

After 32 years of diverse organic agroforestry, scientific research, and public engagement, Wakelyns in Suffolk is a key agroecological farming and community site – an irreplaceable asset for the UK and beyond.

But unless the Wakelyns Charitable Community Benefit Society buys Wakelyns by autumn 2026, unavoidable open market sale will likely lead to its loss as a public facing resource.

Of the £2,050,000 we need to protect its future, £850,000 is already secured by donation from one current co-owner.

Please help us with the rest.



Securing the future of Wakelyns, a unique farm and community asset.

Leading the way in new methods of farming for ecological and social impact.

Wakelyns



Wakelyns has been a pioneer in shaping agroforestry practice and in population grain research across the UK and beyond.

But it will probably be lost as a public facing resource unless we can secure it through community ownership.



Agroforestry at Wakelyns

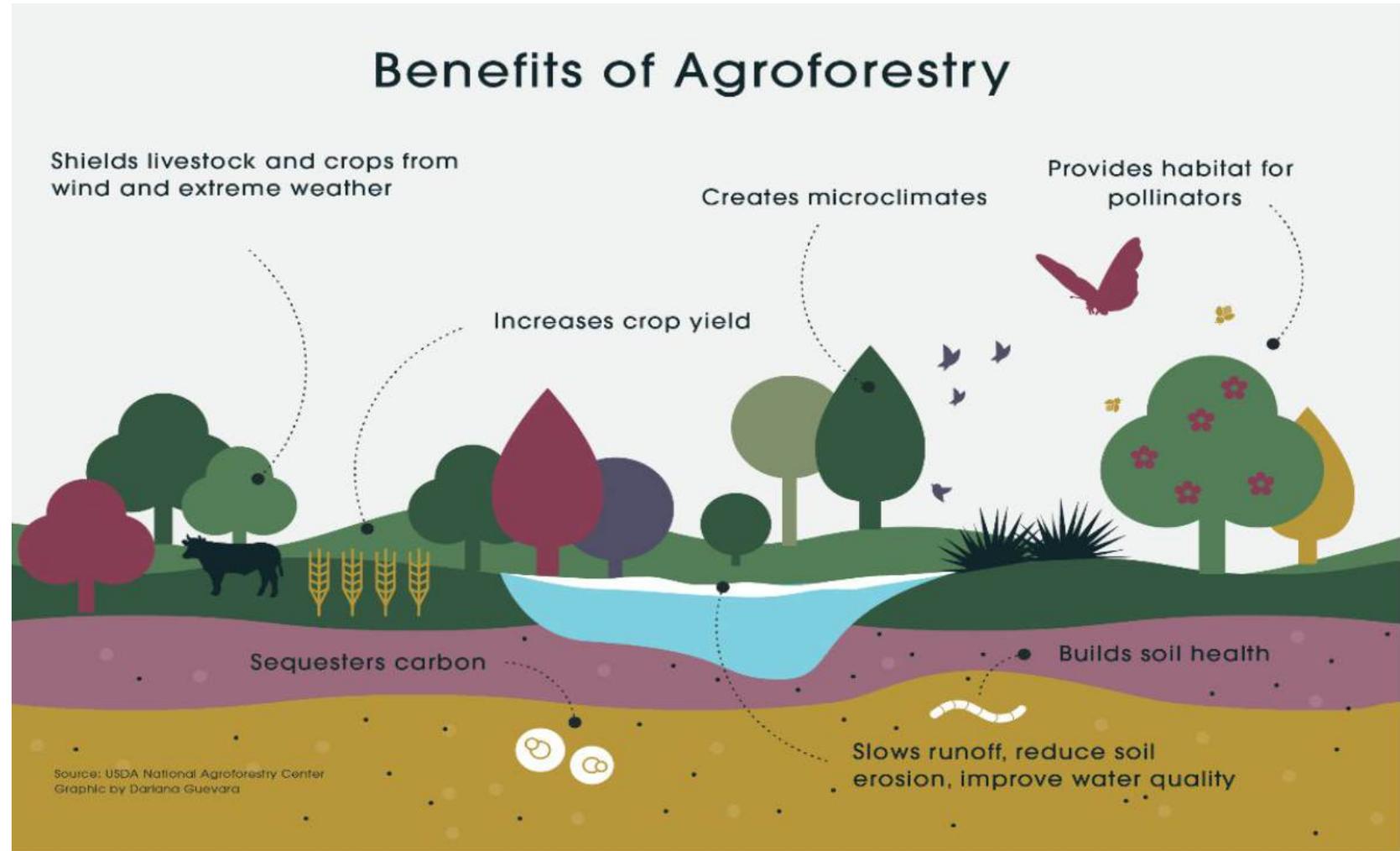
Agroforestry is a nature friendly farming system that integrates trees and shrubs into crop and animal farming.

Its widespread adoption would have significant environmental and economic benefits.

Agroforestry is central to UK Government policy, as UK farming changes in response to biodiversity loss, soil loss and climate pressures.

Established in 1992, Wakelyns in North Suffolk is one of the UK and Europe's oldest and most visited demonstration agroforestry farms.

It is one of only two farms in the UK on the Oxford University Nature Based Solutions Initiative's interactive global map of best practice.



Wakelyns' Achievements

- One of the UK's longest-running agroforestry research sites, collaborating with Organic Research Centre and Rothamsted Research.
- Participant in major EU research projects, including the €15m AGFORWARD and AGROMIX projects.
- Through its YQ wheat population, demonstrated that ultra-low input farming can produce strong yields that are resilient to unpredictable climate stress.
- Founded the international Agroforestry Open Weekend, now involving over 50 sites.
- A recognised learning centre for national and regional organisations.
- Inspired global adoption of agroforestry, alley cropping, and silvo-arable systems.





Wakelyns - Business & Community

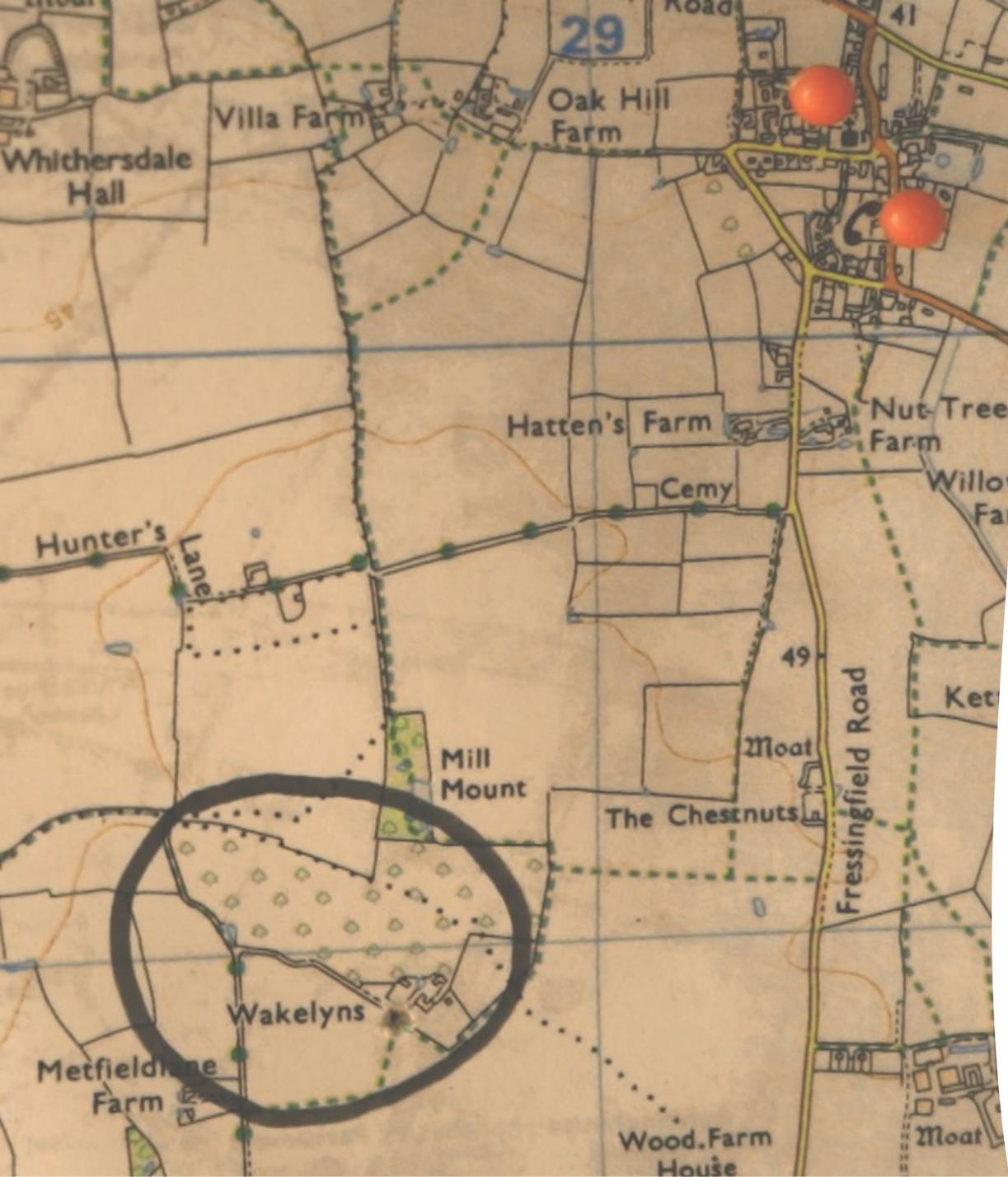
In addition to its agroforestry activity - Wakelyns acts as an incubator for local enterprises with an emphasis on short sourcing and distribution chains, cooperative working and barter.

It is also a much loved community asset, putting people in touch with nature.

Local environmental education charity, Natural Habitat, holds organised visits from local primary schools.

The Wakelyns Dal Festival attracts people from all over the country, with chefs using lentils grown at Wakelyns to produce stunning dishes.





The Future of Wakelyns

To date Wakelyns has been a privately owned but public facing business, established by its founders Professor Martin Wolfe and his wife Ann and subsequently inherited by their sons.

One of the sons now needs to realise the value of their 50% share. Without our action, that will be through an open market sale in autumn 2026 of most of Wakelyns, and its likely loss as a continuing resource to researchers and the local and wider public community.

However, our vision is that Wakelyns is will become a community owned asset, preserving its heritage and securing its future.

The Wakelyns Charitable Community Benefit Society (WCCBS) has been created to acquire the site for public purposes.

We now need to raise £2,050,000 to purchase the site and fund an initial three year programme of charitable activity.

Whilst we do not underestimate the scale of this task, it is made considerably more achievable by the other co-owner, David Wolfe, agreeing to gift his 50% share (£850,000) to WCCBS.

Stewardship, Not Reinvention

An aerial photograph of a farm. The foreground and middle ground are dominated by neat, parallel rows of young trees, likely an orchard or agroforestry system. There are several greenhouses or covered walkways interspersed among the trees. In the background, there are larger fields, some of which appear to be harvested or fallow, and a cluster of farm buildings with various roofs. The overall scene is a well-organized agricultural landscape.

Securing Wakelyns is the critical first step.

- We will not be reinventing what Wakelyns does.
- We will steward what has been built.
- We will add community ownership/ governance, and ensure Wakelyns works well into the future.

The community ownership model of WCCBS will provide:

- a long-term, asset-locked structure established as a charity
- democratic governance with wider participation
- access to grants, research funding and community investment
- a foundation for professional operations and strategic development.



WCCBS Management & Transition

The current WCCBS board is a representative group of 14 people from the Wakelyns community chaired by Donald Peck, (ex chair of the Organic Research Centre). Later this year there will be a community share issue. Future board members will be elected from the shareholders.

David Wolfe, who has been managing Wakelyns with his wife Amanda Illing since 2021, will gradually transfer management of Wakelyns to WCCBS and both will remain involved after the charity obtains full ownership.

WCCBS will appoint a new manager to take over gradually, initially taking responsibility for the agroforestry fields and farming, and implementing an agroforestry plan approved by the Forestry Commission.

There will be a gradual transfer and concurrent development of the remaining areas and activities, such as the accommodation and events business, with full community ownership and governance in place by 2030.

Wakelyns - National & Local

Our vision is that Wakelyns will:

- Serve as a key demonstration site for agroforestry and climate-resilient farming.
- Function as a leading research and education centre.
- Act as a farm-based community hub incubating enterprises that support the local economy.
- Demonstrate short local food and material supply chains.
- Showcase nature recovery and community stewardship.
- Encourage public engagement through guided access and volunteering opportunities.



Our ask to secure Wakelyns

We are now raising £1,200,000 to purchase Wakelyns.

You can help support Wakelyns by:

- Making a donation - WCCBS is registered with HMRC as a charity.
- Taking part in our community share issue.

Both individuals and organisations will be able to become members by buying £1 shares, with the minimum shareholding being 114 shares and the maximum being 100,000 shares. Importantly each member will have one vote regardless of number of shares held. As a member you would have a say in how Wakelyns is run in the future.



Why Now?



Governmental agricultural policy aims to see agroforestry planting on 10% of all arable land in England by 2050.

Demand for demonstration sites is rising.

Universities need long-term research partners.

Wakelyns' 30-year planting and operations cannot be replicated.

The co-owner's deadline requires a decision in mid 2026.

This is the moment to act.



Join Us

Help secure an irreplaceable national asset.

Become a member, make a contribution, or connect us with those who share our commitment to the future of farming and community-owned land.

For further information, please contact:

david@wakelyns.co.uk



Endorsements



“Wakelyns is a magical oasis filled with life, life that’s prospers through a legacy of investment and protection. But it’s not all about the nature now, it’s about the future offering a tried and tested alternative to contemporary industrial agriculture. It’s a scientifically monitored test bed of ideas and proven practices which grow hope as well as trees and crops. It’s also a very rare resource , one that needs nurturing, imagination and love to reach its real potential. Please contribute whatever you can to preserve this vestige of pastoral paradise.”

Chris Packham CBE, environmental campaigner

“For more than 30 years Wakelyns has been an inspirational model for agricultural change in the UK - demonstrating through research and practice that a diverse, complex farmed landscape is not only ecologically, economically and socially viable right now, but the only approach that offers future hope in the face of climate chaos and collapsing biodiversity. I feel fortunate to have watched, been involved with, and to have been shaped by, that work for 25 years. I could name dozens of farms changed for the better through a visit to Wakelyns, and I know hundreds more have been transformed by the research and advocacy Wakelyns has supported and inspired. I’m really excited about this next phase, where Wakelyns' ownership moves to the community it has built to continue its pioneering and critically important work”.

Josiah Meldrum, Founder of Hodmedods



"I've grown to love Wakelyns over recent years, partly because I have come to realise its importance in demonstrating an unfamiliar farming regime, partly because all involved seem such lovely people but also because I can wake there, in summer, and hear the now rare sound of singing Turtle Doves. For all these reasons and more I support this campaign."

Mark Avery, environmental campaigner and writer

"The Organic Research Centre has worked closely with Wakelyns since the 1990s, and over that time our businesses have formed a strong mutual bond. Our work celebrates and builds upon the work of Martin and Ann Wolfe in researching how to achieve sustainable and resilient agriculture and spans everything from the role of agroforestry systems in enhancing biodiversity through to the evolution of the YQ ORC Wakelyns population wheat. The importance of Wakelyns as the leading agroforestry research site in the UK cannot be underestimated and we are delighted to offer our support to the Wakelyns Charitable Community Benefit Society in order to secure its future and the vital role that it plays in British agriculture".

Lucy MacLennan, Director - Organic Research Centre



"Wakelyns is a magical place in a very special part of England. The Wakelyns approach is to innovate for farming, and to farm with diversity - in ways that are sympathetic to the soil, rivers, flora, fauna and fungi of the region. It has achieved extraordinary things by doing so, but now Wakelyns' 30-year public legacy is in need of protection. The established Wakelyns innovations in population grains and agroforestry - combining tree crops with grain crops and market gardening - are vital for the future of English farming, and constitute a shining proof of 'land sharing' as productive both for farmers and for nature. The versatility of the farming at Wakelyns and the enterprises it has helped to create are entirely right for its East Anglian location at the heart of English farming.

It is wonderful to think that, through this share offering, Wakelyns should soon be owned by the community and will be able to be run forever for the benefit of that community and of nature, through varied farming methods and the flourishing of biodiversity."

Robert MacFarlane, bestselling nature writer based in Cambridge



“Wakelyns offers an incredible resource that extends learning far beyond its local reach and also transcends industry boundaries. Whilst the work carried out at Wakelyns speaks deeply to the agricultural community, those of us working in horticulture in garden settings (including growing food at garden scale) have really benefited from visits to Wakelyns and been inspired by the overall agroecological approach which can directly transfer to any form of gardening.

It is this broad reaching value of Wakelyns that makes it worthy of support for future learning and inspiration towards a more harmonious and nature friendly way of working with our land, whatever the context. I couldn't be more supportive of this campaign.”

Sheila Das, Head of Gardens and Parks, National Trust

“Wakelyns’ pioneering early adoption of Agroforestry has been an invaluable source of inspiration and knowledge already to many people, both practitioners wishing to design agroforestry systems for their own holdings, but also for academics and policy makers. The ability to visit an established mature agroforestry system in the UK has never been as important as now and will remain crucial over years to come, interest in Agroforestry from farmers, NGOs, policy makers and academics continues to grow at a fast rate year on year. The living example Wakelyns offers these groups must be preserved”.

Andy Dibben, Head grower, Abbey Home Farm, Cirencester and author of ‘Silvo-horticulture’:



“Wakelyns has been doing pioneering work on agroforestry, crop breeding and agroecological farming for more than 3 decades. This has been during a period when often it was seen as niche or at odds with prevailing thinking. The science and farming research at Wakelyns has been pivotal in helping shape future farming system thinking, with Agroforestry and crop mixtures now part of mainstream approaches. As a farmer and adviser who was inspired by such thinking and has seen its influence implemented on numerous farms, it is vital that the work undertaken at Wakelyns continues. As the farming system matures, it answers more questions and provides a unique resource for learning in in the UK and northern Europe”.

Stephen Briggs, farmer and founder of Abacus Organic, farm consultancy

“Wakelyns is a pioneer exercise in (organic) agroforestry – showing in defiance of convention that trees, arable, horticulture, livestock, wildlife, and people can co-exist and interact to the advantage of them all: an oasis among the vast arable monocultures of East Anglia. It is also a hive of small industries and crafts, an excellent venue for teaching and learning, or simply for being. All in all, though all farms the world over must be unique in detail, Wakelyns in its 23 hectares is a model of what agriculture as a whole should be”.

**Colin Tudge, famed environmental author and activist,
Campaign for Real Farming**



“Wakelyns Agroforestry is a vital example of the kind of farming we need to secure our future in the UK. It has played an important part in shaping discussions at national and global levels about diverse strategies for resilience, from the seed genetics, to the diversity of the trees and cropping, to the diversity of people who have passed through and been inspired by this wonderful place. There is a magic to it, and you can feel it when you arrive and snake down the driveway. Wakelyns has been an inspiration to me since i first visited, and it continues to evolve. Every time I visit I see something new, radical and experimental that reminds me that we all need to keep pushing in the direction of agroecology and social chance. It was the spark that ignited UK Grain Lab, the place I've eaten the most delicious apples, and met some of the most incredible people. Long may it continue!”

Kimberley Bell, founder of Small Food Bakery

“Martin Wolfe was a pioneer of sustainable agriculture and a proponent of sustainable methods of farming well before it became mainstream. One of his major ideas was to use genetic diversity as a tool for controlling diseases in crops without the need for environmentally damaging sprays. Much valuable research was then, over the years, performed at Wakelyns. The role of Wakelyns in promoting and maintaining the YQ population and Martin's ideas of sustainable agriculture is essential for the future adaptation of farming methods to low input agriculture and buffering populations against climate change”.

John Snape, John Innes Centre Emeritus Fellow



“Having been involved in agroforestry research for over 15 years in both the UK and Europe-wide, I can't over-emphasize the importance of Wakelyns as a mature and unique silvoarable system that demonstrates a number of practices ranging from alley cropping short rotation coppice to timber and fruit production. Such sites are incredibly rare across Europe. Over the years, I have collected data from Wakelyns on everything from tree yields, energy use and production, economics, crop and ley growth, pests and diseases, through to biodiversity both below and above ground. While other UK long term agroforestry research sites have been sold off or removed, it is so important that Wakelyns continues as a functioning farm, not only providing a research site but also an inspiration to students and researchers”.

Jo Smith, Senior Researcher - MV Agroecology Research Centre, Portugal and Associate Editor – Agroforestry Systems

As a grain nerd, Wakelyns is synonymous with Martin Wolfe & YQ wheat - both ambassadors for diversity, pioneers and bridge-builders in equal measure, radical interrogators of our incumbent food system. How many journeys started here, or passed through here? What solidarity was built on shared memories of this place? I've come to realise that systems change is a messy, non-linear, even fragile business. So retaining Wakelyns as a kind of anchor, a critical piece of our movement's infrastructure, is surely an essential step towards an agroecological future.

Fred Price, Gothelney Hall Farm - Agroecological Farmer

