

Kin at 42 Acres in September 2022
Supported by Be The Earth Foundation



photo by Claudia Collins

Making Kin, Tending Place

Sometimes it can be a wrench to leave the local neighbourhood and the props that keep us upright and half decent, to journey under widening skies, to walk on new turf and uncurl from the embedded patterns of our life. Having for months looked forward to this much-needed weekend of rest, restoration and deepening, as the event gets close our minds begin to whirl. What will happen? Do we have the time? Can we let go of our responsibilities? There is so much to do! Will the people we care for be all right in our absence – our children, aging parents, colleagues? What will the weather be? Will we like the food? Sleeping in a new environment? Being with people for three days?

Excited and nervous in equal measure, these were some of the feelings going into a three day residential at 42 Acres supported by Be The Earth for an intergenerational group of community workers from Bristol, England. Having formed strong foundations during the Bristol group meet-ups we held during April, May and June, we had each other to lean on. It was time to make kin, let it happen and it was a gift to have this quiet, convivial and beautiful spot in the countryside to do this work.

Who do we include as kin? How do we care for ourselves and each other? What is our relationship to place? Do we know the ground under our feet? The source of our food? The strength of our relationships? In times of great upheaval these questions take on greater import.

As many people will have experienced, it is both a joy and a pain living, working and even playing in community. Resolution doesn't always follow conflict, and it is a rare thing to pause our ceaseless 'doing' to reflect on the patterns that we are part of. That's why Kin didn't so much retreat to 42 Acres but go there purposefully to discover new perspectives.

All kinds, and with a bit of curiosity on our side. Some deep listening. A bit of vulnerability. With time and space in support too. These are perspectives that might serve those we live and work with, our environments and ourselves – a real and normal bunch of complex individuals with different backgrounds, life experience and dreams. So it's important to be conscious of their value. Visions and learnings that might come from gentle observation, wild dance, boxing clever, fires, star gazing and from the roots of our existence. Our time together was epic.

We practised trust, co-creation, improvisation. We wrestled with faith and circled through what we have experienced, what is happening now and what we might be able to fashion into the future. The gorgeous meals were earned, and the dreamy sunsets blessed. The pain and joys were there to be shared and witnessed too.



It's an expansive but also gentle experience staying at 42 Acres, not too much form filling or guff, rather lots of places to rest, and opportunities to stretch and wonder. It's supportive without being overbearing. As a group we were given the opportunity to follow our better senses and make good. For some, wandering in woodland or swimming in a lake were familiar and well in the comfort zone. For others these were massive steps into new terrain - expansive and exhilarating.

Sometimes it can be hard to travel back to your place after such an experience, but a living and breathing 'sense of place' was what we came here to tend, and so needed to make the return. Nourished and strengthened to help our communities meet the challenges that are surely coming this way.



Chiz Williams & Kanada Gorla are co-founders of **Kin**, a soon to be CIC concerned with the collective and connective dimensions of place, space and relationship in meeting the needs of place-based communities in the UK. Our origins are rooted in extensive research into the emergent needs of young people where we found that most metrics continue to prioritise an individualistic frame of disconnected, atomised experiences to measure outcomes of success in all areas of an individual's life. Instead, we recognise that human flourishing comes through: **Connection** to self, nature, meaningful work and purpose; **Community** — a sense of belonging, of being wanted and needed, opportunity, access, respect, caring and engaged elders; **Creativity** — the capacity to collaboratively imagine positive and healthy futures; and **Context** – the bigger picture rooted in place, and the interconnectedness of our world. For more info go to www.connectkin.org



photo by Nabil Amini



photo by Claudia Collins

What People Said

"Amazing, empowering, loving, new experiences, new connections." - Marcella

"Big up to BTE – so many of us could not have afforded to do something like this. Some key words of what I've achieved while being here: Clarity, focus, well-being, connecting, new structures, sanctuary, cultural spaces, solidarity, a sustainable mind-set, advice and guidance from peers, giving each other a nudge, maintaining confidence in what we're doing, considering the little things and asking twice. Thank you Kin. Thank you everyone who came along and made the effort to be here. I feel appreciated and valued." – Shaun

"It's been beautiful spending time with these amazing organisations – the people that run them or are representing them. The wealth of knowledge and experience they bring. I've learnt so much, and made life-changing relationships that I will continue to engage with. I've been given the opportunity to dream again." – Patrice

"What I really loved about taking part in Kin was having the opportunity to rub shoulders with people I'd not met before, who have similar passions for community but expressed in a different place or in different ways. The weekend retreat at 42 Acres, in particular, was a brilliant time for self-reflection and sharing; having the opportunity away from the busyness of 'normal life' to learn from one another, to see life from a slightly different perspective and influence one another positively. The venue was stunning, beyond anything I'd imagined, and I feel very privileged to have been given the opportunity to enjoy this experience." – Rachel

"Living in a concrete jungle is hard at times and sometimes you can really forget what flowers look like. This Kin experience was exactly the nudge I needed, and a healthy reminder that sometimes, maybe even most of the time, stopping to listen to the body's needs and wants, listening to others with intention and without judgement, and laughing to awaken your inner child need to become more of a priority to refresh the mind, body and spirit. - Jade



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photo by Simon Long