



BALCASKIE

PRESS RELEASE

Progressive sustainable farming scheme takes first steps to becoming a national movement with extension into Scotland

- Innovative ‘circular community’ sustainable farming scheme from Hampshire grows into Scotland for 2023 autumn season – tripling its land area
- The scheme is the first of its kind to launch in Scotland
- The team is calling for other farms and estates across Britain to join the scheme in 2024, which offers land, business advice and investment for sustainable producers, food and drink businesses, and land-based enterprises
- This model can grow rural economies and local food systems, improve soil fertility, boost biodiversity, lower carbon emissions and increase carbon sequestration

At the heart of global conversations about food security, climate change, biodiversity and public health, the future of farming is an urgent topic. A new collaboration between two large farming estates in England and Scotland aims to grow the positive impact that regenerative farming, sustainable enterprise stacking, diversification and circular systems can have across the UK. The scheme places the emphasis on collaboration, providing innovative ways for small businesses to access land in a way that would not otherwise have been possible without renting or buying land.





Pitch Up! – which has been dubbed “the Dragon’s Den of farming” – invites sustainable businesses and start-ups to pitch their plans on how they’d use the land/ space. Those that are successful are given access to fertile land, business expertise, retail opportunities and investment (full list below). Above all, it’s an opportunity to be part of a likeminded community that grows together. Presented by **Kingsclere Estates** in Hampshire and, new for 2023, **Balcaskie Estate** in Fife, the Pitch Up! team is also calling for other farms and estates across the British Isles to join in 2024.

Says Tim May, managing director of Kingsclere Estates, who started the Pitch Up! scheme in 2021: “Many farmers and estate managers are keen to get more businesses onto their land in a financially and environmentally sustainable way, but don’t always know where to start – or have the time and capacity to do it themselves. If we can all share knowledge, experience and resources instead of duplicating work or making the same mistakes, it’s better for everyone – and we can grow the impact and opportunities much faster. There’s an increasing focus at government level on collaboration between farms – this is a collaboration that can have multiple benefits for both rural economies and the environment they depend on.”

Pitch Up! connects holistically-managed estates and regenerative farmers with sustainable food producers and other like-minded rural enterprises. Working together in ‘**circular communities**’, they share land, raw materials, retail or production space, by-products, ideas, knowledge, contacts, equipment, costs and whatever’s needed to help good ideas grow into successful businesses.

Within the circular community model, one business’s waste (eg whey from cheesemaking) is a valuable, cost-effective input for its neighbour (eg low impact, protein-rich pig feed). In a mixed farming system, there are endless possibilities for interconnecting in this way – cutting out waste and improving profitability at the same time.

Bread, beer, burials

Examples of enterprises 'stacked' on the Kingsclere and Balcaskie estates include:

- ❑ A collaborative **farming, milling and bakery project** to grow better grain and bake better bread with the common purposes of nourishment, sustainability and food sovereignty...
- ❑ A **mobile milking parlour** and **pasture-fed chickens** producing the best organic milk and eggs, highest animal welfare standards, and improving soil fertility and biodiversity in the process...
- ❑ A **field-to-plate pub and restaurant** serving ingredients from the estate and the **agroecological market gardeners** based there, that's "transformative" (The Times)...
- ❑ A **foraged sustainable pet food brand** that encourages growth of the herbal leys and hedgerows supporting organic oat, quinoa and barley production and **boosting biodiversity** in successive reports...

An **organic brewery** with onsite taproom, record store and bottle shop. A **counselling** and 'walk and talk' therapy partnership. An ethical, pasture-fed **butchery**. A **green burial ground** preserving woodland habitats. The businesses are diverse, but united by a common thread: they're good for the landowner, the business owners, the planet and the local communities too.



**“In nature there is no concept of waste.
Everything is food for something else.”**

– *Ellen MacArthur Foundation* on regenerative natural systems

Pitch Up! is inspired by Kingsclere managing director **Tim May's vision** of building a circular community on his family's 2,500+ acre organic mixed estate. Now in its third year, Tim and the founding Pitch Up! team are excited to welcome Balcaskie onboard in 2023 as part of a pilot for wider national rollout in 2024.

Balcaskie already has its own successful approach to enterprise stacking – especially through its **Bowhouse food and drink business hub, market and events space** – but wanted to find better ways to invite new partners onto the wider estate and farming enterprises, too.

Says Sam Parsons, estate manager at Balcaskie: “We were looking to grow alternatives to the outdated model of landowner–tenant relationships, and were really impressed by what Tim and his team have created with Pitch Up! There's a general assumption that you have to rent or buy a piece of land to be able to run a land-based business, but Pitch Up! shows how this is not true. By collaborating on this year's Pitch Up! application season this autumn, we're excited to find and support a new generation of successful, sustainable rural businesses.”

Daisy Sharp and Dan Davies, **Monch** founders and winners of Pitch Up! 2021 add: “Pitch Up! is perfect for people who have an idea, but need help to make it happen. The Kingsclere team has really helped bring Monch to life, and it’s grown bigger, better and faster than we ever thought.”

The 2023 Pitch Up! applications season runs from 1–30 November. See pitchupandgrow.co.uk for more information on who it’s for, what’s on offer and how to apply.

Follow [@kingsclereestates](https://www.instagram.com/kingsclereestates) and [@balcaskie_estate](https://www.instagram.com/balcaskie_estate) on Instagram for the latest updates.

To arrange an interview with Tim and Sam, please contact hazel@stranger-collective.com / 07544 971957

For images and a selection of film footage, go to [this folder](#).

EDITORS’ NOTES

Pitch Up! is open to all businesses and ideas at every stage of development; and the team is happy to work with people at early/ proof-of-concept stage, or those further along their business journey.

Application Guidance for Pitch Up! 2023 is online now – go to pitchupandgrow.co.uk to download.

Through Pitch Up!, Kingsclere and Balcaskie both offer:

- Land – from small areas to larger rotational parcels
- Fertility – healthy soils and resilient, rotational pastures
- Production, storage and office space
- Roadside and/ or ‘destination’ retail opportunities
- Economies of scale and infrastructure, access to machinery
- Business mentoring
- Low overheads, reduced risk and shared running costs
- Help with accounting, administration and marketing
- Access to industry knowledge and contacts from the landowners and the wider circular communities

The 2023 Pitch Up! logo colour is inspired by the Yellowhammer bird, which has seen a population increase in Kingsclere’s latest biodiversity report, and is also regularly seen around the fields and hedgerows of the Balcaskie Estate. The Pitch Up! team loves how it represents nature increase and good ideas taking flight...



ABOUT KINGSCLERE

Kingsclere Estates is a modern, sustainable rural estate looking to build a bright future and circular community by balancing economic activity, countryside stewardship and community engagement. Covering just over 2,500 acres of mixed-use land, it has been actively regenerating its soils since 2012 and is now fully organic.

kingsclere-estates.co.uk



ABOUT BALCASKIE

Balcaskie is a modern working estate at the heart of the East Neuk of Fife. Covering almost 5,000 acres from the coastline at St Monans to Kellie Law and into the hills behind, it has a mixture of let farms and in-hand farming operations. Balcaskie is committed to cultivating and caring for the natural environment, nurturing local business and supporting its vibrant community.

balcaskie.com