


Whistlewood Common

# A community-owned woodland where nature and people grow together

Melbourne, South Derbyshire

Our story, achievements, and future plans

2026

Earth Care · People Care · Fair Share



# A community response to global challenges

## Why Whistlewood exists

Whistlewood grew from the belief that global challenges such as climate change, ecological crisis and declining wellbeing can be met through positive local action. Whistlewood gives people a way to make a difference.

## What Whistlewood is

That belief has become ten acres of community-owned woodland, orchard and shared outdoor space in South Derbyshire, where people care for nature, grow food, learn skills for more sustainable living and connect with one another.

## How Whistlewood works

Whistlewood is run as a cooperative community social enterprise, guided by permaculture: Earth Care, People Care and Fair Share. Members, volunteers and partners care for the land and shape opportunities together.










# How a community turned an ordinary field into something very special

## How the story began

In 2013, local people imagined turning an ordinary field into a shared place for nature, learning and community. With funding, volunteer effort and support from the National Forest, that idea became Whistlewood Common.

## How the place grew

The field has become a thriving woodland filled with native trees, fruit trees and wildlife habitats. Its straw-bale Roundhouse is now at the heart of the site, hosting events, workshops and gatherings.

## What the story shows

Whistlewood has grown through cooperation: members investing in the vision, volunteers giving time and skills, funders backing the project. Every tree, structure and event tells part of that community story.











# Ways to enjoy Whistlewood




## Explore the land

Wander through woodland, orchard and wildlife habitats, or simply slow down and enjoy being outdoors.



## Learn by doing

Grow, make and care for the land while gaining skills and confidence for more sustainable living.



## Make a difference

Help Whistlewood thrive. Tend trees, grow food, or fix things by sharing your time and whatever skills you bring.



## Come together

Come together for crafts, greenwood working, wellbeing events, campfire suppers and activities for all ages.



## Hire a space with purpose

Choose Whistlewood for your workshop, gathering or celebration. Every booking helps sustain the site.



## Sleep close to nature

Camp beneath the stars or settle into our cosy yurt for a peaceful night surrounded by nature.



# A community run with shared responsibility

## Board and governance

A committed board oversees governance, safety and finance, keeping Whistlewood resilient and true to its community values.

## Members

Members support the cooperative, protect its long-term vision and keep Whistlewood rooted in community ownership.

## Volunteering

Volunteers bring the site to life through land care, maintenance, hospitality, communications and community support.

## Funding

Whistlewood is not-for-profit. Income from shareholders, hire, stays, grants, donations and enterprise is reinvested in the land, facilities and community.

## Business plan

Whistlewood's future grows from shared values, energy and ideas. When someone is ready to make something happen, we create space for it to grow.





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# What we've achieved so far

**2013**
With support from the National Forest, Whistlewood **buys a ten-acre field** in Melbourne.

**2014**
Whistlewood holds its very first **Midsummer Festival**.

**2017**
Our first **Corporate Social Responsibility** day takes place.

**2018**
Whistlewood welcomes its first **Duke of Edinburgh** volunteers.

**2020**
Whistlewood Common Ltd is now owned by ~ **400 shareholder-members.**

**2026**
Whistlewood is recognised as a National Forest **Transformative Tourism Champion**.

**2014**
The first trees are planted - the beginning of around **3,500 trees** that will take root across the site.

**2016**
Our first Whistlewood **wedding** is celebrated

**2018**
Our straw bale **Roundhouse** is inaugurated.

**2020**
Our Whistlewood **Forest School** welcomes its first eco-champions.

**2024**
**Whistlewood receives the King's Award for Voluntary Service.**

THE NATIONAL FOREST








The King's Award for Voluntary Service
The MBE for volunteer groups



# Growing Whistlewood together

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Created together, these objectives capture what our community values most and hopes to grow at Whistlewood.

## Earth Care

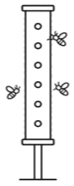
Objective: Building a connected community that understands, cares for and enhances nature through practical action, shared experiences, curiosity and fun.



**1. Understand our land**
Surveying species to understand what lives here and how it connects to the wider landscape.



**2. Share what we learn**
Creating interpretive signs to help more people explore and understand nature.



**3. Create more habitats**
Creating wildlife structures, food sources and habitats, giving more species shelter and food.



**4. Manage our land**
Developing a management plan to keep habitats healthy, connected and richer over time.

## People Care

Objective: Building a welcoming, supportive community where people can connect, join in, feel at home and grow together through shared activities, learning and time outdoors.



**5. Spend time together**
Offering regular free events where members can connect, chat and enjoy time together.



**6. Support wellbeing**
Offering a regular programme of activities and events that support wellbeing.



**7. Celebrate life**
Creating a place where people can come together to mark special moments.



**8. Learn and grow**
Offering courses and workshops that build skills and confidence to live more sustainably.

## Fair Share

Objective: Sharing Whistlewood's space, resources and opportunities fairly, so that what we create benefits members and the wider community.



**9. Share the space**
Offering Whistlewood as a place where groups can connect meaningfully with nature.



**10. Share resources**
Growing and sharing food and resources so they can benefit the community.



**11. Give back locally**
Joining in with other local groups, so Whistlewood can play its part in the wider community.



**12. Support enterprise**
Making space for local businesses and enterprises to grow their work here.

# Visit and get involved

Visitors are welcome to enjoy Whistlewood Common. Please check the booking calendar on our website before visiting, as the site is occasionally hired for exclusive use. Dogs are not permitted on site, except assistance dogs.

To find out about our latest events , please visit:
www.whistlewoodcommon.org/shop
To enquire about venue hire please email:
Bookings@whistlewoodcommon.org

## Follow us

Find us on Facebook and Instagram for latest updates @Whistlewoodcommon.

You can also sign up to our newsletters here:
www.whistlewoodcommon.org

## Find us

Whistlewood Common, Melbourne, South Derbyshire
what3words: ///homecare.flattered.brightens




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# Help the next stage grow

Whistlewood exists because people, partners and funders have backed the idea with money, time, skills, trust and practical help. Its future will grow the same way, through people visiting, volunteering, learning, celebrating, supporting and caring for the land together.

## Support us

Become a member, donate, volunteer, share skills, follow our updates or help spread the word.

## Contact us

admin@whistlewoodcommon.org |
www.whistlewoodcommon.org

*Thank you for helping Whistlewood continue to grow.*