



Farm News

SPRING 2026 ISSUE

Farm Report

Things are in full swing now at the farm. February gave us a gracefully slow build in pace as the new growers – Dan and Joe – had time to familiarise themselves with the operations of the farm, under the gratefully received tutelage of Anna and Jamie, and the invaluable handover from Alex and Beni.

Seed sowing began with a great range of tomatoes and peppers. These have already been potted on and will be planted in the polytunnels in just less than a month! The slow pace of winter seems a distant memory. We are hardening off beetroot, spring onions, and salads now in the open air and will soon be planting them in the freshly prepared beds of Oakbrook's market garden.

Tractor ploughing has started to turn in winter cover, revealing the rich brown soil which will be home to an abundance of vegetables this year. We have managed to stave off the hungry gap longer than expected, with good conditions and a fresh new burst of growth.

The volunteer days on Wednesdays have been delightful with huge progress being made with so many dedicated hands. Thanks go to all who have helped, and to Ruth who so lovingly holds the space.

Finally, we are putting the Severn Trent project to regular good use, with the overhead sprinkling using stored rainwater.

Flowers sown in the polytunnel margins are just showing signs of emerging and the life on the farm is waking up from its winter slumber.

I write these words with just over a month under my belt at SCA and I feel blessed to have joined such an amazing operation. After more than ten years in the horticultural world – working in gardens and private estates – I feel that at last I have found a home in the fields (and polytunnels) of this farm.

It's a privilege to be part of this open-hearted community – something I have searched for across the country and abroad. Like Dorothy returning from Oz, coming home to Stroud was as revelatory as it was reassuring. I grew up in these valleys and hope to grow old in them too! I am very much looking forward to the coming seasons, learning and applying biodynamic practices, and meeting more of you around the farm.

- Joe



Thank you for being part of the farm!



This was going to be an appeal for more core group members but after the uplifting members' meeting we had at Stroud Brewery last night I wanted to start by saying a huge thank you for everything you do for the farm.

Nearly 40 of us got together in Stroud Brewery for some social time, some exchanges and some planning. It was moving to hear the many contributions people make to the farm, from the wonderful Wednesday morning volunteers coordinated by Ruth (thank you!) to people who are organising events, improving buildings and kit around the farm, and helping in a thousand other ways.

It was also good to see younger people stepping up and to realise how important SCA is in building a community and how much love there is for the farm. **We do however still need more core group members in the autumn.**

The Core Group is the name we give to the members of our farm who hold the business end of the farm together. Because we employ people and sell food, we need to be registered as a company.

We are a members' cooperative and that means that some of the members need to hold the responsibility of directors. Without this the farm would not be able to carry on trading. It may seem like a lot of responsibility but it is actually an amazing way to find yourself right at the heart of the farm, understanding everything that happens and helping to guide the farm in the interest of members.

The term is between two and three years and all of our current directors – just three of us – are coming to the end of their terms this autumn. So we do need new people to come forward to take their turn.

Now would be a good time to join the core group, so that there is plenty of time to organise the succession at the AGM, and so that those of us who have been involved with the farm for several years can help you learn what it means to be a core group member.

[Please do drop me an email](#) if you would like more information about this vital role on behalf of the wider membership and community of the farm.

Molly (molly@gaianeconomics.org)

Book our lovely roundhouse

Our beautiful straw-bale roundhouse is available to book year-round and now that the warmer weather is here, do please book it for whatever you need - and let your friends know about it!

We've hosted forest schools, cooking lessons, willow weaving, yoga classes, poetry readings, book launches, art exhibitions, and much, much more. It is a practical, well-equipped venue in a fabulous setting - [book your slot at the Roundhouse here](#). And spread the word!



Jamie's updates

As we move into early spring, there's a real sense of transition on the farm. The celeriac in your share this week were the last crops that we had in storage from last season. From here on, everything you receive will be coming straight from the fields, bought in staples aside.

We still have plenty growing – kalettes, leeks, cabbages and kale have happily wintered in the fields, our salad tunnels are resolutely continuing to flourish, and we'll be getting some lovely colour in our shares soon from rhubarb, radish and rainbow chard, but we are now entering what's often called the “**hungry gap**” - the stretch of the year when winter crops are winding down, and the new season's abundance hasn't quite kicked in yet.

While we will buy in some extra veg to keep your shares topped up, there is likely to be a decline in the overall generosity each week. Your support during this time is what allows us to keep growing, investing in the soil, and preparing for the bumper harvests to come – exactly why the CSA model exists.

As always, **thank you for being part of the farm.** This time of year really highlights what CSA is all about - sharing the risks and rewards of seasonal growing, and staying connected to where your food comes from.

Bread in the shed!

We're also really excited to be trialing fresh bread sales in the pack shed, supplied by Leola bakery in Stroud, owned by Andy and Ruth Strang, who also happen to be members of the farm.

To help us manage quantities and reduce waste, bread will be pre-order only. Orders will need to be placed by **Thursday at 10am** - use the link tinyurl.com/sca-bread to place your order.

Collection will be from the pack shed on Saturday mornings, and you will pay for your order using the existing shop system.

New Membership Software

Over the next couple of months, we'll be moving onto a new membership system. This will:

- Make it easier for us and you to manage your details, shares, and payments
- Improve communication so you receive more relevant updates
- Help us run things more smoothly behind the scenes

We'll share clear instructions when the time comes - there's nothing you need to do just yet, and we'll make the transition as simple as possible.

We'll start with Saturday mornings and see how it goes. If there's good demand, we'll look to expand the available collection days. If you would be interested in collecting on another day, please do get in touch and let us know.

We're also happy to report that the hens just over the road at Good Small Farms have started laying again! So your eggs now come from just a couple of hundred of metres away.

And finally, we're also pleased that we'll also be selling cards designed by one of our members, the artist Tigga Goode. She has done a range of beautiful designs, many inspired by the land at Hawkwood and SCA.

Holidays / missed shares

A quick reminder to **please let us know if you will be away** and can't collect your share in particular week. We will donate your share either to one of our amazing team of volunteers who help to keep the farm running, or to the Network of Stroud Food Hubs. We want to make sure your veggies find a good home!

- Jamie

A word from Farmer Sam

What a difference a bit of sun makes! The warm weather has really got the grass growing, allowing the cows to go outside, which is lovely to see. Most of the cows have gone to fields in Westrip, however you have probably seen the three cows at Hawkwood, they are due to calve in the next few weeks and there I can keep a closer eye on them.

The piglets are growing well and seem to be popular with everyone. They can be quite noisy and will try and convince anyone who walks past they're starving. Don't believe them!

The sheep are currently at Hawkwood. The breed we have are Wiltshire Horns. Its an old native breed once quite rare. Their outstanding feature is they don't need shearing. Around may-June they will naturally shed their fleeces.



This trait has been bred out of most sheep who would just grow longer and longer wool if not sheared. It saves a lot of time and money not shearing and makes them less susceptible to getting fly strike (maggots that eat into the sheep!) which means no nasty chemical repellents. I bought some more ewes over winter, they hadn't been scanned so I have no idea if there carrying twins, singles or even triplets or possibly not even pregnant. Time will tell.

Going forward there is lots of fence repairs to do, staying on top of the seemingly never ending brambles and always the daily livestock checks. The meat sales are going well, so well in fact I'm struggling to keep up with demand. Thank you to everyone who buys the meat. Happy spring, I hope we have some "normal" weather this year.

- Farmer Sam

Member Interviews

We are starting a new series of blogs featuring interviews from members about why you are members of the farm, and what you enjoy about being a members! These could either be in written form (accompanied by a picture of you!) or recorded as a video. If you would be interested in taking part, then please email jamie@stroudcommunityagriculture.org so I can email you a list of questions, or arrange a time to do a video interview.

Balanced budget set from April

With prices and wages rising, it is difficult for all small enterprises to balance their budgets and SCA is no exception.

We are pleased to say that the budget came in on target last year. This year we have set another balanced budget but meeting it will depend on increasing our prices by 10% in the summer. This is to match the increases in the wages for our growers and rising prices for everything including energy, water, and the seeds and other supplies we need to grow the veg. We absorbed some of these costs last year but we can't do that again this year.

The best way to reduce these costs and keep our prices down is to bring in new members, so anything you can do to spread the word to friends and neighbours really helps.

And we also need to bring in money through events and fund-raising. If you'd like to work with a small group organising events including the summer camp, harvest festival, workshops in the roundhouse, or others we haven't thought of, please get in touch. Anybody with fund-raising skills is also invited to please step forward!

- Molly

Celebrating life on the farm



Imbolc: After the dark, cold days of winter we were delighted to celebrate Imbolc on the farm on 2nd February. Later translated into Candlemas, this pre-spring festival gave us a chance to light candles across our land and begin to warm it into new life and fertility.

A bunch of members poured the wax and lit the candles and we spent some time together in the roundhouse reflecting on the turning of the year, and sharing tea and cake!

Summer events: Looking ahead we would like to bring back the annual tradition of camping on the farm this summer. If you would like to be part of that and help us organise it please get in touch with Molly (molly@gaianeconomics.org). We

haven't set the date yet so you could help us choose a date that works for you.

We are planning on running a series of summer workshops and events on the farm, which would be open to both members and non-members of the farm.

So far, ideas include a dye workshop, a film screening, and a toast-and-eggs morning. The purpose of these workshops is three-fold:

- Strengthen the sense of community on the farm for existing members
- Bring more new people to the farm, and hopefully increasing our membership
- Raise crucial funds for the farm from ticket sales and/or donations.

If you would be interested in running a small workshop or event, or know someone who might, then please do get in touch to discuss – similarly if you are interested in helping to support the planning and running of these events, that would be very welcome too. In either case, please contact jamie@stroudcommunityagriculture.org

See you on the farm soon!

- Molly

Welcome to our new grower, Joe

As one of the growers here on the farm, I am putting my energy into raising healthy, happy seedlings and tending to the polytunnels. I am keenly interested in local supply chains, systems, and economies that can develop and thrive through the efforts of communities like SCA. It is with great excitement that I observe more and more people putting their shoulder to these very same wheels and linking hands in cooperation. I am happily engaged in the study of biodynamics and look forward to bringing this to the fore of my daily work. Wholesome food feeds the heart!

- Joe



Stroud CSA needs YOU!

We know you love Stroud Community Agriculture's delicious veg, heart-warming events and really appreciate our hardworking growers. **But did you know we're looking for volunteers to help spread the love even wider?**

In a world that can sometimes feel heavy, SCA is making positive change: creating healthy local food, restoring nature, and building a community that genuinely looks after one another. And our volunteers are at the heart of it all.

We've got so many amazing opportunities to help our beautiful farm thrive - whether that's helping organise events, strategising our finances, becoming a core group member, or helping out with practical stuff around the farm. Many hands make light work, and we need your energy and enthusiasm now more than ever!

Why get involved?

Well, you'll be helping keep the dream of community-owned and run agriculture alive and thriving, for starters. But there's more!

Helping out at CSA means you can make new friends, see old friends, connect more with the community, learn skills that can open new paths, be part of something hopeful and purposeful - and, of course, have fun. All while making making a real difference and building a resilient local food system that nourishes our town!

Join in

To keep this vibrant community thriving, we're inviting members to get involved in ways that suit their interests, skills, and time. You don't need experience, just enthusiasm.

Choose what sparks your interest and let us know via the short form:

- Love numbers, spreadsheets, or **accounting**? Help us manage the farm's finances and business model
- Enjoy bringing people together? Join an **events** team and create joyful moments
- Have **coaching** or HR experience? Help our farm flourish through mentorship and wellbeing training
- Curious about being a **director** in a team? Help guide the long-term strategy of SCA
- Prefer hands-on **practical** tasks? Join in with maintenance jobs and essential improvements
- Got a gift for **communication**? Help us recruit new members and spread the word.

Interested?

Just fill in [this short form](#) and we'll get in touch.

Let's grow this farm together. Join the SCA Farm Community today!



Recipe Corner

Purple sprouting broccoli, squash and spelt salad

Mix the red onion in a large bowl with the vinegar and sugar and leave to soak while you cook the spelt for about 40 mins.

Roast the squash in olive oil and salt for 30-40 minutes, until just tender and starting to colour. Meanwhile, blanch the PSB in boiling water for 3 minutes. Drain, refresh in cold water, then drain again.

Peel the oranges and remove any pith. Cut in between the membrane either side of each segment and remove each orange segment. Squeeze any leftover juice into the bowl with the onion. Add the mustard, capers, 4 tablespoons of olive oil and season.

Mix in the spelt, squash, purple sprouting broccoli, orange segments, olives and parsley. Serve with a dash of olive oil.

- Ben

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 small red onion, finely diced
- 2 tbsp red, sherry or balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 200g spelt grain
- 1 small squash, cut into thin wedges
- 250g purple sprouting broccoli
- 2 oranges
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp capers
- large handful pitted black olives
- large handful chopped parsley



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 16th April
- Thursday 21st May
- Thursday 19th June
- Thursday 16th July

We'll be meeting at the roundhouse for the summer months. If you'd like to join us it would be helpful for you to let me know in advance:

molly@gaianeconomics.org



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:
membership@StroudCommunityAgriculture.org

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