

Opportunity for a Head Grower to Set Up a CSA Market Garden at Hackhurst Farm, East Sussex

We are offering the opportunity for an experienced organic or bio-dynamic grower/growers to set-up a market garden on one of the fields at Hackhurst Farm, near Hailsham, East Sussex. If you are someone looking for a long-term project to lead on, and you have prior experience of starting a commercial garden from scratch, or sufficient skills, growing experience and resources to be able to do so, then please do get in touch. The applicant will need a minimum of 3 years commercial growing experience, and an understanding and a passionate commitment to agroecological farming.

Our vision for the market garden here is that it is set up as a Community Supported Agriculture garden (CSA). We want to see local people have access to land and to share in the joys, risks and challenges of growing food. With that in mind, applicants need to have an understanding of setting up and running a CSA partnership, or open to seeking support and mentorship to do so.

The grower will be responsible for the planning, marketing, production and delivery of CSA vegetables. Some of the shares would be taken up by The Courtyard at Hackhurst Farm business, for the supply of organic fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs to the kitchen for creating locally sourced meals to the guests visiting for retreats or well-being events.

This role will involve:

- designing and setting up the garden
- finding funding if needed
- budgeting for and marketing of the CSA
- managing and delivering on the growing cycle, including planning, crop production, harvesting and delivery of vegetables for onsite collection
- ordering supplies (seed orders, new equipment, sundries etc.) in accordance with the CSA budget and maintaining equipment in good working order
- building soil fertility
- taking on and managing extra workers and volunteers as needed
- running a weekly volunteer session with community members
- ensuring Health and Safety practices are in place and being followed and documented
- attending vision meetings with the partners of Hackhurst Farm to feed into the overall visioning of the farm (we will adopt a self-management system called Holacracy to run the overall business)
- reporting to CSA partnership members
- reviewing finances and identifying areas for investment and budgeting

In addition to skills in organic and agroecological farming principles, the grower will also need to have:

- passion for listening and learning from the land, so that the food grown is done so in collaboration with nature
- the desire for creating a more diverse, inclusive and accessible food system
- leadership and professional communication skills in order to inspire and lead the team of volunteers
- organisational skills; time management and ability to prioritise
- ability to work on own initiative and collaboratively as part of the overall team
- effective judgment to make sound and responsible decisions and remain grounded under stress

- flexibility and a willingness to adapt to changing situations and to learn new skills
- experience with budgeting, finance and farm administration
- a full UK driving licence
- a UK work visa if applying from abroad.

Broader land management skills, agroforestry and livestock experience are welcome. There will be scope for incorporating other enterprises at the farm that diversify revenue streams.

Vision and Overview of Hackhurst Farm

Rebecca and Sascha Kriese came to Hackhurst Farm in 2021 and are passionate about developing this farm into a thriving, community-focused, regenerative enterprise, that protects and enhances the wildlife interest of the site, and shares the natural benefits of this land with others.

Hackhurst Farm is a 96-acre farm comprising a farmhouse, a 3-bedroom bungalow, a Sussex barn surrounded by a courtyard of outbuildings soon to be renovated, a large open-sided agricultural barn, permanent pasture fields, woodland, several ponds and well-established hedgerows. The site is on gently sloping Grade 3 land of mainly clay, has a number of ponds and wells, and has mains water pipes to all fields. The agricultural barn and stables are open for use and have electricity supply.

Our personal vision is to support people to step into their sovereignty in all aspects of their lives. To bring people back into connection with nature and their bodies, with soil as the source of their food, and with their own inner wisdom, so they can live healthier and more community-conscious lives. We are committed to working in collaboration with the land and its natural intelligence to realise this vision.

In the coming year the Sussex barn and surrounding outbuildings will be renovated and then rented out to the business called The Courtyard at Hackhurst Farm LLP, of which Rebecca, Sascha and others are partners. This business will host retreats and workshops that focus on health, wellbeing and regenerative farming in the Sussex barn. It will also rent out the clinical practice spaces for individual alternative healthcare consultations and treatments. The studio and another guest room will cater for guests staying for retreats. The kitchen/dining area will serve organic meals to guests, ideally from produce predominantly grown on site, and will host cooking workshops and talks on topics related to health and wellbeing, agroecology and land-based traditions and knowledge.

We envisage the activities within The Courtyard to complement the overall running of the farm, which will focus on food production alongside soil regeneration, wildlife conversation, biodiversity enhancement, and nature connection for young people and those with special needs (incl. bushcraft and tree-planting activities, and land skills learning opportunities).

Income and Agreement

What is key to us is that the market garden runs as a viable business and the important work of producing food is honoured appropriately. The CSA model is a great approach for enabling this outcome. We are open to discussion about the type of tenancy or agreement the CSA has with the farm. In addition to this, we seek to find ways to build and maintain a strong relationship of support and exchange between the CSA and the overall running of the farm and all the business activities taking place in The Courtyard.

Future On-Site Accommodation

Work to renovate the farmhouse will commence in February 2023 for a 12-month duration. During this time we will be living in the 3-bed bungalow, so a grower would either need to have their own mobile

accommodation that could be parked on site, or rent something locally. Once renovations to the farmhouse have been completed there will be the option to rent the 3-bedroom bungalow at a reasonable rate.

Apply

Rebecca and Sascha recognise the lack of diversity within agriculture. We welcome all applications for this role and actively encourage people from ethnic minority backgrounds and LGBTQI+ to apply.

Please apply by email to Rebecca Kriese: rebecca@hackhurstfarm.uk with a covering letter and CV. If after an interview and site visit we feel we could work together, you would be asked to present your ideas in a business plan.

