



## **PRESS RELEASE**

September 2021

### **Education secure at Low Becksid with farm sale on verge of completion**

The final stages of the sale of Newton Rigg agricultural college's Low Becksid Farm are on the verge of completion, securing its future as a place of learning for young people in Cumbria.

The purchase of the farm by The Ernest Cook Trust was announced in July and now, six weeks on, the sale is almost complete. Newton Rigg, the only remaining land-based learning centre in Cumbria, closed in July.

Already, partnerships are being forged between local colleges, and young people are due on site soon to learn about upland farming.

The Ernest Cook Trust is a UK-wide educational charity, creating outdoor experiences for children and young people. A landowner in five counties, it runs education programmes on its own estates, as well as with partners' estates, and offers grants for land-based learning activities.

The Trust bought Low Becksid Farm to secure it as a land-based learning centre for young people. The Trust already has a presence in Cumbria, through a partnership with Lowther Castle.

The Ernest Cook Trust's Chief Executive Dr Victoria Edwards OBE said:

"I am very excited at the prospect of farming here at Low Becksid, which will be a first for The Ernest Cook Trust. We are landowners, with many tenant farmers, but here we will be farming ourselves for the first time and we're looking forward to working with young people who are also starting out on their farming careers.

"Key to making a success of Low Becksid is understanding what the community needs so we are looking forward to getting out, meeting and talking with people. We have already introduced ourselves to Mungrisdale Parish Council, and representatives of the farming community, and have received a very warm welcome."

*(continues...)*

Victoria has met with Dr Neil Hudson, MP for Penrith & The Border, who welcomed the acquisition of Low Becks by The Ernest Cook Trust. He said:

“It has been great to meet again with Victoria and to discuss The Ernest Cook Trust’s positive plans for maintaining Low Becks Farm as an educational learning site supporting young people. I am delighted that Low Becks has been secured by The Ernest Cook Trust and I look forward to working with them on this exciting project.

“This development is another lifeline in saving land-based education in Eden and Cumbria. I will continue to fight for our rural sector and for a future for land-based education in Cumbria.”  
Newton Rigg campus closed in July. Its other assets are being sold separately.

**Additional information:**

<https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/news/2021/07/hitting-the-headlines/>

**Notes to Editors:**

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Visit The Ernest Cook Trust website at <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/>

The Ernest Cook Trust, headquartered in Gloucestershire, is a UK educational charity that creates outdoor experiences for children and young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged. The Trust nurtures a lifelong journey of learning, appreciation and respect for the countryside through the experiences and support it offers for young people and their communities.

Established in 1952, the Trust remains deeply rooted in its founder’s love of the countryside and owns more than 22,500 acres of land in five English counties (Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Leicestershire and Dorset).

The Ernest Cook Trust carries out its educational work on and beyond its estates, through grant funding activities and through the partnerships and collaborations with like-minded organisations who share a passion for outdoor learning. It has Outdoor Learning Officers on its partners’ land in Cumbria and Lancashire.

