to engage landowners in exploring the option to sell, gift or bequeath land to land trusts. However, all of these organisation currently lack the capacity required to develop these processes and facilities to undertake the long-term work of

building capacity, awareness, understanding and relationships of trust required to bring more private land into community ownership through the development of land trusts in Wales.

We therefore recommend:

- The establishment of a grant fund and / or revolving loan fund that can enable any land trust or community in Wales to act quickly to bring more land into community ownership for agroecological farming.
- Additional capacity for support programmes such as the [Community Land Advisory Service Cymru](#) to enable groups to navigate the complexities and timescales of funding and purchasing suitable land, and to enable them to secure the legal and technical advice they need to successfully complete them.
- The development of new public policy that provides communities, and land trusts, in Wales with a meaningful Right To Buy - including first refusal when land identified as of interest to the community is sold.
- A requirement that local authorities should ensure that communities, and land trusts, are given first refusal on the sale of any public farm land such as county farms.
- Funding to pilot the role of established regional projects and organisations to build on their existing relationships and local knowledge to act as facilitators for the identification and delivery of opportunities for public, private and charitable farm land to be secured for agroecological farming through community ownership or management.

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1. Introduction

Resilient Green Spaces is a £1.27m partnership project led by Social Farms & Gardens to pilot alternative re-localised food systems using communities and their green spaces as the driving force for change across Wales. The project, including the grant fund described here, is funded through the Welsh Government Rural Communities – Rural Development Programme 2014-2020, which is funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the Welsh Government.

As part of the ‘Exploring Community Access to Farms and Land’ workstream of the programme Shared Assets and the Landworkers’ Alliance have been exploring the potential for the development of farm land trusts in Wales. This work has been undertaken through desk research, interviews and a roundtable discussion with existing land trust organisations working in Wales.

2. What is a farm land trust?

2.1 Definitions

Whilst there is a specific legal definition of a Community Land Trust in English housing legislation, the term ‘land trust’ can be used to describe organisations with a wide range of purposes and legal forms and may not conform to the definition of a ‘Community Land Trust’.

A Community Land Trust is defined in the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 as a corporate body which:

- is established for the express purpose of furthering the social, economic and environmental interests of a local community by acquiring and managing land and other assets in order to:
 - provide a benefit to the local community
 - ensure that the assets are not sold or developed except in a manner which the trust’s members think benefits the local community
- is established under arrangements which are expressly designed to ensure that:
 - any profits from its activities will be used to benefit the local community (otherwise than by being paid directly to members)
 - individuals who live or work in the specified area have the opportunity to become members of the trust (whether or not others can also become members) and the members of a trust control it.

However, this definition only applies in England.

A broader definition of a land trust is something close to: *an organisation or collective that acquires land and uses it or distributes it for a specific purpose and use.*

Land trusts work to remove land from speculation so that it can be used in a socially responsible manner, often under the democratic control of a membership, and are committed to providing affordable spaces with security of tenure, most often for housing development but also for other purposes.

Within the Resilient Green Spaces programme, we are particularly interested in increasing opportunities of access to land for new entrants and local communities interested in agroecological farming so, in this case, the specific purpose referred to above would be horticultural or agricultural production.

2.2 Common characteristics

Some of the common characteristics of different types of land trust organisations currently involved in farmland purchase include:

Community or public benefit: They are usually established with specific social and / or environmental purposes. These might include education, environmental protection, community development and the relief of hardship. It will state within their legal documents that they deliver these purposes for the benefit of 'the public' (if charitable) or for a defined community (if a Community Interest Company or Community Benefit Society). See below for more on legal structures.

Not for private profit: Whilst they will operate as enterprising businesses that seek to generate a surplus, these will be used to further their social objectives e.g. to invest in more land. Whilst they may have paid staff, profits are not distributed to directors in the form of bonuses and any payments to shareholders will be limited.

Asset locked: An asset lock is a legal clause in the organisation's legal documents that prevents its assets from being used for private gain rather than the stated purposes of the organisation. It is a way of ensuring that the assets of the organisation can never be cashed in by private individuals or companies for their own gain.

Ability to raise capital: As charitable or community benefit organisations they are able to access grant funding from trusts and foundations, accept donations and, in the case of Community Benefit Societies, issue community shares to the public. As businesses they are also able to secure traditional loan finance.

2.3 Typical legal forms

In practice common legal structures that can fulfil all of the characteristics outlined in 2.2 above are:

2.3.1 Charitable Company

A charitable company is the most common form of charitable organisation. It is essentially a company limited by guarantee but has purposes ('objects') that are recognised as charitable and which mean that the organisation must operate to deliver specific activities in the public interest.

In addition to being registered with Companies House it is also registered with the Charity Commission and must submit annual returns to both regulators. It is exempt from both VAT and Corporation Tax. Employees cannot become trustees so this model is not suitable for employee ownership.

2.3.2 Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

CIOs are a more recent charitable legal form and benefit from simpler regulation. The CIO is registered only with the Charity Commission and not with Companies House. Like a charitable company it has purposes (objects) that are recognised as charitable. This means that the organisation must operate to deliver specific activities in the public interest and is exempt from both VAT and Corporation Tax. Because it is not registered at Companies House a CIO may not be able to raise loan finance against assets it holds which may mean that is unsuitable for an organisation that is seeking to purchase land. Employees cannot become trustees so this model is not applicable for employee ownership.

2.3.3 Community Interest Company

The CIC limited by guarantee is also a legal form that has a company limited by guarantee as its underlying legal structure, but it has to specifically state the communities it serves and the benefits it seeks to deliver to them and how it engages them. It has an asset lock which prevents the assets (or their value) being distributed amongst the members. It does not have the tax advantages of a charitable structure and cannot raise capital through the issue of community shares like a community benefit society. It is regulated by the CIC Regulator and Companies House.

2.3.4 Community Benefit Society (CBS)

This legal form is a type of cooperative and is suitable for businesses that are run for the benefit of the wider community, reinvesting profits in the community. They are registered with and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The structure is highly democratic and operates based on cooperative values of open and voluntary membership, democratic control and economic participation of members, autonomy and independence, education and training, cooperation and concern for community.

Committee members or officers manage the society on behalf of members and are elected on a one member one vote basis. The most significant feature of a CBS is its ability to raise share capital by issuing non-transferable community shares. They are therefore most often used when a community wishes to raise capital, e.g. to purchase an asset such as land or a building. Interest may be paid on shares, however this must not be the primary purpose, and members will not receive dividends as profits must be returned to the community.

A CBS cannot register as a charity with the Charity Commission but it can apply to HMRC to be recognised as an exempt charity for tax purposes, meaning it may be eligible to be exempt from VAT and Corporation Tax.

3. Typology of land trusts

The following types of land trust are not formal or legal definitions, but they can be useful to distinguish between the different approaches to land acquisition, and geographical focus, that different land trusts may take.

3.1 Approaches to acquisition

There are two broad approaches to land acquisition.

- **Active or market acquisition:** Here the land trust raises capital e.g. through a mix of grants, shares and loans, and purchases farmland on the open market or through a private sale. This approach gives the trust more control over the location and type of land acquired, but it requires substantial effort to secure the capital required and means the organisation has to contend with high land prices and the uncertainties of the land market.
- **Receptive or relational acquisition:** In this approach the trust is more focussed on securing land through donations and bequests. This approach reduces the requirement to raise capital to purchase land, however the development of relationships of trust with landowners requires a particular skillset, including engaging with landowners' emotional relationship with the land, and will often take place over a number of years. The type and location of

land and property acquired is also under less control, as are the timing of the acquisition in the case of bequests.

In practice many land trusts will acquire land through a mixture of these approaches, although one will often be the dominant approach given the different skills, capacity and organisational infrastructure required for each.

3.2 Geographical focus

Again, there are two broad approaches with respect to geographical focus:

- National or regional scale: Some trusts operate at the scale of the United Kingdom, across a devolved administration, or across a particular region. They will seek to acquire and manage a portfolio of properties and their community of investors and supporters will be focussed on the delivery of their economic, social and environmental purpose irrespective of the location of the land.
- Single farm or locality models: Other trusts operate at a more local level, being closely associated with a particular locality such as a town or county. These trusts may take on the ownership or management of a portfolio of land and property within a local area as a means of place-based or local community led regeneration. Others still are established to take on the ownership of a specific farm or piece of land which may have been under threat or where the landowner wished to ensure that it was sold or bequeathed to the local community.

Whatever the geographical focus the trust may operate either - or both - of the models of acquisition outlined above, as shown in some of the case studies below.

4. Case study examples

4.1 Ecological Land Cooperative: active or market acquisition / national

4.1.1 Model

The [Ecological Land Cooperative](#) (ELC) is a Community Benefit Society that develops affordable, low impact, smallholdings for agroecological farming.

Their core business is the creation of small clusters of three or more affordable residential smallholdings. ELC raises funds through community share issues, grants and loans, to buy land and apply for (initially temporary) planning permission. This enables smallholders to take on a growing plot with planning permission and build their own sustainable home, whilst ELC provides some of the infrastructure such as access roads etc.

The model allows ELC to keep costs low, both through buying larger sites at a lower price per acre, and through distributing the cost of infrastructure, planning applications and subsequent site monitoring across a number of smallholdings. The model allows the smallholders to work and learn together and to provide mutual support. While some smallholdings are rented and some are sold on 150-year leases, the cooperative retains the freehold on each smallholding in order to protect it for affordable agricultural and ecological use in perpetuity.

4.1.2 Aims

Beyond providing affordable smallholdings, the broader aims of ELC are to:

- Demonstrate a model of collective ownership that can protect and enhance the land, based not only on ideas of conservation, but on producing a living and working countryside;
- Contribute to, and strengthen the growing community of individuals and organisations committed to fostering the skills, knowledge and solidarity to allow the land to sustain us as we head into unpredictable times;
- Provide evidence through site monitoring research that helps strengthen campaigns for land reform;
- Seek to improve planning policy by providing evidence and examples that low-impact ecological land use has multiple benefits and should be embraced and legislated for.

4.1.3 Finance

As a community benefit society, ELC can issue community shares to raise capital to purchase land. Shareholders become investor members of the cooperative, and can receive limited returns on their shares. ELC has needed to raise substantial additional capital through grants and loans to help it purchase land.

4.1.4 A mixed model

Although their primary model of one of active acquisition on the open market, in 2022 ELC were gifted Maesgywn Isaf, a 47-acre farm in Carmarthenshire in South West Wales, when the previous owners left them the farm in their will.

4.1.5 Enablers and challenges

Key enablers for ELC are that it has the legal structure, capacity, skills and experience to secure capital from a wide range of sources including community shares, grants and loans.

However, high land prices driven by a general increase in asset prices and the increasing purchase of agricultural land by those seeking to benefit from carbon offsetting and other new forms of green investment present a challenge to this model.

4.2 Soil Association Land Trust: receptive or relational acquisition / national

4.2.1 Model

[The Soil Association Land Trust](#) (SALT) is a charitable company founded in 2007 by the coming together of Land Heritage, the Paget Estate and the Soil Association, initially taking ownership of four farms owned by Land Heritage. Land is donated by retiring farmers and landowners, often those with no dependents, who wish to see their life's work continue into the future. SALT was recently donated Woodoaks Farm on the edge of London which doubled the size of its land holding.

4.2.2 Aims

The trust aims to protect the countryside by acquiring and managing farmland sustainably; and to connect the public with the stewardship of the land. It also aims to safeguard legacies of productive land, providing a safe haven and preventing land being lost from farming and growing. Land management is not entirely organic although this is encouraged, and the trust is looking to create more opportunities for new entrant farmers.

4.2.3 Finance

Income in 2021-22 was approximately £131,000 of which just under half was income from tenancies. However, in 2020-21 income was £4,127,518 due to the gift of Woodoaks Farm to the charity along with a significant individual donation. Tenancies alone do not provide a sustainable income, and other income streams have been developed including installing renewable energy on properties. The organisation has a fairly constant stream of 3-4 potential donors per year, including a pipeline of future properties in Wales, and expects to take on a significant estate in England in the future which currently provides a regular annual cash donation.

4.2.4 Enablers and challenges

Enablers have included the technical knowledge of the trustees, which has helped to build relationships of confidence and trust with potential donors. The option to donate to the trust is an 'offer' rather than a 'sell' to potential donors. Tax benefits, particularly with respect to inheritance and capital gains tax also play a role.

Challenges include the price of land and housing, the complications of dealing with personal and family relationships with the land and charity law which limits the options available for donation. These include:

- As a legacy: leaving the land to the charity in a will
- As a lifetime gift: either as an outright gift, or under a gift and leaseback arrangement
- Gift of the freehold subject to a long lease: where the trust receives the freehold of land that has already been let on a long lease.

4.3 Local land trusts

There is a wide range of organisations operating within Wales which are operating a local land trust model, aiming to secure freehold or leasehold tenure of land for farming and for other economic, social and environmental purposes. These include:

[Down to Zero](#): a not for profit Community Benefit Society established and supported by Cynon Taf Community Housing Group to support community led environmental activities that help tackle climate change. As part of this work it aims to secure 50-100 acres (20-40 hectares) of land across a range of different sites to support regenerative agricultural practices in Valleys communities. It has been working with local people, communities and farming consultants to develop plans for food-based agroforestry systems, polytunnels, and biochar development on sites within the area.

[Ffynnone Community Resilience](#): a CIC based in Pembrokeshire that has established 2 community-run food producing gardens over the last 3 years, and are setting up a further two this year. They are currently purchasing 5 hectares of a 6-hectare site in Pembrokeshire in order to develop a FarmStart site, provide access to land for food growing and develop food processing facilities.

[Cwm Harry Land Trust](#): a charity based in Newtown, Powys. It acts as a development trust taking on projects that contribute to local social, economic and environmental development, creating wealth and jobs, better environments, and social cohesion. Cwm Harry are members of the consortium Ymlaen Moelyci who own Fferm Moelyci, one of the UK's first community owned farms.

Going Green for a Living: a community land trust which operates under the name [Open Newtown](#) as a result of a successful bid to the Big Lottery Community Asset Transfer Fund led by Cwm Harry. The trust manages 130 acres of public open space on behalf of the local council and has developed a new

destination play park and a BMX Pump Track and Mountain Bike Trail and a Riverside Venue, to open up the River Severn and surrounding parkland to visitors and local residents.

[Clynfyw Community Benefit Society](#): established in 2021 to purchase the farm through the issue of community shares in order to purchase a 395-acre organic farm, Clynfyw Farm, for the community. Clynfyw Farm has been farmed by the same family since the 1750s and is currently owned by Tom Lewis-Bowen. It is leased to Jim Lewis-Bowen, who manages the Care Farm, a Community Interest Company that cares for adults with learning difficulties, those recovering from mental health difficulties, domestic abuse survivors, veterans struggling with life after the forces and others.

5. Current context, opportunities and barriers for the development of land trusts in Wales

As part of the Resilient Green Spaces programme a roundtable was held for individuals and organisations involved in land trusts in England and Wales in June 2023.

The roundtable was hosted by Shared Assets and Landworkers' Alliance and attended by representatives from; Soil Association Land Trust, [Our Food 1200](#), Ecological Land Cooperative, [Project Skyline](#), Biodynamic Land Trust (BDLT), and the [Community Land Advisory Service](#), part of Social Farms & Gardens (SF&G).

5.1 Current context and provision

The current provision and capacity of farm land trusts in Wales - and in the UK more widely - is low, with trusts either being local / single site focussed or currently owning little farm land in Wales. Ecological Land Cooperative currently owns one smallholding site (a 17.85 acres site on the Gower Peninsula) in addition to the farm it has recently been donated in Carmarthenshire. Neither the Soil Association Land Trust or the Biodynamic Land Trust currently own land in Wales although in both cases there is farm land in Wales that is currently privately owned but which may pass into their ownership in the future.

In addition to being small-scale and somewhat fragmented across a number of different trusts there is a perceived lack of awareness, familiarity and therefore trust and confidence in the land trust model amongst private landowners.

However, work is currently underway between ELC, SALT and BDLT to explore how they might work more closely together to increase their capacity, and visibility and ensure a clearer offer for landowners. The national [Community Land Trust Network](#) is also interested in exploring how the Community Land Trust model might be extended from its current use primarily to support community led housing developments to encompass a wider range of land uses, including farming.

5.2 Barriers to taking privately owned land into community ownership

The main barriers identified for taking privately owned land into community ownership and management were:

- Public policy: Whilst Scotland has undertaken a significant legislative programme of land reform, including the establishment of a community right to buy and a Community Land Fund, and England has a much weaker Right to Bid, there is no equivalent provision in Wales so accessing land that is being sold to the highest bidder in an unregulated land market is very difficult.
- Land prices: Availability of land at a farm scale is an issue and the cost of land is prohibitive. Subsidies, the potential for new green investment income and tax advantages for agricultural

landowners means that agricultural land remains an attractive investment for private individuals ensuring that prices remain high.

- **Funding:** Groups accessing funding to buy land is very difficult, especially being able to raise the money quickly, you need to either find someone able to buy the land, or buy it and then do a community share after, but this is not easy to achieve.
- **Housing:** Farm land is increasingly sold separately from housing, and agroecological approaches are more labour intensive, meaning there is a demand for new agricultural dwellings that are not being permitted by the planning system, either as agricultural worker dwellings or under One Planet Development provisions.
- **Capacity:** Working with landowners to facilitate the sale or donation of land to a land trust is complex, long term and emotional work that requires significant organisational capacity and specific skills. There is also a need for capacity building programmes for community organisations and growers to ensure they have the appropriate legal structures, governance and business plans in place to develop successful farm businesses.

5.3 Opportunities for taking privately owned land into community ownership

The main opportunities identified for taking privately owned land into community ownership and management were:

- **Farm succession:** Whilst an ageing profile of family farmers and changes to the economics of farming mean that family farmers are increasingly considering issues of succession and the future stewardship of their land, the demand from new entrant and agroecological farmers is generally for sites at the scale of a smallholding rather than a family farm. There is therefore a potential role for land trusts to act as intermediaries, taking on farm scale sites and enabling new entrant and scale up stage farmers to take on part of the farm.
- **County farms:** Where local authorities and other public bodies are selling farmland communities and farm land trusts should be given first refusal on the purchase.
- **Derelict land:** Scotland is considering legislation to require owners of land that is neglected, unmanaged or derelict to put land on the open market, enabling it to be sold at a real current market value and not being held unused due a perceived future 'hope value'. Similar legislation in Wales could bring more land onto the market and a community Right to Bid could enable communities to have first refusal in such circumstances.
- **Public, charitable and church land:** Whilst it was not proposed that land that is already in public, charitable or church ownership should be transferred to community ownership (unless it is in danger of being and sold on the open market), owners with a clear public benefit purpose were identified as providing potential opportunities for community management including farming.

5.4 What support is missing?

- **Communities:** Need support to develop legal structures, a vision, business plan etc. Whilst there are several organisations that can provide this advice, it is not clear if this is enough or if

community groups think it is inadequate to help them develop economically sustainable business plans – this needs a lot of capacity and resource to get together, never mind managing the land

- Landowners: Need to be made more aware of the potential for land trusts to provide long term sustainable stewardship of their land and to navigate the legal, financial and emotional processes required to transfer ownership through sale, donation or bequests. They also need support in engaging with local communities when considering exploring potential opportunities for community ownership and use of their land.
- Funder and finance providers: Both land trusts and private landowners require access to patient capital and affordable rates alongside grants, support for community share offers. This may include new financial products that provide flexible transfer of capital and ownership, including for example the provision of long-term pension income to farmers transferring their land to community ownership. There is also a need for bridging loans or a revolving loan fund to enable communities and land trusts to act quickly to purchase land and then repay the loan once the land has been secured, through fundraising and / or from trading surpluses.
- Public bodies: Civil servants and local authority officers need support in working in partnership with land trusts in order to understand the potential for transferring public land to community ownership or long-term management as an alternative to sale on the open market to retain its public benefit.

5.5 How should support be provided or land trust capacity be developed?

There is an existing ecosystem of land trusts and support for community led farming in Wales but there is a lack of capacity, coordination, resourcing and an enabling policy environment to facilitate a greater transfer of farm land from private to community ownership.

- The Community Land Advisory Service (CLAS Cymru) provides advice but has limited capacity. It has a good relationship with the Welsh Government and expects to apply for further funding after the current funding period ends. Potential new areas for extending support would be additional capacity for local and national land trusts to engage with landowners, support for landowners to consider selling, donating or bequeathing land and the establishment of a facility to provide bridging, revolving loans to enable land purchases.
- The existing land trusts operating at a UK wide scale either have (ELC) or expect to have (BDLT and SALT) farm land holdings in Wales, and the National Community Land Trust Network is also interested in how the Community Land Trust model can enable community ownership and management of land for activities beyond housing. Whilst they are currently actively engaged in exploring how they can collaborate to provide a more efficient and coordinated service, some additional resource could enable the development of a more joined up and visible offer for private landowners in Wales.
- Our Food 1200 is working across Powys, Monmouthshire and Bannau Brycheiniog, to increase opportunities for access to land to boost food production in the area. It has the potential to act as a pilot of a more regional approach to securing land access, able to develop trusted relationships across a wide range of relevant stakeholders within the area and to identify and pursue local opportunities. It is also operating a scale that enables it to network across Wales and the UK to develop new approaches e.g. to planning for agricultural dwellings, and to share learning.

6. Developing new or existing land trusts

When considering the development of the capacity of farm land trusts the potential for establishing a single national body such as farm land trust for Wales may be considered. There is a logic in developing a trust with both a geographic specificity and scale to own and manage a portfolio of land holdings. However, it should be recognised that the business models of most land trusts are highly marginal. Land prices are high and agricultural rents and returns are low. It is also hard to secure the right mix of capital so as not to hamper the development of the organisation with unrealistic expectations of being able to pay interest on loans or dividends to investors.

The development of a robust business model, reputation, and the relationships of trust required to secure donations of land and money take significant time. There is also a fundamental structural challenge in developing a sustainable business model for an organisation dedicated to purchasing a commodity such as land - where a large part of its current value and attractiveness as an investment is the expectation that it can be sold at a higher value - in order to take it out of the market, effectively removing the resale value on which the land market is based.

The [Scottish Farm Land Trust](#) was established as a community benefit society in 2018 and has relied mainly on the voluntary effort of dedicated members and its board to develop a business plan and to explore options for generating a revenue to support its core functions, and financial mechanisms that will enable it to recoup the value of land purchases over time. These efforts have been further complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

[The People's Land Bank](#) was established in 2021 as a Community Interest Company to create a 'people's land bank' that would build a pipeline of suitable sites for community groups and community land trusts wishing to create affordable living, growing space, clean energy production and nature-based education and employment. Whilst still operational they closed their membership and website in April 2023.

Both experiences - alongside the slow development of other land trusts in scaling their models to date - demonstrate the challenges associated with developing new farm land trust facilities. The development of new vehicles also risks inciting competition with those existing organisations who are trying to develop their operations through increased collaboration.

7. Learning

The land trust model is poorly defined in legal terms and can operate using a range of legal structures provided these have an asset lock and operate for public or community benefit.

Whilst most farm land trusts use a mixed model for acquiring land most favour either an active or market based approach whereby they raise capital and buy land on the open market or through private sale, or a more receptive and relational approach where they acquire land through donations, gifts and bequests.

Farm land trusts are already operating in Wales at a local level, and the main farm land trusts based in England that operate on a UK level either own farm land in Wales or expect to do so in the future.

The main barriers identified for taking privately owned land into community ownership and management were:

- Public policy: the need for stronger rights for communities to purchase private land
- Land prices: driven by tax advantages and the perceived potential for green investment income

- Funding: lack of quick access to capital when land becomes available to purchase
- Housing: it is hard to secure planning permission for new agricultural dwellings
- Capacity: provision of support for landowners, land trusts and communities

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- Farm succession: creating a potential supply of farms that land trusts could acquire
- County farms: farm land trusts should be given first refusal when public farm land is sold
- Public, charitable and church land: provide opportunities for management for the public good

There are challenges inherent in establishing a new land trust and there is a strong existing ecosystem of organisations who are already collaborating both in Wales and across the UK to develop the capacity of land trusts and communities, and to engage landowners in exploring the option to sell, gift or bequeath land to land trusts. However all of these organisations currently lack the capacity required to develop these processes and facilities and to undertake the long term work of building capacity, awareness, understanding and relationships of trust required to bring more private land into community ownership through the development of land trusts in Wales.

8. Recommendations

8.1 The establishment of a grant fund and / or revolving loan fund that can enable any land trust or community in Wales to act quickly to bring more land into community ownership for agroecological farming.

8.2 Additional capacity for support programmes such as the community land advice associated with it to enable groups to navigate the complexities and timescales of funding and purchasing suitable land, and to enable them to secure the legal and technical advice they need to successfully complete them.

8.3 The development of new public policy that provides communities, and land trusts, in Wales with a meaningful Right to Buy - including first refusal when land identified as of interest to the community is sold.

8.4 A requirement that local authorities should ensure that communities, and land trusts, are given first refusal on the sale of any public farm land such as county farms.

8.5 Funding to pilot the role of established regional projects and organisations to build on their existing relationships and local knowledge in to act as facilitators for the identification and delivery of opportunities for public, private and charitable farm land to be secured for agroecological farming through community ownership or management.

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