

Briefing about Leigh Court Farm for Sustainable Redland, Bristol Food Network, Bristol Food Producers, Transition Bristol, Soil Association, and Bristol Food Policy Council. 17 April 2019

Leigh Court Farm is a really important part of the Bristol good food movement. They supply organic veg boxes into the city and have a strong reputation. They are one of only three organic vegetable growing projects that serve the city, the others being Sims Hill Shared Harvest and The Community Farm.

Leigh Court Farm is an exemplar for the type of farm that the National Trust supports, and that Council for the Protection of Rural England is advocating in its publication New Model Farming.

Sustainable Redland volunteers started the Whiteladies Road Farmers and Fairtrading Market over ten years ago. Leigh Court Farm's vegetable and fruit stall has been an essential part of this weekly Saturday morning market for 8+ years.

Work by the National Trust to improve woodland management and habitats using grazing livestock are welcomed, as is their intention to improve meadows and pastureland for the benefit of biodiversity.

We are very concerned to learn that retendering by the National Trust of their land in Failand could lead to Leigh Court Farm losing their tenancy. We believe it essential that the 10-acre field in Failand, farmed by Leigh Court Farm, must continue to be farmed by the current tenants in order to maintain the viability of their business. It is not enough for it simply to remain as vegetable growing, as without this field the Leigh Court Farm business model does not survive.

We are very concerned to learn that there has been little or no direct, supportive, face-to-face dialogue between the National Trust as landlords and Chris, Carol and the staff at Leigh Court Farm, who are valuable and important tenants.

We urge the National Trust to meet with Chris and Carol to find a way forward that meets all parties needs. We understand that cattle grazing in Leigh Woods could be provided by Geoff Nash, another Failand tenant of the National Trust, without disruption to the growing operation of Leigh Court Farm.

Who to contact;

Eleanor.Baxendale@nationaltrust.org.uk National Trust Estate Manager for Failand
Sarah.Merriman@nationaltrust.org.uk Bristol General Manager for the NT
theseecretary@nationaltrust.org.uk for forwarding to relevant people

Or by post to National Trust, Unit 3, The Hubbard Wing, Leigh Court, Pill Road, Abbots Leigh, BS8 3RJ

You can also forward your emails to Chris and Carol if you would like to at mail@leighcourtfarm.org.uk