



## **PRESS RELEASE**

March 2023

### **Grants fund learning and land management at Cumbria farm**

Almost £100,000 in grant funding is being invested in a Cumbria land-based learning farm, to restore hedgerows and boundaries, and give young people skills which will lead to employment.

Upland farm Low Becksdale, in Mungrisdale, was bought by educational charity The Ernest Cook Trust in 2021, to preserve it as a land-based learning centre in the north of England. Now two grants from the Government's Farming in Protected Landscapes (FIPL) programme, together worth £90,000, are being invested in the farm.

FIPL grants support projects which aid nature recovery, restore land, and give people opportunities to enjoy and understand the landscape.

At Low Becksdale farm, the grants – supplemented with additional funds from The Ernest Cook Trust - are helping restore hedging and boundary fencing. Some hedging is completely new, while others are being replanted, with the aim of expanding and connecting wildlife corridors. All are being planted with native trees, predominantly hawthorn and blackthorn. One large field has been divided into four by hedging, to allow for rotational grazing.

"We're very grateful to have been awarded this FIPL funding, which is helping secure the future of farming at Low Becksdale, and supporting young people who are seeking careers working on the land. To support our ambitious plans for the future of Low Becksdale, we are also expanding our team and recruiting for a new role, who will lead The Ernest Cook Trust's operations in Cumbria and Lancashire," said Dr Ian Gambles, Interim Chief Executive at The Ernest Cook Trust.

As well as funding hedging and boundary restoration, the FIPL grants have helped finance a whole farm survey, the results of which will enable the Trust to explore options for upland farms of the future. The FIPL grants have also helped pay for LANTRA off-road vehicle training at Low Becksdale for Kendal College students, to complement their land-based studies. The students have learned how to handle tractors and quadbikes, and have also taken part in emergency outdoors first aid training, and a vet-run course on lambing.

(continues...)

The Ernest Cook Trust is a UK-wide charity, owning land across six counties, and using its estates to run programmes that promote Outdoor Learning for young people, families and communities. Through grant-giving, it supports other organisations in the field of Outdoor Learning, and awards some £2M in grants each year. The Trust prioritises working with disadvantaged young people and/or those living in deprived areas.

For more information about the work of The Ernest Cook Trust, visit <https://ernestcooktrust.org.uk/>.