



Farm News

AUTUMN 2025

News from the Farm

The tide of the season has been drawing in, with tomatoes coming out of the ground and garlic going in. We have had some crisp mornings on the farm and fresh nights, which means our polytunnels now stay closed during the cold hours to protect our baby winter salad - of which you've already had a share!

The Orchard field, in its first season, has already produced some amazing winter storage crops, thanks to Alex! We have brought cabbages, swedes, celeriac, beetroot and - always the most exciting - squash into our storage.

The Oakbrook market garden is now mostly sown with green manures, ready for winter, with only a few more crops to harvest, such as endive and pak choi.

The polytunnels have had their bi-annual flip, with winter salad, spring onions, and chard ready to bear the winter months. One of the Hawkwood tunnels has been reskinned, with side ventilation being added on, and another one is soon to receive the same treatment; this will improve airflow in the warmer months. The tunnels will then be kitted out with guttering that will collect rainwater in water tanks, which we will then use for irrigation. This was thanks to the work of our growers and board members who succeeded in receiving a grant to sustain this project.

The Pick-Your-Own patch is also resting with green manures, but with a little more spinach, kale and parsley for you all to eat.



Volunteer session in the field! More and more volunteers have been joining us on a Wednesday morning on the farm, with a record of 30 volunteers helping us harvest squash and plant out a few weeks ago. Thank you volunteers for all your time and enthusiasm! If you'd like to get involved, we meet at 9am on Wednesdays at the farm, and the session runs until 12noon.

Finally, we are still looking for **new members** to join, so please refer a friend if you haven't already! We have updated our joining form, making it easier to start receiving a new share, please find it [here](#) and share widely.

- Anna & the Farm Team



Pack shed update

A few changes in the pack shed this month! The payment books have now been removed, and all transactions should now be made through the tablet. If the tablet isn't working for any reason, please check the notice behind it for details on how to make direct bank transfers — to SCA for veg, eggs, and juice, and to Sam for meat.

We've also added a new noticeboard on the back of the door — please feel free to use it! You're welcome to post community events, recipes for items in the share, or anything else you'd like to share with others.

Finally, a quick note that we've decided not to continue our Demeter certification for the pack shed, mainly due to cost.

This means we can no longer label the produce in the shed as certified organic or biodynamic. However, rest assured that the land we farm and our growing practices remain fully certified, and we only source produce from certified organic producers.

We're still looking for new members to join our farm community, so please continue to spread the word so that we can continue to thrive over the coming months and years. Thanks for your understanding and continued support!

- Jamie



We're excited about our annual bonfire night, which this year is taking place on Friday 7th November at 6pm. There will be burgers from the BBQ from Sam (veggie options available too) and plenty of warming soup for the autumn night as well.

If you're able to make some soup for us to dish out, then please get in touch: membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Report from the SCA AGM

The AGM was a positive and uplifting event, where we were reminded of how valuable our farm is to the community and how many people are committed to making it a success.

As you have seen in farm reports in newsletters, this year has been a tough one for the farm team. Although the spring and summer were beautiful in many ways, the lack of rain put huge pressure onto the growers, physically watering crops but also negotiating access to shared water resources.

They have done an amazing job providing us with abundant supplies of delicious vegetables.

We received the finance report from our treasurer, Rachel. As we knew, this showed a substantial loss for last year, something the core team has managed to turn around with a stringent break-even budget agreed back in April, with support from the farm team.

As Rachel summarised it:

“The 2024–2025 financial year saw a 12% decline in income compared to the previous year, primarily driven by a reduction in membership numbers and, to a lesser extent, a decrease in income from events. Expenditure fell modestly by 4%; however, staffing costs have continued to rise as a proportion of total costs. This increase reflects both the organisation’s ongoing commitment to the Real Living Wage and the necessity of maintaining appropriate staffing levels.”

We heard that loss of members also continues to pose challenges to the farm. There are two main drivers here: increased competition in the local



organic veg market; and continuing financial pressure on households, which makes an SCA share feel like a luxury, despite fresh, healthy, climate- and soil-friendly veg being an absolute necessity!

That said, there have been real successes this year. We’ve welcomed more new members than in any of the previous six years and membership seems to be stabilising at around 200, thanks to consistently excellent produce from the farm team over the summer; active recruitment through online promotion and Stroud Market; and a significant rise in word-of-mouth referrals. **Thanks to you for continuing to pass the word: it is really paying off.**

After formally accepting the report, we moved into discussion mode, focused on how to engage our members better – and also how we can connect more strongly with the wider Stroud community. All of the groups stressed the vital importance of the farm in building our community, something that is so vital in these disconnected times.

- Molly

New SCA treasurer needed - could it be you?

While we all enjoy the events and our weekly trips to the packshed, a lot also goes on behind the scenes to keep SCA going as a business and as a company. Central to this is budgeting and accounting. I’ve been working with SCA to keep the financial wheels turning for several years but unfortunately it’s time for me to step away as I have other commitments which require my time.

We’re looking for somebody who has financial or accounting skills to replace me and to support SCA as Treasurer from April. Could you give a few hours a week to keep the farm on track financially? Feel free to get in touch for an informal conversation about what might be involved.

- Rachel

Messages from our Members

Every month we get lots of lovely messages from SCA members - some on our Packshed noticeboard, some in person, and some via email and social media. Here's just a couple of requests from our mailbag - and if you've got something you'd like to see appear in a future newsletter, just let us know! newsletter@stroudcommunityagriculture.org

Can you help at the Hatch?

[NDHub Gloucestershire](#) is a charity and part of their help for neurodivergent people is a farm space here at Oakbrook Farm, The Hatch.

I was really pleased when Zaphira, NDHub CEO, moved The Hatch to Stroud as it will benefit local young people. But it's created a problem; she has to travel from Tewkesbury twice a day to let the poultry out in the morning, then again to put them inside in the evening.

Once she's here it only takes a few minutes, but the travel is at least 2 hours a day. So we are **looking for local volunteers** to let the poultry out in the morning before 8:30 and collect any eggs. It only takes about 10 minutes and doesn't require poultry skills. Please let me know if you can do a morning? My number is 07977 145366 and email Janie.roberts@gmail.com. Thanks for reading this.



- Jane Roberts



Thanks for Ruth's Eco-Printing Workshop!

I felt strongly that I should let you all know how much I enjoyed the eco-print workshop on Wednesday. Ruth was such an enthusiastic and helpful tutor and I learnt so much. We all went away with a beautiful eco-print on paper and the necessary knowledge to carry on our own experimentation at home. I have attached a photo of my efforts, but hope you get photos from others too, as the results were truly stunning!

Huge, huge thanks to Ruth, and to the other Ruth for her support. Looking forward to other similar workshops in the future, hopefully!

Very best wishes

- Sue

A farewell to grower Alex...

Some of you will already have heard the sad news that our grower Alex has decided to move on from the farm team after years of hard work, dedication and commitment to this amazing project.

I have only had the pleasure of working with Alex for just over a year but I know her efforts for this farm have been noticed for much longer and we are very sad to see her go.

Before I had even met Alex I met some of the people Alex worked and trained with and they all spoke highly of her energy, commitment and hard work. In her time with SCA, apart from growing mountains of delicious vegetables, she has put on some banging events, helped us balance budgets, navigate subsidies, move fields, set up polytunnels, secure funding, learn how to use heavy machinery and - most importantly of all - shared her infectious enthusiasm and genuine passion for community agriculture with everyone who met her.

We are delighted that she will continue to be part of our wider community as she stays in Stroud and I know that she will find her way to be part of our SCA family in whatever way works for her.



Alex (on the left) celebrates our recent squash harvest

So a massive thank you from all of us, the farm team, the core group and all the members for your tireless efforts for this important project, we look forward to seeing what you do next and staying in touch. Good luck Alex, we will miss you!

- Diya

Wades Farm Kitchen survey

Would you be interested in having access to a food preparation and processing kitchen in the Slad Valley?

Wades Farm is a 12 acre smallholding in the Slad Valley where we base our conservation grazing business. From our herd of Galloway cattle we produce high quality but very slow grown beef, so we are exploring ways of adding value.

We have planning permission to convert one of our farm buildings into a unit kitchen with specialist equipment for value-add processing, and given we will only need the space for ourselves on a very part time / adhoc basis we want to gauge interest from other producers in the area - who, like ourselves - might need either a regular or

occasional, fit-for-purpose kitchen in which to make product - cheese, charcuterie, preserves, and more.

Being in the Cotswold National Landscape we have the opportunity to apply for funding through the extended Farming in Protected Landscapes scheme, who are very positive about this proposal.

If this sounds interesting at all, please take a few moments [to fill out THIS SURVEY](#).

Alternatively if you'd rather just have a chat, that works too - please call or message Emma on 07551 979197.

- Emma & Eddie, Wade Farm

Mateo's trip to East Africa



Over the last few months I have been away from the farm pursuing other projects, with the Twinning mantle carried admirably by our own Eva Wildin (Thank you Eva!).

Meanwhile, I swapped trowels for owls (sorry) and participated in a research project studying a population of Africa's smallest owl, the sokoke scops owl, a bird hanging on in several forest fragments along the East African coast.

It was a dream come true to contribute to frontline conservation work in an ecosystem currently experiencing environmental and political pressures.

From a farming perspective, it appears that there is much less of a conversation concerning regenerative/sustainable/biodynamic farming practices in rural Kenya. Forest patches are felled for the planting of crops such as pineapple which is grown as a monoculture.

Land in the area of study is some of the cheapest in the country and is bought up for farming even though the soils are some of the poorest. The result is a big loss for the region's native fauna and flora, but work is ongoing to get the forest formally recognised for its rich biodiversity.

I'm now back with Twinning and happy to announce that the coordinator role is being shared between myself and Eva. Over the next few months we hope to start work on a farm kitchen and attend more events in Bristol. See you soon!

- Mateo

Celebrating the Harvest with members

At the end of September we welcomed members of the farm and the general public on to the farm to celebrate the season with us for the Harvest Party. We were surprised by how many people ended up attending with guesses at around 100!

It's an important moment in the season to take stock of all of the work we have been doing on the farm throughout the season providing beautiful organic vegetables to our members. We shared food - lots of which was made by amazing volunteers with veg from the farm.

We played guess the weight of the *Musquee de Provence* squash (which was a whopping 12.8KG!!)

There were various workshops on offer including flower bashing, drawing with charcoal made on the fire, singing and mud painting. We were joined by our friends from the Somali Kitchen in Bristol who ran a workshop on Somali Spice making. All in all it was a lovely community building day on the farm!

- Eva



Recipe Corner

Polish cabbage wraps

Boil the rice in salted water and let it cool. To make the stuffing, chop and fry the mushrooms using a tablespoon of olive oil. Whilst they are frying, finely dice the onion and add to the mushrooms.

Then add the boiled rice to the fried mushrooms and onion and leave to cool, adding salt, pepper and marjoram to season them.

Meanwhile, cut 10 outer leaves from the cabbage. Partially trim off the thick vein from the leaves (so it's not so thick and the leaf is more flexible). Blanch the leaves in boiling water and pat dry. Put 1-2 tablespoons of stuffing on each leaf, roll up like croquettes (first fold the sides inwards, then roll up from the thicker part).

Place the cabbage leaves on the bottom of a large pot. Then pack the cabbage wraps tightly, and pour over the broth. Stew for about 30-40 minutes. Serve with mushroom or tomato sauce and some potatoes.

Recipe author: Aleks

Ingredients (serves 4-5)

- 300 g of mushrooms
- 100g rice
- one medium onion
- 10 large (outer) leaves of savoy cabbage
- 1l of vegetable broth
- salt and pepper
- 1 teaspoon of marjoram

Serve with boiled/roasted potatoes or jacket potatoes.



Find out how decisions are made about your farm



The amazing thing about SCA is that we are not just a place to find wonderful, seasonal organic vegetables, grown in an ethical way, we are also a co-operative that belongs to you.

At the AGM you elected the members of the core group, who are also the directors of SCA. We have an in-person meeting every month and you are welcome to join us to see how we make decisions and maybe think about joining us?

We meet at 5.30 every third Thursday of the month so the next core group meetings are:

- Thursday 20th November
- Thursday 18th December
- Thursday 15th January

Venues change during the winter so contact Molly if you'd like to join us: molly@gaianeconomics.org

- Molly

Our SCA Principles

1. To farm in a way that enhances biodiversity and reduces our carbon emissions.
2. To develop a sense of community around the production of our food.
3. To ensure our farmers have a decent livelihood and can afford to live in Stroud District.
4. To continue to pioneer a new economic model based on mutual benefit and shared risk.
5. To offer opportunities for learning, therapy and re-connecting with the life of the earth.
6. To practice organic and biodynamic agriculture.
7. To be inclusive in welcoming people from any background or situation, including those with low or no income.
8. To encourage members, in co-operation with the farmers, to use the farm for their individual and social activities and celebrations.
9. To be transparent in all our affairs. To make decisions on the basis of consensus wherever possible. To strive towards social justice.
10. To network with others to promote community supported agriculture to other communities and farms and share our learning (both economic and farming).
11. To work co-operatively with other enterprises that share our principles.



**Thank you for being a member of
Stroud Community Agriculture!**

DONATING YOUR SHARE?

If you'd like to donate your share to a volunteer or the food hubs while you're on holiday, please send an email to:

membership@stroudcommunityagriculture.org

Or text **Jamie**: 07758 237078

CONTACT US

General enquiries and information:
info@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

Membership Admin:
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