

This was a marketing plan produced to go with our 2017 share offer, we are now in an open share offer but most of the plan is still applicable as it is a plan which runs to 2021. (updated June 2020)

Whistlewood Common Marketing Plan 2017

February 2017

Dependencies: Business Plan and individual marketing sub-plans

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Executive Summary

This marketing plan covers the trading activities of Whistlewood Common Limited on its 10 acre site in Melbourne, Derbyshire, during and following a programme of capital investment in the site to build a roundhouse and ancillary trackways. This investment will allow Whistlewood Common to improve and increase its activities and social impact. The marketing plan covers past and proposed activities from 2016 to 2021. These activities will be carried out to forward the organisation's social and enterprise aims and objectives. The marketing plan can be read in conjunction with the Business Plan.

Whistlewood Common's Vision

"Whistlewood Common

Forests, Food, Fun and Friendship

Whistlewood's vision is to make our community a better place. We want to create a productive woodland where everything is edible or useful and where everyone can come together to celebrate, create livelihoods, learn, and interact. We wish to show others what is possible if you think big, to make our communities more sustainable, resilient, more inclusive, and to take control of our future"

Whistlewood Common's Mission

The Mission of Whistlewood Common Limited is:

- To buy, hold and establish a land-based asset on which resilient and useful community resources can be created.
- To demonstrate models of productive landscapes, including woodland.
- To develop and provide education and training in sustainability
- To encourage wildlife and to work in harmony with the natural world.
- To be an exemplar of environmental best practice and serve as a catalyst for others to improve their practice and performance.

Situation Analysis – Current situation (internal)

Current Products and Services (2016)

Whistlewood Common offers a range of services, mainly based at our 10 acre site in Melbourne, South Derbyshire. These activities include: facilities hire; guided visitor activities; education; consultancy and produce sales.

At the current time enterprise income is predominantly from facilities hire and education. Additional non-enterprise income comes from fundraising events.

Service	%age of sales 2016	Features	Benefits
<p>Facilities hire</p> <p>Including hire of roundhouse, covered shelter, outdoor and indoor kitchens, hire of yurt, and camping.</p> <p>Hire for birthday parties, private events, group activities, weddings and celebrations.</p>	35%	<p>Flexible DIY options.</p> <p>Ability to hire one part or all of site.</p>	<p>Rural location.</p> <p>Campfire, barbecue and pizza oven a unique proposition.</p>
<p>Guided visitor activities</p> <p>Such as forest school, scouts and guides, school visits, parent and toddler group, special needs groups.</p>	1%	<p>Local knowledge.</p> <p>Multiple activities</p>	<p>Rural location that can be made secure from risks.</p>
<p>Educational activities</p> <p>Including workshops and experiences concerning food, horticulture, permaculture, health, wellbeing, crafts, wildlife and green building.</p>	62%	<p>Part of a suite of educational services with options for progression.</p> <p>Permaculture and sustainability focus</p>	<p>Set within a working sustainability project with options for practical application.</p>
<p>Consultancy</p>	1%	<p>Inspirational talks on Whistlewood Common's activities and impact.</p>	<p>On-site or off-site</p>
<p>Product Sales</p>	1%	<p>Locally produced, sustainable</p>	<p>A diverse range of sustainable products.</p>

Customer Segmentation (existing customers)

We have segmented our customer base as follows:

- Existing highly engaged (members and supporters)
- Local people
- Local and regional groups
- Local enterprise
- Permaculture and Transition movement
- Tourists

Segment 1 – Highly engaged supporters

Description – these are our members and regular volunteers

- Our highly engaged supporters account for approximately 50% of sales in 2016 – 2017.
- The motivation of this customer segment is to have a role in the development of Whistlewood and to see it succeed. Members were consulted in November 2013 and again in February 2017 (as part of a wider survey) as to the activities they would like to see on the site, and showed that they supported (and would attend) a wide diversity of different workshops and activities on the site.
- These members attend workshops and activities according to their interests, but may also attend volunteer days, increasing their sense of ownership of the site.
- This segment is already highly engaged by virtue of their membership, regular attendance on site and at meetings, and engagement via social media. This segment is also engaged by attendance at fundraising events on site, where they can book and purchase other products and services.
- Highly engaged supporters come from all income spectrums, and thus have differing sensitivity to price. Their purchase of one product or service may have relatively little price sensitivity, but second and subsequent purchases may be more price sensitive, which is something to consider when trying to attract supporters to purchase several different services (workshops, site hire etc) over the course of a year. The offering of volunteer discounts may allow active volunteers to participate in more workshops and activities than they might otherwise have.

Segment 2 – Local people

Description – residents within 10 miles of the Whistlewood Common site. They may have some knowledge of the organisation and its activities, and may be reached via Whistlewood's attendance at local events.

- This segment currently accounts for around 30% of sales, and in the future, as more local people become members and volunteers we anticipate converting many from Segment 2 to Segment 1 – thus making them more likely to be highly engaged.
- From the February 2017 survey we could see that local people supported (and would attend) a wide range of workshops and fundraising events on site (see below).
- Local people use the full range of products and services that the site offers. At the current time the offering is limited to those wishing an outdoor location, but in future (once the roundhouse and infrastructure are built), local people may hire the roundhouse as they would any other community building, but with the added benefits of the site and sustainable angle. The opportunities for outdoor parties (barbecues etc) are unique to the local area.
- Local people who are not familiar with the site will require a basic introduction to the site and its facilities. They may need more signposting as to its location (despite it being in Melbourne); and information in leaflets and online, about the ethos and raison-d'être of the site.
- This segment can be reached through engagement with local media, social media and the networks of members and the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector.
- Site hire will be relatively price sensitive due to the alternatives (although no direct alternatives) available locally.

Segment 3 – Local and regional groups

- There are numerous local groups in the area looking for a venue for a full range of activities
- Currently this segment accounts for 10% of the sales.
- Groups will want bespoke offerings that vary from site hire, catered events, camping and whole site hire. Hire may be for one hour or several days.
- Groups may hire the site, may want a catered event or may want a group workshop or experience. They may want one-off or regular attendance.
- Groups will require liaison prior to booking, discussing their particular requirements, with Whistlewood offering a bespoke service. They will usually need a site manager or other staff member to be in attendance at events.
- Groups can be reached by targeted marketing, word of mouth, local press and contacts and social media.
- This segment is usually price sensitive, looking for good value for their members. The bespoke nature of this type of booking may be a challenge when looking at profitability. We have identified a way to keep costs low for not-for profit groups, by offering an induction process for group leaders to undertake site-related tasks.

Segment 4 – Local enterprise

- Local enterprises include small, medium and large businesses, and medium and large organisations.
- Currently this segment accounts for 5% of the sales.
- These customers want a venue for meetings and team-building activities. They may require bespoke services such as catering or activity leaders.
- Local enterprises will usually require the space on a one-off basis, or perhaps yearly.
- Requirements will usually be bespoke and we will need to discuss requirement with them in detail in advance.
- Businesses will be reached via word of mouth, and by making contacts with local enterprises. Larger enterprises may be reached via their corporate social responsibility schemes, converting them from donors to customers.
- These customers will be price-sensitive, but if they engage with the unique aspects of our site, such as its sustainable, permaculture ethos, availability of talks and tours, then they may be willing to pay a premium.

Segment 4 – Permaculture and Transition movement

- These customers are already highly engaged in the issues of sustainability. They may live regionally but are willing to travel to gain the knowledge they require. They value and appreciate the benefits of social interaction, in addition to core learning.
- Currently this segment accounts for 5% of sales
- These customers want a diverse range of workshops and permaculture events that contribute to the advancement of sustainability, in addition to their own learning.
- This segment may require a bespoke event, may attend workshops but will usually require a social group element. They may require children to be included in activities, or to have childcare available. They may wish to add camping to their stay.
- Bespoke events will require discussion in advance.
- This segment can be reached via the Permaculture Association; local Transition and permaculture groups; social media, and via national magazine articles (such as in Permaculture magazine). We would expect that, once reached, this segment will become strong supporters and repeat customers.
- This segment values learning and will usually be willing to pay a reasonable price for workshops on sustainability. For bespoke events this segment expects very good value for money, but may be willing to undertake some of the work in organising, catering etc on themselves.

Current Pricing Strategy

Our prices are derived by looking at our competitors rates, by analyzing costs, and by looking at demand. As a social enterprise we intend to maximize accessibility and social impact to as many people as possible, whilst remaining profitable.

We charge different rates for children and unwaged and will introduce additional pricing bands as appropriate for each type of activity.

The offering of lower workshop prices for those on low income was supported by 71% of respondents in our 2017 survey.

61% of respondents cited price as a “very important” factor when booking workshops, and 30% citing it as “quite important”.

We offer low-cost, DIY, options for parties and weddings, as well as fully-catered, more expensive options. The option of DIY as well as catered/organized activities is important, allowing us to cater for all budgets.

We have volunteers’ rate/discounts on workshops and facilities hire for those who volunteer over a certain amount of hours.

Our facilities hire is priced to allow for one hour hire, or for half-day or daily hire periods, making it attractive to a wide range of customers. For local not-for-profit groups we have devised a reduce-price strategy that minimises Whistlewood’s costs by requiring group leaders to attend an induction so that they can undertake site-management duties themselves.

Current Place and Channels of Delivery

1. Services are delivered at Whistlewood Common, The Common, Melbourne, Derbyshire, DE73 8DH. This is in the National Forest, in South Derbyshire, in proximity to local towns Derby, Swadlincote and Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and numerous local villages. The site is on a bus route that runs an hourly or half-hourly service between Derby, Melbourne and Swadlincote. Parking will be available on site once the current plans are implemented, but in the meantime there is parking on-site in the summer months, and otherwise within a few minutes walk at the local recreation ground. Customers from Melbourne and Ticknall can walk to the site in around 15 – 25 minutes. The site offers a quiet, rural location with a high degree of accessibility.

Additional workshops and events are delivered at: local halls; local gardens and smallholdings; festivals and outside events.

2. Customers can book workshops and events online, via Whistlewood’s website and paying via credit card or Paypal. Bookings for facilities are taken via enquiries via the website and/or telephone booking. Payments for facilities hire are taken in advance online via credit card/Paypal. Deposits are also taken and returned online. Opportunities for cross-selling are taken when customers book workshops. These include camping and yurt hire. When attending the site there are opportunities to cross-sell food or other produce items such as

plants and craft items. Larger events, such as the Summer Music Festival are an opportunity to cross-sell workshops and produce. Attendance at outside events such as Elvaston Wood Fair, Melbourne Festival and Carnival, and Melbourne Xmas Shopping provide opportunities for taking bookings and sell produce.

Current Promotional Activity

1. On-line Promotion

Website: A website has been created and is regularly updated with pictures of events/activities and information as they are carried out. www.whistlewoodcommon.org. The online shop www.shop.whistlewoodcommon.org is accessed via the main Whistlewood website and provides automated booking of workshops and events, taking payment via credit and debit card.

The website currently receives between 15 and 60 hits per day.

Social Media:

Facebook – Whistlewood Common has its own page which has over 500 likes, can be accessed by key members for information to be added to and is mainly used as a means of communicating special events (prior/post event) on site, Whistlewood organized events at other sites, external courses/workshops and info deemed to be of interest to those following the page, and Working Saturday updates. It also has a separate group which is private for sharing of ideas for events/the site amongst a smaller group (who have applied for inclusion) and has a Directors private group for sharing of information pertinent to the Directors. Events/Activities are also posted on other Facebook pages such as Spotted Melbourne, Melbourne Area Transition, etc. See Appendix 1 for a complete list. Each event is posted on multiple local Facebook pages as appropriate. Trials with boosting posts via payment to Facebook for one event did not result in additional sales, but this is an area that can be explored further, and has been successful for other groups. In general Facebook posting has been shown to engage an active audience that goes on to purchase services, and there is more work to be done on finding engaging “stories” to input into Facebook and other social media posts.

Twitter - Whistlewood Common has a twitter feed @ediblewoods. Facebook posts are cross-posted to twitter, but there are few shares beyond a few current members. Note @whistlewoodcommon is already taken. There is an opportunity to use Twitter more actively as a promotional tool.

Mailing lists – there is a mailchimp mailing list that goes out to members (those with shares) and Supporters (those who do not have shares but have requested to be kept abreast of events etc). This is often delivered in the form of a Newsletter approximately every three months.

2. Conventional promotion

Leaflet/Leafleting – a general leaflet has been produced (see appendix 2) that aims to give the reader a snapshot in visual and worded form of who we are/what our aims are/what we do/where we are and how to get more information.

This has been distributed to all Education Events and Enterprise group members who have distributed copies to Tourist Information centre in Swadlincote, Ashby and Derby. It has also been

given out at Whistlewood site events, the Melbourne Arts Festival and ElvastonWood Fair as well as the Permaculture Convergence, Budhafield and the Nothern Green Gathering, at the Tara Budhist Centre in Etwall, They have also been put in Melbourne Library, Swadlincote Library and Swadlincote Adult Education Centre. The leaflet has been designed not to need updating too frequently and is attached to additional leaflets such as workshop and event programmes.

Whistlewood Banner – As well as simple, rustic cloth banners with our name on a pull-up banner has been produced which again outlines who we are/what our aims are/what we do and this is used at external events, permaculture conferences, etc. The banner is also used for events on the site where a percentage of the audience may not know our ethos, or may not be aware of our additional services (such as at the Summer Music Festival).

Face to face promotion - This includes activities such as attending conferences, giving talks, talking to the public at Elvaston, Melbourne Arts Festival and Melbourne Carnival as well as inviting specific groups to the site, eg, Weleda. Opportunities are taken to promote services to local member, and non-member groups that attend the site (eg WI groups, Forest Church, Astronomical Society). A future activity may be to make links with other local and regional groups.

Targetted promotion - As well as using F/B, Twitter, the Website and mailing list for events marketing, posters are designed for each event and specific target audiences are identified (where applicable) and appropriate methods of marketing are formulated, eg, the Astronomy event was felt to have a strong potential educational element and approximately 20 local schools were e-mailed. Posters are used for both Social Media use, circulated to E-mail lists and are physically printed and posted on lampposts/in Shops in Melbourne, Swadlincote, Aston/Weston and Ticknall

Rolling Marketing Activities - We are now regularly marketing our fundraising and educational activities in the Whats on Directory for South Derbyshire produced by South Derbyshire Tourist Information Centre, and on e-mail via the Community Climate Action Network. There is further potential to utilise the National Forest's tourism channels, and the National Forest Company has specific targets around supporting local tourism businesses.

3. Media marketing

TV/Local Press/Radio - We have already featured in approximately six slots on Local Radio (BBC Radio Derby) and have been mentioned on local TV through the Let Kids be Kids Initiative/Forest School initiative that took place in May 2016.

We have also appeared regularly in the local Melbourne Paper, The Village Voice, but should increase our coverage in local papers such as the Burton Mail and Derby Evening Telegraph.

PR—We are seeking links with local PR companies who may be able to offer us promotion on a voluntary basis.

Specific Structures Marketing - Eg, Yurt, Trim Trail, Childrens Play Area,. The trim trail was installed in the first half of 2016 and a local running group ran to it on its opening night and then used the trail with local press being present. It created good local publicity.

Current situation – the external landscape

Nationally there is a need for communities to come together to find ways to ensure they can make the transition to the low-carbon economy, re-localising demand and becoming more self-sufficient to weather future economic and environmental shocks. The Transition Movement was established to show the way and, as a Transition Initiative, Whistlewood is key to this, in our community. Scientists and governments are agreed that ways must be found to lower carbon emissions, as witnessed by the Paris climate talks in 2015.

Individuals often feel powerless to make changes, when faced with government inaction and the power of big corporations, but communities have shown that, when they come together, people can make big changes in their local communities.

Through education and practical experience, we are transmitting essential skills to give people confidence to lower their impact on the environment, but do so without sacrificing the important things in life, such as fun, family and friendships. Whistlewood identifies skills and experience gaps and builds on these, for both adults and children. The sharing of these ideas will also often lower the financial burden, via action such as by community food-growing and shared community orchards.

It is vital that communities become more resilient in the face of world-wide economic changes, such as climate change, resource depletion, population movements and social and political upheaval. By re-localising vital goods and services, such as food, communities can become more able to cope with the shocks that will inevitably hit our economy and society in the near future. In addition, by building a more cohesive community who care about others, and understands the value of a strong local economy, we can try and insulate ourselves from some of the worst aspects of a future “broken society” such as racism, nationalism and a breakdown in law and order, in addition to the problems of providing for the basic needs of people, such as food and shelter.

Market overview

Whistlewood is a low-carbon permaculture project that has been ahead of the curve on sustainability, but we are now seeing a very great increase in the numbers of people who understand the issues of climate change and other environmental issues. These people may feel powerless to change the big picture, faced with large scale government inactions, but when offered the opportunity to engage with an organisation, such as Whistlewood, that understand their concerns, they are relieved to know others are feeling the same fears and want to do something for positive change. The Transitional movement identifies the changes that are key to community resilience.

We have also identified a growing dissatisfaction with the traditional consumerist, throw-away lifestyle. Many people are reaching “peak-stuff”, where the accumulation of more material goods is making them more unhappy. Others are finding that there are gaps in their spiritual wellbeing and their connection with others. Whistlewood concentrates on what is important in life, in terms of basic needs, but also friendship, community and emotional and physical wellbeing to try and help others create lives that are fulfilling whilst not trashing the planet or its inhabitants.

Environmental scanning – PESTLE Analysis

The following table provides an analysis of the environment in which the project will be operating based on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental issues.

Political	Economic
<p>The grants environment looks set to continue to be tough.</p> <p>Forestry, agricultural and wildlife policies are likely to change after Brexit and may have some impact.</p> <p>Locally, Whistlewood will continue to work with local councils (Parish, District and County) in a way that furthers its aims and objectives but is not aligned to any political party.</p>	<p>Demand may be limited for some services (eg high-end courses) in a recession, but all of our offerings are reasonably priced, with many having discounts for unwaged. Conversely, in a recession many people look for ways to save money and we can provide training.</p>
Social	Technological
<p>Melbourne is a thriving town with good community activity in a range of areas. Local people are generally involved in local life, although many commute to surrounding towns and cities. There are several whole-community activities each year – Melbourne Carnival, Festival and Late-night shopping at which we can promote our activities and increase community engagement. Within the National Forest there is a forest identity which is developing as the forest matures.</p>	<p>We will seek to showcase renewable technologies on our site and through our courses. We will always be ready to consider innovative solutions to environmental problems, in particular those that assist off-grid, low-impact living.</p>
Legal	Environmental

<p>The community shares environment is changing rapidly and changes in laws are projected, but may be delayed in the general legislative delays caused by Brexit. We continue to receive high quality advice via several bodies, such as Making Local Woods Work; Plunkett Foundation; Co-operatives UK; Locality and the National Forest Company.</p> <p>Legal changes to forestry, land, planning and agricultural laws may impact in unforeseen ways, especially after Brexit.</p>	<p>Although we are an environmental organization, the world climate is changing rapidly. However, we are seeking ways to mitigate against climate change, and indeed see that demand for information on natural ways of living will increase as climate impacts increase. Our site has been designed using permaculture principles, which work with nature and allow for adaptation to future environmental changes.</p>
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Evidence of demand

Whistlewood Common undertook a new members survey in November 2013 and used this as the basis of subsequent planning. Whistlewood and its parent organization Melbourne Area Transition have run several courses over the past six years to test the type of activity that will be popular and are confident of the demand. Course and workshop types have included: horticulture, permaculture, arts/crafts, food, woodland crafts, and childrens activities. Feedback has been obtained on each workshop and event with a view to improving the offering on each subsequent occasion.

In February 2017 a market research survey was carried out, publicised amongst members, supporters and on social media, which has so far elicited 65 responses. 52% of respondents were members and 47% non-members. 45% of respondents had never attended a workshop or event, so their responses were additional evidence of future demand.

The February 2017 survey showed the following demand for workshops, indicating a wide interest in a full-range of different types of activity:

Q3: Which of the following workshops or activities would you (or your children if appropriate) potentially like to attend, if they were offered by Whistlewood Common?

	Not at all interested	Quite interested	Very interested	Total	Weighted Average
Horticulture (eg tree pruning, grafting, organic growing, forest gardening)	24.59% 15	52.46% 32	22.95% 14	61	1.98
Permaculture (eg intro to permaculture, Permaculture Design Certificate, practical permaculture)	44.07% 26	35.59% 21	20.34% 12	59	1.76
Green building (eg straw bale, timber-frame, renewable energy, water harvesting, off-grid living)	20.69% 12	41.38% 24	37.93% 22	58	2.17
Small-scale animal husbandry (eg chicken-keeping, bee-keeping, goats)	19.67% 12	59.02% 36	21.31% 13	61	2.02
Woodland management (eg coppicing, hedgelaying, dry-stone walling)	21.67% 13	45.00% 27	33.33% 20	60	2.12
Wildlife workshops (eg wildflowers, mammal, entomology)	21.31% 13	49.18% 30	29.51% 18	61	2.08
Food workshops (eg cooking in the outdoors, foraging, breadmaking, preserving, brewing)	8.06% 5	50.00% 31	41.94% 26	62	2.34
Arts workshops (eg watercolours, dyeing, weaving, spinning, ceramics, art with natural materials)	27.42% 17	38.71% 24	33.87% 21	62	2.06
Woodland crafts (eg weaving, green woodworking, hurdle-making, whittling)	20.63% 13	44.44% 28	34.92% 22	63	2.14
Health-related activities (eg yoga, meditation, pilates, keep-fit, sweat lodge, individual therapies)	27.12% 16	44.07% 26	28.81% 17	59	2.02
Mental-health-related activities (eg talking groups)	48.33% 29	30.00% 18	21.67% 13	60	1.73
Children's activities (forest school, toddler group, gardening group, post-natal group)	48.33% 29	16.67% 10	35.00% 21	60	1.87
Men-only activities (eg men's group, Men-in-Sheds)	61.40% 35	29.82% 17	8.77% 5	57	1.47
Women-only activities	58.18% 32	30.91% 17	10.91% 6	55	1.53

There was also overwhelming support for attendance at larger-scale events:

Q4: Which of the following events would you be interested in attending if they were held at Whistlewood? Please tick all answers that apply

Answer Choices	Responses
Easter Egg Hunt	28.57% 18
Music Festival	76.19% 48
Halloween	28.57% 18
Apple day/harvest day	63.49% 40
Fermentation festival (celebrating all things fermented – food and drink)	50.79% 32
Christmas events on site	49.21% 31
Repair cafe (bringing tools and other items to learn how to repair and maintain them)	65.08% 41
None of the above	6.35% 4
Total Respondents: 63	

73% of respondents said they would be interested in hiring the site, and the reasons for their hire covered a whole range of activities, from parties and weddings, to arts events.

In addition the organization has identified areas in which other providers are not operating locally, but which are successful elsewhere. There is a potential to partner with other local providers who have a sustainability focus, with a view to co-operation rather than competition. Local providers of similar, but not competing, workshops are doing extremely well, with additional workshops having to be put on. This is evidence that the National Forest is becoming known as a venue for a wide variety of experiences and activities with a sustainability focus, and is attracting people from the region and nationally. This expanding market is one that Whistlewood is ideally situated to tap into.

Through operating the site for three seasons, the organization has adapted its offering according to demand for some of the more basic and natural elements, such as the fire circle, off-grid camping and outdoor cooking. There is demand for children’s parties where young people can run about in a natural open space in a secure environment.

At the present time we have demand that we are unable to meet. We have demand for hire of the site for events, weddings and other activities, and we currently cannot provide for medium or large size events in months outside of June – September due to the lack of parking and the wet ground conditions. Disabled access is restricted during this time too, as cars cannot get onto the site and we have no hard tracks. Currently for small workshops we have to ask participants to park in the drive of the property opposite, which is not ideal, and subject to that neighbour’s goodwill. 91% of our survey respondents cited parking as important when attending an event or workshop. And despite the fact that we are on a bus route 64% of respondents said that public transport was “not at all important” to them when attending an event or workshop or hiring an outdoor space.

We find it very difficult to provide for the comfort of our workshop participants in the winter month as our covered shelter does not provide protection from the cold winds. In February 2017 a fruit tree pruning workshop was held on site but feedback was that the theory part of the course (held in

the shelter) was uncomfortable for participants. The roundhouse classroom with appropriate access will allow us to meet this un-met demand and hold events and workshops all year round. A number of workshops are seasonal to the winter months, such as pruning, grafting, coppice etc, and to meet that need fully we do need this new infrastructure. The same applies for activities taking place in Spring, such as horticulture, and even in Summer, when winds and weather can make some craft or health-related workshops difficult.

There is also un-met demand for a local venue for many different types of activities. Melbourne lost one of its community venues several years ago, and groups and individuals can struggle to hire a venue. With the roundhouse we will be able to offer an alternative, with a wide range of flexible options, both in terms of pricing and in terms of different facilities.

Competitor analysis

We have analysed the competition and have noted our own unique selling points within the market. In particular these include:

- A sustainability focus – 40% of respondents in our 2017 survey cited sustainability as “very important” and 50% “quite important” when choosing a venue or attending an event or workshop.
- A picturesque outdoor venue
- Features such as barbecue, pizza oven, fire-circle not seen elsewhere
- Off-grid interest
- Site security
- Site hire - an adaptable site for small or large events
- DIY options (eg for weddings, birthday parties etc)
- Low-cost options (eg weddings, parties), especially for larger numbers of people.
- Camping available – 58% of respondents to our survey were interested in camping, either just for them, or as part of an event or workshop.
- Small-scale off-grid camping (as opposed to large campsites)
- We can offer workshops and activities that we know are being done successfully elsewhere but are not available within the local area
- We can offer “experiences” in a unique setting to appeal to the activity market not just the education market.
- Additional services such as catering, talks, produce can also be offered.

Specific analysis has been completed for each competitor in each market and this is being used by the Directors to inform pricing, identify “niches”, avoid direct competition with other local providers, and to learn from competitors in other parts of the UK.

SWOT analysis (or SWOC)

The following table contains an analysis of the organisations strengths and weaknesses and the opportunities and threats to the organisation. This draws on the outcomes of the PESTLE analysis, particularly to inform the opportunities and threats section:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Active and engaged volunteers.</p> <p>Knowledgeable and experienced management team.</p> <p>Knowledgeable and experienced working group members.</p> <p>Solid support from organizations such as the National Forest Company, Co-ops UK, Co-op Culture, The Permaculture Association, Transition Network and under Making Local Woods Work.</p> <p>Engaged shareholders</p> <p>Potential open share offer will allow enthusiastic new members to join the organisation at any future point in time.</p> <p>Permaculture framework and governance framework that guides ways of working that avoid conflict and allow for individual difference.</p>	<p>Marketing and publicity needs additional push and targeting at each activity</p> <p>More social media engagement necessary</p> <p>The organization needs more hands-on volunteers for the day to day jobs, including the heavy work.</p> <p>Time-constraints of having an all-volunteer workforce.</p>
Opportunities	Threats

<p>To bring more of the community together to learn how to live more sustainably.</p> <p>To continue to contribute to a world-wide movement who want change regarding environmental protection.</p> <p>There may be opportunities to inform a new forestry and agricultural policy post-Brexit.</p> <p>To continue to work with national organizations to input into the social enterprise and co-operative movement by giving talks and sharing experience. Also to give feedback on grants and support opportunities.</p> <p>To inform and encourage other organizations seeking to set up woodland or permaculture enterprises.</p> <p>To input into changes in forestry and agricultural practice, in particular with regard to community ownership/management and small hectare enterprise.</p> <p>To share knowledge of emerging off-grid and green building technologies as the markets develop.</p> <p>As the social enterprise sector grows and becomes more well-known, there is an opportunity to engage more people in the project, through share ownership.</p>	<p>Potential loss of key directors for a variety of reasons, such as illness, time constraints etc.</p> <p>Difficulties in transitioning from unpaid to paid staff.</p> <p>Real-world threats such as climate change, resource depletion, social and economic upheaval.</p> <p>Continued lack of engagement and understanding by large sectors of the population on environmental and climate issues.</p> <p>Challenges of getting environmental message across in all services, including facilities hire, birthday parties etc.</p>
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Marketing Strategy

Whistlewood has operated for three years now and as tested many of our business offerings, and tweaked them according to demand, and to how our users have told us they want to use the site.

We have identified a gap in the market for an outdoor venue for all types of activities, and in particular for people to enjoy the whole site as part of whatever activity or event they are taking part in. We have noted that the campfire is a big draw, as well as the opportunity to camp overnight or hire the yurt as part of an event.

Our beautiful site allows people of all ages to appreciate nature at the heart of a developing forest, and appreciate the enjoyment of the simple things in life, such as sharing food around a fire, seeing children play in the grass, or observing wildlife up close.

We have also identified that people wish to learn new skills as part of an “experience” in a fun way, with shared food and company. Whilst many want to have produced a tangible item at the end of

the day, for most it is the experience and inspiration they have during that day that is the most important aspect. By bringing in expert trainers, and combining this with a unique site, with good food and a warm welcome we believe we can attract repeat customers for our full range of services.

Finally, we can see that, because we offer a wide range of services and products, there are great opportunities to cross-sell and up-sell different elements.

Marketing objectives:

The object of the marketing strategy is to:

- Increase income from £3,900 to £31,000 between 2016/2017 and 2021/22
- Increase gross profit from £2000 to £15,100 between 2016/2017 and 2021/22
- Increase turnover sufficiently to break-even; to service equity; and to facilitate the transition from volunteers to paid employees.
- Increase the number of workshops from 10 in 2016/17 to 39 in 2021/22, thus delivering important skills to circa 400 people
- Increase the number of site hires from 6 to 59
- Increase the number of camping nights from 5 to 25
- Increase and ensure customer retention, with a focus on encouraging customers to purchase multiple services and products. Our target is for 50% of customers to attend two or more events or activities in year 2017/18 and for 60% of customers to attend four or more activities or events in year 2021/22.
- Increase the number of educational sessions for children and people with special needs from 7 to 85, with approximately 1500 - 2000 children and adults benefitting per year in 2021/22.
- To maintain the number of fundraising activities on-site and off-site at around 8 or 9 events per year.
- Increase the number of people attending our site from circa 2000 people to upwards of 8,000 people (2021/22).
- Raise awareness of volunteering opportunities, for individuals, organizations and companies and increase the number of volunteers on site from circa 10 per week to circa 50 per week.
- Attract new members, with a target of increasing membership from 175 members to 500 or more members in 2017, and additional members sufficient to service share withdrawal in future years where appropriate.
- Increase the number of member organisations from 15 to 25 in 2017.

In addition the marketing strategy will:

- Allow Whistlewood to support new enterprises, both on-site and off-site. Our target is to go from supporting two small-scale entrepreneurial activities on site in 2016 to supporting 5 larger scale enterprises and 20 - 30 smaller scale entrepreneurial activities/producers by 2021/22.
- Facilitate general awareness-raising of issues surrounding climate change, resource depletion, wildlife conservation and economic uncertainty. Our target is that every fundraising event, on-site and off-site will have an awareness-raising element. Furthermore, that we will maximise the opportunities for awareness raising during

workshops and facilities hire by means such as talks, hands-on activities and explanation of the facilities (eg straw bale, compost toilet, solar power etc).

- Allow Whistlewood to promote local resilience. To participate in numerous opportunities to re-localise services, such as food-production and promote local production (both on-site and by other local producers). To encourage all types of local groups to interact with each other in positive ways, and to allow them to see that community cohesion is key to avoiding societal breakdown. Our target is to engage with our 15 member groups (and future member groups) to maximise our reach, giving our impact a “multiplier effect”.

Products and Services

The investment in infrastructure and personnel will allow us to increase the benefits and increase sales as follows:

Service	Projected %age of sales (yr 1,2,etc.)	Improved Features	Improved Benefits
Facilities hire	35% of turnover in 2016/2017 Projected to be 42% of turnover in 2021/22	Addition of roundhouse, track and parking, disabled toilet, outdoor kitchens and other infrastructure. Improved camping facilities	Disabled access All-weather site Parking Access Wider range of events possible. More inviting and aesthetically pleasing site.
Guided activities	Around 2% of turnover each year.	Addition of roundhouse, track and parking, disabled toilet, outdoor kitchens and other infrastructure.	Wider range of activities possible. Disabled access and toilet. More
Educational activities	62% of turnover in 2016/2017 Projected to be 52% of turnover in 2021/22	Improved infrastructure. More sustainable technologies Addition of gardens wildlife areas and improvement of natural play areas.	Increased opportunities for demonstrating sustainable technologies (eg green building, solar) within a working sustainability project. Better infrastructure for workshops and to attract people onto the site.

Consultancy	Very little income from this in 2016/2017 but to increase to 2% of turnover in 2021/22	Improved facilities More in-depth knowledge developed through additional share offer, social enterprise expertise and woodland social enterprise expertise. More attractive and profitable enterprise for others to want to emulate and learn from.	Increased opportunities for inspirational talks on Whistlewood Common's activities and impact. Active demonstration of a successful social enterprise. Demonstration of creation of jobs and livelihoods via the project.
Product Sales	We will increase this from almost nothing in 2016 to 2 - 5% of sales in 2021/22	Better infrastructure for growing produce, eg gardens, forest gardens, woodland. More events and workshops at which to sell products.	More locally produced, sustainable products. Value-added products, eg preserves. More home-grown produce to use in Whistlewood catering. Increased attractiveness and interest of site. Increased interest by others for running small-scale enterprises on the site.

Pricing Strategy

Our future pricing strategy will remain similar to the present – matching to similar enterprises. Pricing will take into account our unique offering, and the development of the site over time. Additionally we will strive to continue to offer reduced prices to those on low-income as part of our social mission.

We will offer discounted rates for social enterprises that add to our infrastructure and/or social mission. Otherwise we will charge a market rate.

Channels – how people access the services

In future customers will continue to be able to book workshops and events online, as at the current time. There is the potential to offer a more bespoke booking system for events, with online ticketing, but this would require additional investment for only a small gain in functionality. The current system has been developed at very little cost and is working well to accept bookings. Facilities hire payments and deposits will continue to be taken online, but due to the bespoke nature of these booking, and the need to avoid clashes with other activities, these will continue to be done via telephone and email. This direct contact also gives the opportunities for cross-selling other services and products.

We have identified that customers often wish to have a feel for a person or organisation before they book and therefore our continued attendance at local events, such as Elvaston Wood Fair, Melbourne Festival etc is important. We will expand this to additional local and regional events such as craft fairs, garden centres, wedding fairs as appropriate. Interested parties will be able to leave their email addresses and show interest in specific workshops or activities that can then be followed up via email or phone. We will explore the option of providing online booking available at such events.

We will explore the possibility of partnering with individuals offering complementary products and services so as to share the costs of attendance at such fairs and to create a more enticing stall.

Promotion

We aim to attract users and customers and setting out marketing budgets for each area of activity. These include:

- Emails (to members and supporters)
Regular email newsletters (every 1 – 3 months to keep members and supporters engaged) .
Develop style to be readable, engaging and informative.
- Whistlewood Website
Ensure easy to use. Explore benefits of comments on website posts (but avoid spam).
Informative but also selling our story. Cross-linking with other local websites.
- Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and other social media.
- Increase likes, comments and shares via regular posts (every day or two) with Whistlewood stories but also other relevant links and comments. Cross-liking other local organisations.
Publicising events and services via What's On type pages. Commenting and sharing on other facebook pages, eg permaculture groups and pages. Link to national events via relevant hashtags on twitter. Ensure a good supply of high-quality photos for Instagram and develop a following for an inspirational eco/lifestyle WhistlewoodInstagram page.
- Local newspapers
Produce engaging articles and press-releases with local angle. Work with local journalists.

- National press
Target lifestyle/eco magazines and publications. Such as Permaculture Magazine.
- TV – Explore opportunities for local TV coverage, with a focus on community and the environment. Work with local video producers to produce high quality videos for use on our website, YouTube and other streaming services.
- Local radio
Use the opportunity of news and local events to continue to tell the story of Whistlewood. BBC Radio Derby has covered our story from the start and this can be a continuing relationship.
- Local What's On Guides
- National Forest What's On guides (including online).
- Permaculture Association and other specialist websites
We have our own page on the PA website and can publish details of relevant courses and workshops on the site.
- Regional Transition groups
Many have Facebook or email/forums.
- Attendance at woodland and environment-related events
For example Elvaston Wood Fair.
- Talks to local groups
We can tap into our local member groups and wider regional groups.
- Talks at regional and national conferences and events
Such as Green Gathering, Co-op conferences, Permaculture convergences and social enterprise conferences.
- Specialised events (such as wedding fairs)
To target local fairs, and green wedding fairs.
- Presence on specialized websites (eg camping, green weddings)
Specifically targeted and chosen for their relevance and reach.
- Word of mouth
This is one of our most important channels, and we recognise that each customer has the ability to tell their friends about us. Additionally each person who has a party exposes their friends to the site, probably for the first time.

Cross-selling and up-selling

We intend to cross-sell and up-sell in the following ways:

For facilities hire:

Up-sell: catering, leadership (eg birthday parties, corporate days); talks and guided tours

Cross-sell: workshops, produce

For weddings:

Up-sell: bespoke wedding organising, outside catering, entertainment, site decoration, yurt hire and camping

For workshops:

Up-sell: camping, yurt hire

Cross-sell: facilities hire

For Whistlewood-organised events:

Up-sell: camping and yurt hire

Cross-sell: facilities hire, workshops, products

Promoting the 2017 Share Offer

We will do the following to promote the 2017 Share Offer:

- Organise a launch event on site

This will be in the format of a "Have-A-Go-Day", where anyone can come and experience the site and a range of activities that we offer now and will offer in the future. We will draft in expert tutors to provide short activities, and will provide guided tours. We will attract people interested in permaculture by having a Permaculture Diploma Accreditation event on that day. Food and drink will be provided free of charge, and will also reflect our ethos of locally-grown, sustainable food.

- Ask all current members to promote the share offer to their friends and family. Ask them also to buy a share for a friend or family member as a gift.
- Utilise mailing lists to email supporters.
- Ask member groups to promote the share offer to their members. Contact member groups to give talks at their meetings.
- Attend "Swad Day", a local activity day in Swadlincote. Attend other local events in Swadlincote and Derby.
- Promote the share offer with a big push at our Whistlewood Summer Music festival.
- Promote the share offer with every workshop and event.
- Produce a short video, working with a local video producer, to share and put on our website.
- Produce fliers to leave in local venues, and posters.
- Promote via social media, in particular Facebook.

- Use Facebook paid services to increase reach.
- Encourage re-tweets by prominent Twitter users.
- Write press-releases for local newspapers, and engage with journalists for large articles in local press
- Contact BBC Radio Derby and other local radio stations for coverage
- Write articles for specialist publications such as Permaculture Magazine, Permaculture Works
- Use Transition, Permaculture and Green networks to reach interested parties.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Society has set out an ambitious but realistic plan for expansion in a number of key business areas that will raise revenue whilst promoting Whistlewood's social aims. This marketing plan is presented at a key time when infrastructure investment and business growth can combine to ensure the long-term success of the organisation. As a community social enterprise we have a committed and engaged membership that have an interest in making the project a success and are not only a key part of our customer base but also inform the direction of the society.