



## **PRESS RELEASE**

July 2021

### **Learning from the land set to continue at Low Becks Farm**

The future of learning from the land at the last remaining agricultural college farm in Cumbria looks set to be secured, following an offer to purchase by leading land-based educational charity, The Ernest Cook Trust.

An established landowner in five counties, The Ernest Cook Trust has committed to maintaining Low Becks Farm, Mungrisdale, as a crucial learning resource for the region. The Ernest Cook Trust's offer for the farm has been accepted by Askham Bryan College, in a sale organised by international land agency Savills.

The farm is the sole remaining centre of learning on the land in Cumbria and was part of Newton Rigg campus (run by Askham Bryan College), which is closing this month (July). There was local concern at the potential loss of this valuable learning resource to the children and young people of Cumbria. Thanks to The Ernest Cook Trust, its future looks secure as an operating farm and the Trust looks forward to re-establishing it as a learning centre.

The Trust plans to get more people learning from the land by operating the farm alongside training schemes, apprenticeships, demonstrations, educational visits, workshops, seminars and open days.

The Ernest Cook Trust's Chairman of Trustees, Andrew Christie-Miller, said: "We have been looking for a suitable place to support land-based learning in the north of England. We are really excited about the opportunities that Low Becks Farm will offer to so many young people." The Ernest Cook Trust already operates training and apprenticeship programmes for disadvantaged young people from its base in Lowther, in collaboration with Lowther Castle and Gardens Trust.

The Trust also does much for engaging communities in the countryside from its base in Lancashire, as part of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership Scheme.

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Tim Whitaker, CEO and Principal of Askham Bryan College, which took over the running of Newton Rigg in 2011, said: “We are delighted that The Ernest Cook Trust has come forward to protect this valuable local resource. Low Becksde has provided practical training opportunities to so many young people over the years and its contribution to the future of upland farming now looks set to continue.”

The Ernest Cook Trust’s Chief Executive, Dr Victoria Edwards OBE said: “We have a lifelong approach to Outdoor Learning that covers schools, skills and communities. Low Becksde will provide a spectacular landscape for us to nurture and grow our work in the north west.”

**Additional information relating to this Press Release:**

<https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/news/2021/07/were-buying-a-farm/>

**Notes to Editors**

For more information contact press officer Jo Smyth [jo@wordworker.co.uk](mailto:jo@wordworker.co.uk) 07780 639287. 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 it offers and supports 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.

