

# **SOUTH WEST BIODYNAMIC GROUP**

## **SPRING NEWSLETTER 2026**



**Like a tree in spring, my life is full of blossom,  
I have a lap full of flowers – who should I give them to?  
Oh breeze of life, come to me tonight,  
As otherwise, I will not last so full of flowers until dawn.**

**Simin Behbehani**

### **Dates for your diary:**

**Sat 25<sup>th</sup> April and Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026** Stirrings and sprayings of cow horn manure and cow horn silica at Velwell Orchard. See p 6 for times and details

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May** South West Biodynamic Group Gathering at On The Hill, Oxen Park Farm, Lower Ashton, Exeter, EX6 7QW (website: [onthehill.camp](http://onthehill.camp)) 10am to 4pm

For full programme of the day see details inside

## **From the editor:**

Due to unforeseen circumstances Adrian Hanks has had to return to Australia. Thank you Adrian for your help with the last newsletter and ideas for the soon to be updates website.

This means we are still needing someone to help with and eventually take over the newsletter for the group. As you will see later in the newsletter the small steering group are trying to establish a more formal (but not rigid) way of working within the group as we now have the responsibility of the bequest from Helen Dolby to administer and to spread the load from the people who have carried it for the past few years.

We are looking for people to come forward for various roles within the group which are outlined in the article starting on P4.

We are holding an Extra General Meeting as part of a gathering at On the Hill, on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May.. Hoping to see you there – Diana White

## **Helen Dolby Bequest - Grants**

We want to remind readers that The South West Biodynamic Group had a bequest from a member, Helen Dolby who died in 2024. As well as being a trained Steiner teacher and worked for a while at The South Devon Steiner School she also supported Biodynamics

A small group formed to decide what to do with the money. It decided that the best use was to help people who are working with Biodynamics either in a practical way or needing to further their learning and understanding.

We worked out the criteria below to help make it a 'level playing field' for applicants

- 1) That the applications must be connected to biodynamics.
- 2) That requests for grants can only be made by members of the South West Biodynamic Group and living in the South West.
- 3) A condition of receiving a grant to help towards attending a course or a conference is that the recipient must share in some way what they have learnt. We can be flexible about the method of presentation according to the strengths of the recipient e.g. by writing on article for the newsletter, a presentation or workshop at a seasonal gathering. These are just suggestions.
- 4) Grants will normally be between £50 and £100. However we are willing to consider larger requests in exceptional circumstances so please apply.
- 5) To receive a grant we need a letter or email of application with a) your name and address, b) what you need the grant for and its connection with Biodynamics. c) how you would like to share the benefits of the grant with the wider group.
- 6) That a minimum quorum of three from the SWBD Steering Group should discuss and decide on grant applications.

We welcome applications at any time. Please send an email to [southwestbiodynamicgroup@gmail.com](mailto:southwestbiodynamicgroup@gmail.com) describing what you would like to do and also say how you would like to share the results/what you have done or learned with the group. If you are not sure if your request would fit the criteria above, please contact us anyway to have a discussion.

**New Website** – We are planning a new website for the Group containing a lot more information. We hope it will be up and running before the Gathering on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

## **Spring Preparations Day**

On March 29th we held a Preparation day at Whites Farm near Buckfastleigh.. We dug up the horns buried in the autumn and inspected the 500 prep. A few had not turned fully so we put them back in the earth. Frankie van Stok was able to advise on this. We also dug up the Yarrow Dandelion and Chamomile. As there are now lovely wooden signs marking where each of the preparations were buried last Autumn, there was no difficulty in locating everything!



We had an ambitious programme for the day, and after a shared lunch got busy making the Cow Pat Pit . 5 buckets of manure from Tobias Goulden's cows were put on the table, rock basalt and egg shells were added and we kneaded the whole for an hour. A wooden frame was partly buried in the ground and the light and airy mix was layered with 3 full sets of compost preparations. We will check it in a month but expect it to be ready in three months time. Some of the group then stirred the 500 - this was shared between those who wanted to take some back with them for their land.

## **A New Business Opportunity**

We have an abundance of fruits growing wild in Devon, as well as cultivated fruit.

Over the past 30 years I have been picking this fruit to make up to 10 different varieties of fruit cordials, many of which have specific health properties as well as their nutritional value. Some fruit is obtained from biodynamic farms or gardens, but most is picked from hedgerows along lanes, parks and open spaces.

If anyone would like to consider setting up a food, either in a workshop or starting up in their own premises, I would be happy to pass on my knowledge and experience, plus best sources of fruit, as I think this would be a valuable asset to the community. One could easily expand into tinctures and other health products with the fruit ,flowers etc.

Please do get in touch if you are interested or know of someone else who might be -

Derek Lapworth tel 07747 120 669

## **Southwest Biodynamic Group Gathering at 'On the Hill'**

**on Saturday 9th May 2026 10 am -4 pm**



Our Group has been invited to visit to On the Hill Oxen Park Farm, Lower Ashton Exeter EX6 7QW where the focus is on regenerative farming, land based education, land stewardship & community building. The farming is done biodynamically. See their website for a full picture of what they do. <https://onthehill.camp/on-the-hill-test/> What Three Words to our entrance: Parading.plot.nipping

**Directions are on website under Contact us.**

As well as a Farm tour shared lunch and stirring of the 500 preparation we will have an extra General Meeting. Up to now our group has had an informal structure, the responsibilities carried by a few people. We hope to widen the group to share the decision-making responsibilities and be more transparent in how we run.

The shape of the day will be

Arrive 10am 10.30 EGM to 11.30 at latest

**After the meeting we will have a Farm Tour and a shared lunch and a stirring of 500 preparation**

### **Things to bring**

suitable clothing and foot wear for the weather,

something to share for lunch ,

a bucket and a container if you wish to take some of what you stir home with you.

**Please let [selby@crookedpath.co.uk](mailto:selby@crookedpath.co.uk) know if you are aiming to come, so that we have an idea of numbers.**

A G E N D A - Acting Chairperson for the meeting Kit Buckley

- 10.30am Meeting opened by Diana White, SWBD Treasurer
- Introduction of our host Joe Clark
- Voting on Nominations that have been received
- Non-elected roles: Preps Co-ordinator SWBD Newsletter Editor SWBD Website Administrator
- Any Other Business

The aim of the meeting is to elect officers: a Chairperson; Treasurer and Secretary for the group.

The position of Newsletter Editor, Preparations Co-ordinator and Website Administrator will also be formalised.

The current Secretary and Treasurer will stand for re-election but other nominations for these roles are welcomed.

Details of the roles are below and we encourage you to register your interest in any of the positions, or for any of the non-elected roles, with: [dianawhite35@hotmail.com](mailto:dianawhite35@hotmail.com).

**ROLES** (Please note, these descriptions are not set in stone. If we feel you would be able to do part of any role, please let us know)

### **Chairperson**

The chairperson is responsible for overseeing the Steering group's delivery of the South West biodynamic group's aims and objectives: ensuring that there is full participation during meetings; that all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

Main duties of the chairperson can be summarised as:

Ensuring the Steering Group functions properly - that the quarterly meetings are planned effectively, and decisions are carried out, working with the Secretary, Treasurer and other members of the Steering Group.

Being an ambassador for the South West Biodynamic Group.

The Chairperson ideally is experienced in Biodynamics, farming and the countryside with diverse knowledge across farming will help to inspire others to work with their charges of land and livestock using a holistic BD approach.

### **Treasurer**

Liaise with the chair and send out information via the secretary



Keep accurate records of income and expenditure of the group

Keep records of members who have paid annual subscription

Send subscription information to prospective members

Send subscription reminders annually to all members

Produce annual accounts in time for Annual General Meeting

Be part of the sub group that decides on making grants from the Helen Dolby Legacy and keep records of any grants made.

### **Secretary**

Ideally the secretary will have an interest in biodynamics, a background in administration and communication

Duties include: Liaising and coordinating the administration of the SWBD group with the chair and taking minutes at meetings

Liaising with Treasurer and keeping membership group lists up to date

Liaising with website administrator and assisting with enquiries about Biodynamics

Managing the email group and timely notices of meetings and activities

### **Prep Coordinator (non-elected)**

Ideally the preps coordinator will be an experienced biodynamic practitioner and will liaise with Steering Group throughout the year whilst ensuring the necessary materials for both Spring and Autumn prep days are obtained and in stock;

Advise the person responsible for updating the website of the optimum days for picking the various prep ingredients and reminding members of the days in a timely fashion; ensuring enough materials are picked. Be responsible for checking the integrity of the stored prep ingredients and advising the Committee of stock levels and, on prep days, facilitating the making of the preps members present

### **Editor of the SWBD Group Newsletter (non elected)**

Produce quarterly newsletter ensuring relevance of biodynamics content in all articles.

That news and articles support and promote biodynamic growing in the South West

Liaise with steering group regarding content

Liaise with secretary regarding updates, announcements and biannual prep days

Liaise with prep coordinator regarding best picking days etc,

When possible, attend Steering Group meetings

### **Website Administrator (non-elected)**



Liaise with secretary to update website

Liaise with preps coordinator to update website

Liaise with steering group to update website

When possible, attend steering group meetings

**If you wish to put yourself forward for any of these roles, please let [dianawhite35@hotmail.com](mailto:dianawhite35@hotmail.com) know.**

## **Stirrings at Velwell Orchard on Sat 25th of April and Sun 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026**

### **Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April**

15:00 Compost preparations

15:30 Tea and cake - provided

16:00 Stirring cowhorn manure

17:00 Spraying cowhorn manure

18:00 Barbecue (if weather allows) - bring your own

### **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> of April**

07:00 Stirring cowhorn silica

08:00 Stirring cowhorn manure

08:30 Breakfast - provided

Jeremy and Kate    07962 432317 Or [elwellorchard@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:elwellorchard@yahoo.co.uk) for directions

## Seasonal Recipe Millet Leek and Walnut Patties

From The Biodynamic Cookbook by Wendy Cook, published by Clarion

### Ingredients: - serves 6



- 10 oz/275g millet
- 3oz/110g walnuts
- 2 tbs millet flakes
- 8 oz.225g cleaned and finely sliced young leeks
- 2 tbs Quark or cream cheese
- 1 large egg for binding
- 1oz/25 g butter and 2 tbsp olive oil for sautéing
- 1-1 1/2 pints good vegetable stock.

### Method:

- 1) Measure the millet. Wash it in a sieve and pick over carefully. Allow to dry.
- 2) Melt the butter and oil in a heavy bottomed pot and sauté millet for 2-3 minutes until the grains are coated (this keeps them from clogging together too much. Pour in the vegetable stock . Allow to come to the boil and turn down as low as possible. (perhaps use a flame spreader if using gas) The grain will double in size so please allow for this when choosing the right sized pot. Do not stir during cooking. After 30 minutes the stock should be absorbed and the grains plump and fluffy. Add the raw millet flakes to bind and leave to rest till cool enough to handle.
- 3) While the millet is cooking lightly roast the walnuts in a dry frying pan. Then grind them not too finely in a food processor, leave some texture.
- 4) Sauté the leeks on a little butter with oil until softened and the emerald green colour is retained.
- 5) Add leeks, walnuts Quark or cream cheese, egg to the millet and adjust seasoning. The mixture should now be easy to form into firm patties (8-10) . Dust with millet flakes and leave for ten minutes. They should be cold now.
- 6) Fry in olive oil for approximately five minutes on each side. They should be golden brown.

### From the Treasurer

**This is a reminder for all members who pay their subscription annually either by cheque or bank transfer that it is time to renew your membership. The bank details are . South West Biodynamic Group Sort Code 20-60-88 Acc. No. 13509680**

**If you pay by cheque please send to Diana White (Treasurer) at 12 Apple Wharf, The Plains, Totnes, TQ9 5QL**

**We charge an annual subscription of £15 per person and £20 for a couple. We offer a concession of £10 a year unwaged**

**For those who pay by standing order please ignore this notice!**

## **BIODYNAMIC PRODUCE FOR SALE**

**BIODYNAMIC BEEF** from our freezer from our biodynamic South Devon Cattle, various cuts Please contact Tristan Bertie 07836 591 847  
Lordswood Churchstow Kingsbridge  
Or e-mail me at [lordswood.biodynamics@btinternet.com](mailto:lordswood.biodynamics@btinternet.com)

**GREENLIFE SHOP, TOTNES.** 01803 866738. Some Demeter products, Biodynamically grown vegetables in season and Seed Cooperative organic open pollinated seeds.

**TEIGN GREENS, OXEN PARK FARM,** Lower Ashton, EXETER, EX6 7QW – Contact for availability of produce. [www.teingreens.co.uk](http://www.teingreens.co.uk) email [teingreens@gmail.com](mailto:teingreens@gmail.com)

**VEGETABLES FROM APRICOT CENTRE/ HUXHAMS CROSS FARM:** We deliver weekly vegetable bags or boxes. The boxes contain Huxhams Cross Farm own produce as well as several small BD and organic growers who will be providing vegetables at certain times of the year . We can add eggs, flour, fruit and meat. You can order online at [www.apricotcentre.co.uk](http://www.apricotcentre.co.uk)

**BD FRUIT JUICE CORDIALS for SALE** - All with organic apple juice  
Contact Derek Lapworth on 07747 120 669

**Hemp and other Tinctures** (all homemade)

The CBD tincture is made by Nick Read from hemp grown at Dartington and is the only UK organically grown CBD.

Please see website for costs and purchasing information. <http://www.englishhemp.co.uk>

### **South West Biodynamic Group**

The South Devon Biodynamic Group's purpose is to inform those interested in BD methods of gardening and farming of what is happening in the area. As a member you receive

- A quarterly newsletter
- Seasonal gatherings where we make the biodynamic preparations. These are then made available to members free of charge.

We charge an annual subscription of £15 per person and £20 for a couple. We offer a concession of £10 a year if needed. Sort Code 20-60-88 Acc. No. 13509680 South West Biodynamic Group

**Preparations** are available from Whites Farm, Lower Dean, Buckfastleigh. TQ11 OLS. Contact Denise [deniselaurenj@icloud.com](mailto:deniselaurenj@icloud.com)

**If you wish to join, please contact Diana White (Treasurer) at** [southwestbiodynamicgroup@gmail.com](mailto:southwestbiodynamicgroup@gmail.com) or write to 12 Apple Wharf, The Plains, Totnes, TQ9 5QL 07747398839