**Lauriston Farm Limited**

**Charitable Community Benefit Society**

**Seven Year Business Plan**

**April 2024 to March 2031**

***‘From Lauriston Farm to Lauriston Farm Village’***

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**1. Executive Summary**

Our first seven years of trading as a Charitable Community Benefit Society (CCBS) have demonstrated our ability to start, from scratch, enterprises that deliver the charitable aims set out in the CCBS governing document. The CCBS has 216 members, a board of seven Trustees and has a license to occupy the land and buildings at Lauriston Farm.

The future vison aims to build on this successful track record of delivery by expanding and diversifying the existing enterprises and developing new enterprises that take advantage of the newly inherited buildings with the aim of reducing our reliance on grant funding. We will put down a deeper root for the initiative into the locality and into anthroposophy with the aim of transitioning from Lauriston Farm to Lauriston Farm Village.

This is a twenty-one-year vision with a seven-year operational plan from 2024 to 2031 during which we intend to:

* 1. **Set up a new Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee called the Lauriston Land Trust which will take ownership of 125 acres of farmland, residential and agricultural buildings at Lauriston Farm and hold them in perpetuity for the charitable objectives of Lauriston Farm Limited to be delivered through a lease agreement:**

1.1.1 Develop holiday accommodation linked to our charitable aims in the Beach Hut and Brick Barn.

* + 1. Develop the timber framed Black Barn into a heritage centre, community hub and Steiner Early Years Setting.

1.1.3 Introduce the Shared Lives Scheme to develop residential opportunities for people with learning disabilities in the farmhouse.

* 1. **Increase our organisational efficiency and capacity by creating the new role of Operations Manager working shoulder to shoulder with the Farm Director to:**

1.2.1 Continue with all current biodynamic farming, growing and social farming activities, deepening the community’s connection with Anthroposophy.

* + 1. Launch and develop a Teaching Kitchen to provide training, farm produce processing, daily lunches, a Footpath Café, outside catering and support of local cooks.
    2. Enable a successful succession in the Teaching Garden from Andre and Monique Kleinjans to two new biodynamic growers.

1.2.4 Start the succession process for the role of biodynamic farmer.

1.2.5 Maintain financial sustainability by:

* Increasing our net profit to enable further inward investment.
* Running community share offers to provide capital for building developments.
* Applying for grant funding for start-up wages and tourism.
* Reapplying to the National Lottery Community Fund and other funders for five years funding of the Social Farming Bursary.
* Exploring relevant loans as required.

1.2.6 Supporting Willow Hall Biodynamic Farm in their implementation of a succession plan to keep that farm Biodynamic.

**1.3 Deepening the Biodynamic Camphill Community by exploring the feasibility of:**

1.3.1 Developing an Entry Level Three and/or Level One qualification in Biodynamic Farming and Horticulture for Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) students.

1.3.2 Enhancing the self-supporting biodynamic farm organism through an increase in the land area (25 acres) available for cultivation.

1.3.3 Establishing a biodynamic micro-dairy.

1.3.4 Building two new dwellings at Lauriston Farm for Shared Lives.

**2. Principals of the Future Vision – Lauriston Farm Village**

**2.1 The Village Concept**

Evolving from the original Camphill Community impulse inclusive villages were created where people diagnosed with a learning disability and those without such a diagnosis live and work alongside one another in a rhythmical and rewarding way. Everyone knows their job and everyone’s activity contributes to the running of the village. Lauriston Farm has been developing its own interpretation of this impulse for twelve years and have a blend of employment, volunteering and day opportunities primarily for people with a learning disability. From this activity, a great sense of community has developed and a sense of belonging which we experience every day. Now, we would like to extend this into residential opportunities and new, diversified activities linked to the fixed assets at Lauriston Farm.

**2.2 De-Commoditisation of Fixed Assets (Land and Buildings)**

We are laying the foundations for the long-term continuation of the delivery of the charitable aims of the CCBS on the land at Lauriston Farm by removing the land and buildings from private ownership and placing them into a charitable land trust with the same charitable aims as the CCBS. The full charitable aims can be found in the annexe but briefly they are conservation, education and care and support for people with a learning disability, delivered through the running of a farm according to the principles developed by Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy.

A diagram of a farm land agreement

Description automatically generated

The Land Trust will have as many levers as possible to prevent the sale, mortgaging or raising of loans on the land and buildings with the aim of preventing them being treated as a commodity. These include a permanent function endowment and the requirement of the Biodynamic Agricultural Association to have a casting vote on any such proposition. Separation of the trading body (the CCBS) from the land and buildings also protects the latter should the trading body cease to exist.

**2.3 Local Community Accountability and Anthroposophical Underpinning**

Creating a long-term setting for anthroposophical initiatives such as biodynamic farming and putting the decision making into local hands is very important to us. So, the Trustees of the Land Trust will be drawn from local organisations - Mid Essex Quakers and the Colchester Rudolf Steiner Study Group – as well as from the membership of the GB Anthroposophical Society and the UK Biodynamic Association.

The CCBS and the Land Trust will be linked by a lease agreement which will set out all the finer details involving access, use of buildings, requirement for Demeter Certification on the land and various other aspects. There will be a rent payable to the Land Trust from the CCBS.

The assets will be gifted by the current owner, Spencer Christy, to the Land Trust in stages. To enable the CCBS to use the asset for the agreed purpose, it will raise finance through community share offers, grants, unsecured loans, donations and legacies. The Land Trust will be responsible for maintaining the land and buildings in accordance with it charitable aims.

**2.4 Staff Succession in the CCBS**

One of the founding members and current Farm Director, Spencer Christy, still has complete overall responsibility for the day-to-day work of Lauriston Farm Ltd. To enable growth and succession, much of this work will be taken on by the new role of Operations Manager who will oversee all day-to-day operations such as CCBS activities, management of all non-land-based staff, ensuring compliance with external regulations and internal policies. Land workers will be succeeded by training new entrants to biodynamic agriculture through the apprenticeship style Level Three Diploma in Biodynamic Principles and Practice.

**3. The Story So Far**

**3.1 Evolution of the Farm Landscape and Human Activity**

* **3,500 BC -** Neolithic round houses remain in Blackwater Estuary near Lauriston farm and later Bronze Age and Iron Age
* **45 AD –** Roman Red Hill, salt making site at Lauriston Farm
* **400 AD** – Anglo Saxons famous for sheep husbandry on the salt marshes
* **1450 AD –** Initial building of the sea wall and gradual draining of the land to create ‘Sea Meadows’
* **1600 AD** - Duck decoy pond was excavated in Rough Marsh and worked for at least 250 years
* **Late 1800s** – Farm owner, Mr Laurie, excavated gravel from the estuary and the farm was named Laurie-Stone or Lauriston
* **1955 –** Blackwater Estuary first designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
* **1972 -** Agricultural ‘improvement’ grants enabled the flattening and draining for cereal growing on all but 30 acres of the sea meadows, Rough Marsh designated as SSSI
* **1987** - Marion and Robert Christy (M&R) moved from Maldon to the Lauriston Farmhouse
* **1992** – 260 acres of Lauriston Farm purchased by M&R, 122 acres designated as SSSI
* **2003 –** 145 acres sold to clear mortgage
* **2004 to 2017 -** Spencer Christy**,** son of M&R developed Sole Trading Biodynamic Farm Business on 210 acres with Shetland Cattle, North Ronaldsay Sheep, honeybees, vegetables and social farming. Demeter certified from 2011 and Camphill Impulse from 2012
* **2017 -** Conversion to Community Ownership, community share offer, 138 members, 80% Essex based, Social Farming Initiative Established, adult day placements, two-acre market garden established
* **2019 –** Second community share offer, 45 members, 95% Essex based, ‘Social Farming Bursary’ launched
* **2021 –** Farm custodians, M&R, both crossed the threshold, their will was, **“*To keep the biodynamic farm running***”
* **2022 –** Probate granted, inheritance tax paid, Spencer inherited farm and started to research land trusts. Three-year grant from the National Lottery and two visits from local MP, Rt Hon Priti Patel
* **2023 –** Decision to form new land trust and run third community share offer

**3.2 Financial Performance 2017-2023**

Total income includes turnover from goods and services as well as grant income. In 2022/23, turnover contributed 70% with grants and donations contributing 30%. In the start-up years, the CCBS used share capital to invest in people and infrastructure to develop new income streams. The equity has been slowly rebuilt as profit is generated.

**3.3 Social Farming Impact**

The CCBS supports seven different streams of social farming. The Social Farming Bursary (SFB), which we fundraise for, supports all streams aside from Day Placements which are funded by Essex County Council (ECC). Primary Schools are funded by the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)/Rural Payments Agency (RPA). A total of 801 individuals took part in social farming in 2022/23.

**3.4 Social Farming Outcomes**

A variety of outcomes are measured by surveying participants from all streams of social farming activity. The above are five such outcomes with participants asked to compare their initial feelings with post activity feelings.

**3.5 The Social Ethos**

Everyone who attends the farm works towards the daily tasks needed to run the farm with tasks being allocated so that many individuals with varying needs can undertake part of the overall task. Through this engagement, individuals have a sense of purpose and belonging to the farm community knowing everything they do helps the farm. This can bring greater self-confidence, the promotion of independence and the learning of life skills that ripple out into the wider life of the individual.

By practising a daily rhythm of gathering together for meetings, breaks and lunch and then expanding out over the farm in between these meetings, we create a living, breathing community. For example, the following Farm Prayer by Rudolf Steiner is read before every meeting and at 9am every day for everyone on the farm, where it sets the tone for the day, together with a weekly meditation from the Calendar of The Soul by Rudolf Steiner:

Oh Earth, I perceive Thee,

Gently receive me,

Feel now my feet,

Lovingly we meet.

With each step you carry me,

Onwards most gently,

My home here you give me,

Oh Earth, I thank Thee.

**4. Foundations of Lauriston Farm Village**

The village concept beautifully defines all the current and future activities at Lauriston Farm. We aim to build on our excellent track record of social farming over the first seven years and merge this with residential living and new enterprises to, over time, increase the number of dwellings with shared lives.

To this end, there are seven inter-dependent foundations of the village:

* Biodynamic Conservation Farming.
* Biodynamic Horticultural Teaching Garden.
* Social Farming & Heritage Crafts.
* Teaching Kitchen.
* Guest Accommodation.
* Early Years Steiner/Waldorf parent and child group and Kindergarten.
* Residential Shared Lives.

The remainder of this business plan will explore in detail these seven foundations and present a financial plan that supports itself with reduced grant funding over the seven years. A separate business plan will be written for the Lauriston Land Trust.

**4.1 Biodynamic Conservation Farming**

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| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| * RAMSAR site – Internationally Important Wetland. * 210 acres, 2 landowners. * 90% SSSI. * All certified biodynamic. * Shetland cattle. * North Ronaldsay sheep. * Laying hens. * Natural honeybee colonies. * Agri-environment schemes. * Turtle doves, lapwing, brent geese, starlings, curlew, nightingales, sky larks, shrill carder bees. * Beef, lamb, mutton, hay eggs, farm walks. * 3 employees. * Biodynamic hens, chicken feed and straw bought from Willow Hall. * 6 markets/month, farm gate sales, wholesale to local shops & London. | * Sustainable Farming Incentive. * Increase hedging. * Sheep grazing salt marsh. * Biodynamic micro-dairy. * Additional 25 acres of cropping land. * Successional full time biodynamic farmer. * Bring more tractor tasks in house. * Closer collaboration with Willow Hall Farm. | * Two-year land based L3 diploma training in biodynamic agriculture. * Trailer, muck spreader, post knocker, hedge trimmer. * Feasibility study for micro-dairy. * Feasibility study for expanding onto 25 acres of neighbour’s land. |

**4.2 Biodynamic Teaching Garden**

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| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| * Two acres started in 2017. * Biodynamic certified. * Jean-Martin Fortier method. * Two 8m x 25m poly tunnels. * Irrigation from borehole. * 60 varieties of vegetable. * 90% grown from seed. * Cut flowers developing. * Four employees, volunteers, student with SEND, WWOOF. * Caravan accommodation. * Cold store. * Andre retires Nov. 2025. * Daniela on BD L3 training. * 6 markets/month, weekly box scheme June to Jan, wholesale into London, farm gate sales. | * Two extra acres available on farm. * Attachments for two-wheel tractor. * Cut flowers especially for events. * Mushrooms. * Ooooby – online veg box administration software. * Greater use of green manures. * No shortage of local demand for the produce. | * Two-year land based L3 diploma training in biodynamic horticulture. * Feasibility study on expanding area of growing. * Development of Ooooby system, admin time. * Marketing of flowers on web, leaflet and social media. * Funds for implements for two-wheel tractor. |

**4.3 Social Farming and Heritage Crafts**

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| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| **Day Placements**   * Tuesday to Thursday, 10am to 4pm. * Three co-workers per day. * One staff member per day. * Funded by ECC or private budgets. | * Develop day placements on Mondays. * Increase to six co-workers per day. | * Operations Manager. * Marketing. * Increased staffing as numbers increase. |
| **Work experience for SEND schools & colleges**   * 2 colleges, 3 days/week. * 1 group per day, 10am-2pm. * Up to 15 students/day. * Funded by SFB. | * Two other local schools looking to attend. * Five days per week. | * Operations Manager. * Extra member of staff. |
| **Primary School visits**   * Working with the Country Trust. * 6 classes per year. * Funded by CSS agreement. | * Dependant on funding from the Country Trust. * Possibly 4 to 6 additional visits per year. | * Operations Manager. * Training for existing staff member to host visits. |
| **Supported Internships (SEND)**   * Four students over two years. * All employed at Lauriston. * We employed the Job Coach. * Worked with CCI local SEND College. * Funded by college. | * Max 3 students per year. * Working with Castledon College. | * Operations Manager. * Payment from Castledon to host. * Possibly additional member of staff. * Development of a BD course. |
| **Supported Volunteers**   * Two regular. * Various drop ins and short-term volunteering. * Funded by SFB. | * Additional five SVs per week. | * Operations Manager. * Advertising campaign. |
| **Regular Volunteers**   * WWOOFers/charitable status. * Local day volunteers, often members. * Visiting family members. | * 2 WWOOF’ers/charity volunteers at same time. * Five more weekly volunteers. * Weekend volunteering for families. | * Operations Manager. * Converting static caravan to electric heating. * Advertising Campaign. * Staff to host at weekends. |
| **Open Days/Educational Farm Walks**   * Two-hour visits. * Local groups. * Weekdays. * Occasional Saturdays. * Max 20 adults. * Shop open afterwards, good sales. | * Open Days needed during share offer –Wed. Fri and Sat. * More local groups. | * Operations Manager. * Advertising campaign. * Share offer. |
| **Entry L3/L1 Qualification SEND**   * Delivered various courses. * Little biodynamic content. * New course needed. * One year course. | * Demand from parents and students. * Can be used for SI or college course. * Helpful to other farms. * College can contract farm to deliver qualification, good income stream. * No other such course available locally. | * Operations Manager. * Feasibility Study. * Course development. * Partnership with the Biodynamic Agricultural College and Crossfields accreditation. * Member of staff. * 6 to 12 month development. |
| **Workshops**   * Visiting speakers or by staff. * Day/weekend. * BD courses. * Anthroposophy. * Crafts. | * Always been popular, good track record and demand exists for more * Annual program. * Can offer lunches. * Kitchen workshops. | * Operations Manager * Advertising. * Developing program. |
| **Heritage Crafts** | | |
| * 240 sheep. * Looms, carders, wool washing, felting. * Dedicated room. * Various products. * Experienced volunteers. * Good sales. * Therapeutic benefit. | * More refined products. * Increase output. * Workshops. * Good demand for produce. * Mini mill. * Use of Timber Framed Barn for visitors. * Greater public interest in sustainable fibres. | * Operations Manager. * Employed craft worker, 1-2 days per week. * Feasibility study for Mini mill. * Architectural plans for Timber Framed Barn. * Grant funding to implement architectural plans (£80,000). |

**4.4 Teaching Kitchen**

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| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| **Teaching Kitchen**   * Opening April 2024. * Infrastructure and staff recruited through grants. * Two days per week and increase to five. * Daily Canteen. * Processing of farm produce. * Certified organic/biodynamic. | * Footpath café. * Refreshments, lunches & afternoon teas for visitors. * Lunch with the Farmers. * Workshops. * Renting out. * Link to social farming. | * Operations Manager. * Training. * Marketing. * Extra staff with increased output. * Ongoing additions to kitchen & hospitality equipment. |

**4.5 Guest Accommodation**

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| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| * New income stream. * Created by inheritance of land and buildings by Farm Director. * New charitable Land Trust to be created to hold assets. * Brick Barn Annexe. * Beach Hut. * Farmhouse. | * Holiday lets. * Target SEND families & support. * Off Grid Therapeutic Retreat. * Birdwatchers, nature lovers, city dwellers. * Link to social farming activities. * Overnight stays. | * Architectural design for Beach Hut. * Share offer & grants to rise capital for works and interior (£40,000). * Share offer & grants to finish fitting out and decorating of Brick Barn (£17,000). * Advertising and marketing. * Administrative support. * Housekeeping role. |

**4.6 Steiner-Waldorf Early Years Setting - Parent and Child Group, Kindergarten**

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| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| * Parent & Child Group previously held on farm (2014/16). * Wider group for seasonal celebrations. * Kindergarten development took place but stalled as a Waldorf trained teacher could not be found. | * Significant local demand for Steiner/Farm/Nature based early years activities. * Once started, potential of kindergarten can be established. * Can be situated in Timber Framed Barn when renovated. | * Recruitment of group leader. * Training in Holistic Baby & Child Care for group leader (£3,200). * Equipment (£1,000). * Risk assessments. * Marketing & advertising. * Feasibility study for kindergarten. |

**4.7 Residential Shared Lives** (see appendix for further details)

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Background** | **Potential for Growth** | **Required Investment** |
| * Run by ECC. * Up to three adults with SEND move into an existing household. * Hosts are self-employed and receive financial support, rent and house running cost contributions from ECC. * Ongoing monitoring and support from ECC. | * Five-bedroom farmhouse available. * Can link to social farming activities. * Requires hosts to move in first. * ECC has many people suitable for placements. * Once stablished with proven track record, apply for planning permission for two more dwellings. | * Farmhouse needs modernising for energy efficiency. * Ongoing redecorating. * New pressurised hot water cylinder. * Advertising for host. * Training of hosts. |

**5. CCBS People and Roles**

This section explains how the CCBS is structured and what each role does. There are Trustee meetings six times a year plus the Annual General Meeting (AGM). Staff provide written reports to every meeting and the AGM and attend three Trustee meetings plus the AGM.

**Trustees –** Monika Curry (Chair), Jenny Chittenden (Secretary), Naoya Tatsuzawa (Treasurer), Odilia Kirst, Richard Adams, Anne-Marie Sinclair, Spencer Christy (Farm Director ex-officio).

Drawn from the CCBS membership, trustees have the responsibility of representing the members and ensuring that the CCBS trades legally and delivers its charitable objectives. It also has an operational overview, reviews and updates polices, financial overview, developing strategy, assisting with recruitment processes and staff appraisals.

**Farm Director –** Spencer Christy (40hr/wk)

Responsible for **Biodynamic Conservation Farming** with Aaron Collins (10hrs/wk) and Chris Pudney (4 hr/wk)**.**

Also, all land workers, Demeter certification, financial management, fundraising, business plan, share offer, Land Trust development, networking, Shared Lives, farm walks and talks, marketing, market stalls, holding the consciousness of anthroposophy and the Farm Being.

**Biodynamic Horticultural Teaching Garden –** Monique Kleinjans (Co-Lead 32 hr/wk), Andre Kleinjans (Co-Lead 32 hr/wk), Daniela Livornese (Apprentice 35 hr/wk), Niels Walter (18 hr/wk).

Responsible for two-acre market garden, Demeter certification, veg bag scheme, market preparation, wholesaling, hosting SEND students, local volunteers, WWOOFers, supported volunteers, farm walks.

**Operations Manager –** new role, Autumn 2024 (35 hr/wk).

Responsible overall manager of day-to-day activities, personnel management, ensuring external compliance with regulations, internal compliance with polices, social farming coordinator, communicating with members, day placement cover, responsible for all non-land-based employees.

**Office Administration -** Stephanie Valentine (8hr/wk) and Hannah Houlding (8hr/wk).

General office tasks, accounting software, bank, Gift Aid, social media, meat stock take, postage, telephone, office supplies, veg bag scheme.

**Social Farming –** Support workers Kate Skelton (8 hr/wk), Julia Cobb (24 hr/wk).

Co-worker day placement program for adults with a learning disability, laying hens, farm laundry, sheep checks, site cleanliness, heritage crafts.

**Site Maintenance** – Aaron Collins (20 hr/wk).

Repairing farm infrastructure.

**Heritage Crafts –** volunteers Lois Gardener, Tom Stentiford, Laura Stentiford (8 hr/wk *Future Craft Worker (*7 hr/wk*).*

Fleece washing, carding, spinning, weaving, felting, slippers, scarves, table mats.

**Teaching Kitchen –** Kate Skelton (Lead, 14 hr/wk), Lilly Stroud (7 hr/wk), Louis McCarthy (7 hrs/wk).

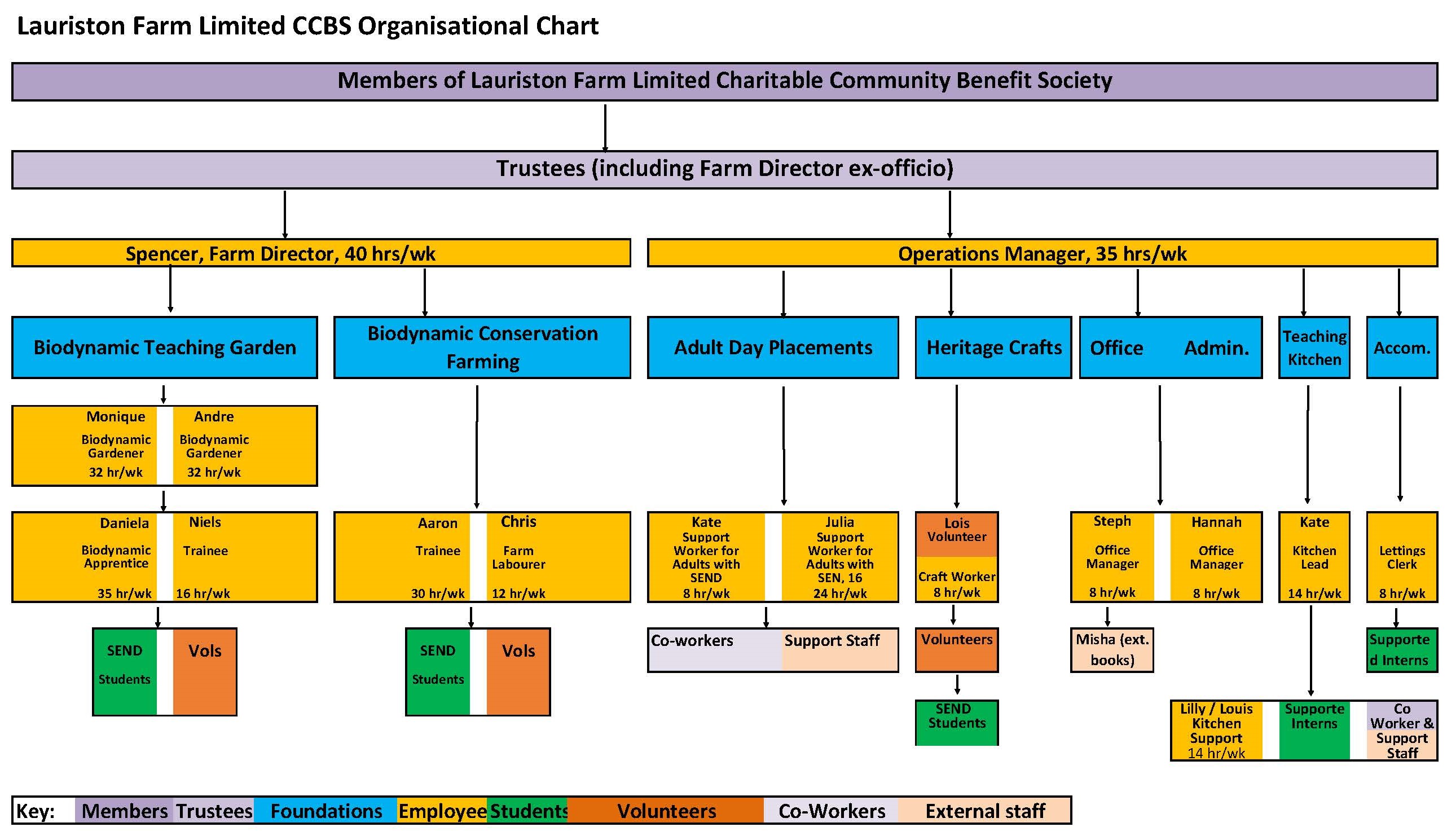
Employs people with a learning disability and/or autism. Daily lunches, tea breaks, processing farm produce.

**Guest Accommodation –** *Future Lettings Clerk (5 hr/wk).*

Managing bookings, servicing of accommodation.

**Early Years Steiner/Waldorf Parent and Child Group –** *2025 P&C Group Leader (7 hr/wk).*

Running group, corresponding with families, health and safety.

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**6. Marketing**

In this section we explain, for each strand of the business, our marketing strategy, evidence of the markets that already exist and those we intend to develop.

**6.1 Biodynamic Conservation Farming & Teaching Garden, Heritage Crafts**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Current Customers (2023/24) | Marketing Tools | Future Markets |
| Meat  Sheepskins  Yarn  Eggs  Hay  Vegetables  Flowers | Local markets  Visitors  Veg bags  Farm gate sales  Staff, volunteers, social farming and their friends/families  Members  Supporters  Farm Direct  Wholefood Store Manningtree  Restaurant/cafe  Website visitors  Social media followers  Market stall holders  Local talks  Etsy shop | Face to face selling  Word of mouth  Farm flyer  Website  Open days  Farm walks  Member & supporter events  Workshops  Market stallholders  Facebook  Instagram  Member, veg bag & supporter email  Etsy  Specific flyers | Ooooby online shop  Facebook Marketplace  Processed farm produce  Local RSPB, EWT groups  Etsy  Pick your own |

**6.2 Social Farming**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Current Participants (2023/24) | Marketing Tools | Future Markets |
| Day Placements  Supported volunteers  Regular Volunteers | Member’s relatives  ECC referrals  Friends/acquaintances of existing co-workers or staff  Attendee with visiting group  WWOOFers | As above plus  ECC events:  day placements  inclusive employment  SEND school/college open days | As above plus  Instagram  LD support groups  LD social groups  Craft day  Cookery day  Member, veg bag & supporter email  SEND colleges  Needs specific flyer  Autism groups  CVS members |
| SEND schools and colleges -  work experience | Marketfields, Clacton  Castledon, Wickford  Grove House, Brentwood | As above | As above  Direct comms with SEND schools & colleges |
| Primary Schools | via The Country Trust charity | As above | As above |
| Supported Internships (SI) | SEND college work experience groups  Parents of SI  ECC advertising | As above | As above |
| Workshops  Open days  Farm walks | All categories above | All categories above | All categories above |

**6.3 Teaching Kitchen**

All staff employed in the Teaching Kitchen will have a diagnosis of autism and/or a learning disability.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Future Customers (from April 2024) | Marketing Tools | Future Markets |
| Staff canteen | Staff  Social farming participants  Members  General visitors  Accommodation and lettings | Internal communications  Member, veg bag & supporter email  Direct communication to visiting people and groups |  |
| Footpath Cafe | Disabled people arriving by car  Non-disabled people arrive by foot | Word of mouth |  |
| Events catering | Workshops  Farm walks  Open Days  Members birthdays | Included in marketing for the event | Expanding the range and size of events |
| Outside catering | Quaker funerals  Small gatherings | Same channels as vegetables | Expand the range and size of events |

**6.4 Guest Accommodation**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Future customers (from Summer 2024) | Marketing Tools | Future Markets |
| Brick Barn | Carers and families of people with a learning disability  Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain (ASinGB) members  Biodynamic Agricultural Association (BDAA) members  Quakers  People with a learning disability and/or autism  Staff, volunteers, social farming and their friends/families  Members | Same as first table | Same as first table |
| Beach Hut Off Grid Retreat | Same as first table  Relevant web sites | As above plus  Specific retreat websites  ASinGB  RSPB  EWT  BDAA | Offer marriage services in the Beach Hut |

**6.5 Early Years Steiner/Waldorf Kindergarten/parent and child group**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Future Customers (2026) | Marketing Tools | Future Markets |
| Parent and Child Group | Same as first table | Same as First table | Forest or Beach based |

**6.6 Residential Shared Lives**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Element | Hosts and Shared Lives | Marketing Tools | Future Growth |
| Shared Lives | Hosts  Shared Lives | Emails to supported and members, advertising in ASinGB, BDAA, Camphill publications.  Co-workers and ECC | Develop track record which can be used in future dwellings planning applications |

**7. Community Engagement and Partnerships**

**7.1 Share Offer Promotion and Grant Funding**

Our existing members are key to the success of this next phase of development. Encouraging their engagement through being given the draft business plan and inviting comments and then ratifying it at a social event on the farm. Asking members to arrange local talks for the Farm director to give during the share offer. Get an understanding of how many prospectuses they would like before the print run and asking the members to spread the word. Additional sources of publicity are detailed in sections 7.2 and 7.3.

The National Lottery Community Fund are a key partner. There is a strong interest in the business plan and we have the opportunity to apply for five years of social farming bursary funding as well as start-up wages for the Operations Manager, Lettings Clerk and Craft Worker which is very encouraging. We will also present this seven-year plan to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation through an Expression of Interest form. Around 90% of such applications are rejected but those that are accepted have a high probability of receiving funding. This is not considered too likely but if we were successful, the combination of Esmee Fairbairn and the National Lottery would put us in a very strong position.

**7.2 Longer Term Community Engagement**

We have developed a good relationship with our local MP, Priti Patel, and obtaining her support for this plan will be very useful. We will also work to develop a good relationship with any MP who succeeds the current one. Our close connections with the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain and especially the current general secretary, **Marjatta van Boeschoten,** will need to be nurtured and maintained. In addition, existing healthy relationships with the Biodynamic Association, Biodynamic Land Trust and other leading people in biodynamics provides continuous support and evolution for the project.

Other local connections include the Maldon Mayor, the Goldhanger Parish Council, ECC staff, college staff, Suffolk Market Events (who run the Maldon and Colchester markets) and Willow Hall Farm who we are very engaged with. In addition, the Manningtree Wholefood store, the Colchester Rudolf Steiner Study Group and other local groups who have visited the farm, received talks from Spencer or Andre, have links to our trustees and members and are all to be nurtured.

The Maldon Quaker Meeting is a significant supporter of our work and philosophy with a number of people being members of the Society. The other local Quaker meetings would be good places to arrange talks about the farm. The Green Party in Chelmsford are also very supportive as are the Colchester Environment Centre, En Form.

**7.3 Existing Social Farming Networks**

We anticipate this next phase of development will further develop all our existing social farming partners such as Castledon College, Marketfields College, ECC social care and supported employment teams, care providers for our co-workers, The Country Trust and the various Primary Schools that have visited over the years, along with the Essex Wildlife Trust, the RSPB and local markets at Maldon, Colchesterand Wivenhoe. Further, all our co-workers and their families are very supportive and could prove a valuable source of networking opportunities. Coco Care in Colchester use our site for day placements and have been supportive in the past.

**8. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportuities and Threats Analysis**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **8.1 Biodynamic Conservation Farming & Biodynamic Horticultural Teaching Garden** | |
| Strengths | * Resilient, healthy soil, plants and animals. * Not open to external price fluctuations. * Low risk. * Deeply nourishing for the human being. * Feel connected to nature. * Abundant wildlife. * Clean water. * Enhanced biodiversity. * UK and worldwide Biodynamic community is very supportive. * Great tasting produce. * High animal welfare. * High nutritional quality produce. * Therapeutic and educational work. * Experienced staff and many volunteers. |
| Weaknesses | * Little land to plough so need to buy in straw bedding for cattle. * Since Brexit, very few biodynamic farmers in the UK. * Land floods in winter. * Very physical work. |
| Opportunities | * Train local people in biodynamic farming. * Undertake research to prove the method works and spread the word. * Increase financial margins. * More educational work. * Increase cut flowers. |
| Threats | * Notifiable diseases in cattle, sheep and hens. * GM seed in the UK can spread onto neighbouring farms. * Loss of honeybees locally. * Spray drift of chemicals from neighbours. * Intensive chemical agriculture in area does not provide habitat to link to Lauriston. * Closure of Seed Co-Op. |

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| **8.2 Social Farming and Heritage Crafts** | |
| **Social Farming** | |
| Strengths | * Cohesive group of people supporting one another. * Empowering individuals to go beyond their perceived limitations. * Require all people to be more sensitive. * Good sense of humour. * Great commitment and care to their work. * Enables people to visit that wouldn’t normally have the opportunity to do so. * Gives a good cross subsidy to primary industry. * Many different channels to maximise resilience and diversity. |
| Weaknesses | * Our location can be a barrier to attending. * Small groups so when someone leaves, it can be challenging for people. |
| Opportunities | * Many ways for social farming participants to overcome fears and gain confidence. * Learn new work and life skills. * Experience the world of work in a safe and supportive environment. * Possibilities to move into employment. |
| Threats | * Any incident that could require external agencies to inspect us, e.g. safeguarding, accident, health and safety issue. * Funding cuts in social care. |
| **Heritage Crafts** | |
| Strengths | * Skilled volunteers. * Plenty of raw fleece from our sheep. * Many different craft tools and machines. * Great for hand dexterity, relaxation, creativity, calmness. * Really good community activity. |
| Weaknesses | * Providing a really well finished product that can sell well. * Craft items are not valued by consumers, so the price tends to be much lower than the cost of production. * Our crafters are volunteers, so we don’t always have a consistent output. * Craft room hosts lunches and tea breaks so limited in space. |
| Opportunities | * Won an international prize so have lovely new equipment. * Fund raise to employ a craft worker for two days a week to develop the crafts. * Could become a coworker day as it is very popular. * Produce beautiful items and promote natural fibres. |
| Threats | * Notifiable disease in the sheep. * Moths in the fleece and yarn. * No organic certified mills in the UK so consumers may lose trust in status of wool. * Injuries to participants. |

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| **8.3 Teaching Kitchen** | |
| Strengths | * Processing high quality farm produce for good healthy meals. * Great learning opportunities for all abilities. * Experienced Kitchen Lead. * Many different potential income streams. * Outside cooks interested in renting kitchen. * Daily lunches, all eating the same food together, creates a great human bond with one another which strengthens the community and helps people to socialise |
| Weaknesses | * A little tight for storage space. * Location may prove challenging for visiting guests. |
| Opportunities | * Endless! * Many we don’t know yet. * Workshops, preserves, using gluts from veg field, less waste, outside catering, parties, cakes. |
| Threats | * Taking on too much. * Price hikes in bought in goods. * Food hygiene issue. * Staying safe in the kitchen with hot pans, steam and sharp knives. |

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| **8.4 Guest Accommodation** | |
| Strengths | * Beautiful, tranquil location with amazing birdwatching and dark skies (Milky Way is visible). * Add biodynamic food to the guests booking. * Join the farm for lunches. * Great local walks. * Interesting buildings to stay in. * Beach hut retreat is truly amazing, a very special place. |
| Weaknesses | * You need to like the outdoors. * A few miles from a shop. * Isolated. * Need to enjoy the sounds of the farm, cockerels at 4am! |
| Opportunities | * To develop good personal relationships with regular guests. * People can learn about biodynamics and sustainability while on holiday. * Truly unwind in the Beach Hut. * Marriage services in Beach Hut. * Giving priority bookings to carers and families with learning disabilities. |
| Threats | * Safeguarding on the farm. * People could be noisy at night. * Dogs can frighten some of our social farmers. * Vandalism and thefts at Beach Hut. |

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| **8.5 Early Years Steiner/Waldorf kindergarten and Parent & Child Group** | |
| Strengths | * Tranquil, safe setting deep in nature on a working biodynamic farm. * Animals and vegetables, lots of birds and insects. * Safe soils and clean water. * Woodland, beach, grassland, large puddles! * Very popular with parents previously. * We have a track record and experience. * Can support farm staff and volunteers with young children. |
| Weaknesses | * One mile farm track can be a challenge for some drivers. * Difficult to break even with a small group. * Lack of trained Steiner facilitators and teachers. |
| Opportunities | * Develop a group of parents together and they may want to help start a kindergarten. * So many different ways to learn in nature. * Can really get to know the seasons and the rhythm of the farming year. * Possibility of swimming in the river. |
| Threats | * Injures to small children. * Investing in training someone and they leave to work in another setting. * Funding cuts. |

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| **8.6 Residential Shared Lives** | |
| Strengths | * Lovely, welcoming big house with large rooms. * Very safe and tranquil setting. * Opportunities to work on the farm. * A strong social community on the farm gives diversity in an isolated place. * Wonderful walks from the house and loads of birds and nature. * The whole farm understands people with learning disabilities and/or autism. |
| Weaknesses | * Location could be considered too isolated. * Always need a car to get anywhere. * Need to plan ahead, can’t just nip to the shop. * The house can be cold in winter and needs to be more energy efficient, especially the windows. |
| Opportunities | * To create a wonderful supportive and loving community house. * Allow everyone to grow and develop. * Learn about ourselves as well as learning about others. * Shared cooking and eating. * If it goes well, two more houses could be built. |
| Threats | * Any health and safety or safeguarding incident. * Reductions in funding for Shared Lives * Closure of the scheme all together. |

**9. Uncertainty and Risk**

The following is a list of risk factors to the business we have identified and how we will mitigate against them.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Risk** | **Mitigation** |
| A drop in government funding for adults with learning difficulties. | Keep abreast of the developments in social care policy, respond quickly to any planned changes. |
| An accident or incident at the farm involving a special needs participant or anyone else. | Ensure all insurance, risk assessments, first aid and policies are in place for dealing with such an event. |
| Funding sought is not achieved. | Take stock and review business plan, look for new funding sources and phase in the plan over a longer time period. |
| Cash flow problems as funds go into refurbishing existing buildings. | Keep applying for funding with help from self-employed fund raiser. |
| Staff leaving. | Have regular meetings with all staff to keep abreast of any issues or plans for change. |
| Global pandemic | Respond quickly to ensure compliance with the new regulations and seek funding for new infrastructure development and extra staff costs |

1. **Finance and Funding**
   1. **Trading Performance Forecast**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Profit and Loss Forecast - 1st April 2024 to 31st March 3031 | | | | | | | | |
|  | | | | | | | | |
|  | **2023/24** | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** | **2028/29** | **2029/30** | **2030/31** |
| **Trading Income** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Biodynamic Conservation Farming | 64,124 | 66,152 | 70,131 | 73,551 | 76,416 | 85,082 | 98,636 | 106,368 |
| Biodynamic Teaching Garden | 38,186 | 43,078 | 46,502 | 48,827 | 51,268 | 53,832 | 56,523 | 59,349 |
| Social Farming & Heritage Crafts | 51,498 | 59,792 | 71,888 | 108,633 | 114,814 | 132,995 | 139,820 | 148,461 |
| Teaching Kitchen | 0 | 15,860 | 32,584 | 40,310 | 38,798 | 41,093 | 43,447 | 46,894 |
| Guest Accommodation & Events | 0 | 13,800 | 40,560 | 50,000 | 65,000 | 76,954 | 84,649 | 101,579 |
| Parent and Child Group | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13,000 | 13,650 | 14,333 | 15,049 | 15,802 |
| Other | 26,301 | 9,791 | 8,230 | 6,679 | 7,013 | 7,757 | 7,952 | 8,300 |
| **Total Trading Income** | **180,109** | **208,473** | **269,895** | **341,000** | **366,959** | **412,044** | **446,076** | **486,753** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total Cost of Sales** | **24,953** | **36,572** | **42,347** | **44,062** | **44,765** | **45,318** | **47,584** | **53,863** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Gross Profit** | **155,156** | **171,901** | **227,548** | **296,938** | **322,194** | **366,726** | **398,492** | **432,889** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Grant Income** | **45,981** | **82,445** | **100,100** | **98,405** | **72,620** | **44,641** | **41,105** | **17,716** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Operating Expenses** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Employment Costs | 127,113 | 171,805 | 230,135 | 262,491 | 275,615 | 295,428 | 310,199 | 325,709 |
| Other Expenses | 62,806 | 75,208 | 84,458 | 114,003 | 108,596 | 112,465 | 115,458 | 119,401 |
| **Total Operating Expenses** | 189,919 | 247,013 | 314,592 | 376,493 | 384,211 | 407,893 | 425,658 | 445,110 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Net Profit** | **11,218** | **7,333** | **13,056** | **18,849** | **10,603** | **3,474** | **13,940** | **5,495** |

**Income**

The new streams are driven by new access gained to existing properties on the farm. The new Operations Manager is fully grant funded for the first three years and will increase capacity notably in Day Placements. There is a forecast for a five-year Social Farming Bursary grant from the National Lottery which tails off over the five years. Additional turnover comes from the holiday lets in two properties with further increases in agricultural income, flower income and Teaching Kitchen.

The vegetable output has been budgeted to remain on the existing two acres with two poly tunnels. The Job Coach income relates to the launching of a biodynamic entry level 3/level 1 qualification for students with SEND. The Parent and Child group starts when the Black Barn is ready, and the forecast is for one day per week with seven children. There is some uncertainty over the agri-environment schemes over this length of time but, at the moment, the budget is valid for these items.

**Cost of Sales**

These stay pretty steady aside from the purchase of biodynamic steers due to a lack of calves.

**Expenses**

Control over expenses has been historically strong. Additional items of note are rent for the all the buildings and farmland payable to the Land Trust and expenses associated with internal external improvements to new and existing properties. Total wage increases result from additional members of staff for the kitchen, in day placements, the parent and child group and servicing the lettings which will also be linked to work experience for college students with SEND.

We currently pay the national living wage of £11.44/hour for staff living on site with responsibility for vulnerable people and managing a budget, £12.50/hour for staff with similar responsibilities living off site and £13.50 an hour for the former plus managing a budget, e.g. Kitchen Lead. The budgeted wage for the Operations Manager has been set at £35,000 per annum which equates to £19 per hour assuming they are living off site.

**10.2 Balance Sheet Forecast**



**10.3 Cash Flow Forecast**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cash Flow Forecast - 1st April 2024 to 31st March 3031 | | | | | | | |
|  | **2024/25** | **2025/26** | **2026/27** | **2027/28** | **2028/29** | **2029/30** | **2030/31** |
| **Opening Balance** | 45,000 | 52,333 | 65,389 | 84,238 | 94,841 | 98,315 | 112,255 |
| Net Profit | 7,333 | 13,056 | 18,849 | 10,603 | 3,474 | 13,940 | 5,495 |
| **Closing Balance** | **52,333** | **65,389** | **84,238** | **94,841** | **98,315** | **112,255** | **117,750** |

By the end of the period, the CCBS generates sufficient reserves to achieve its stated reserves policy of six months operating costs.

**10.4 Investment Required**

Investment is needed to set up the Land Trust (solicitor fees, initial £5,000 bank deposit and registration costs), writing of the Lease agreement between the Land Trust and the CCBS (solicitor fees) and the CCBS, move assets into the Land Trust (solicitors) and make capital improvements to the buildings. The Beach Hut requires a minimum of £50,000, the Brick Barn £10,000 and the Black Barn £80,000.

To enable growth in the CCBS, start-up funding for three new roles is required – operations Manager (3 years, £153,000), Craft Worker (1 year, £5,500) and Lettings Clerk (£5,500).

For continuation of the Social Farming Bursary for seven years until income from the new enterprises funds the Social Farming Bursary. Total grant over seven years is £270,000.

**10.5 Sources of Funding and Amounts**

**Community Share Offer**

Launching in the Summer of 2024, a new community share offer will fundraise for the setting up of the Land Trust and capital improvements to the Beach Hut and Brick Barn. We will apply to Co-Ops UK Booster Program to assist with the share offer nd generate match funding as well as any other match funding opportunities. The revenue we will seek is as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Community Share Offer** | |  |
|  |
| Brick Barn | | £10,000 |
| Beach Hut | | £50,000 |
| Land Trust Set Up | | £10,000 |
| Solicitor Fees | | £7,500 |
|  | |  |
| **Total** | | **£77,500** |
|  | |  |

Grant income and/or loans will be sought for any shortfall in the community share offer.

**Grant Income**

The remainder of the funding requirements will be sought through grant funding as follows:

Capital improvements to the Black Barn - apply to the National Lottery Heritage Fund (approx. £80,000).

Wages for the first three years of the Operations Manager nd first year of the Craft Worker and Lettings Clerk - apply to Esmee Fairburn Foundation and the National Lottery Community Fund (£150,000).

Social Farming Bursary - apply to the National Lottery Community Fund for a tapering down, five-year grant (£175,000) and smaller funds to raise around £10,000 per year.

1. **Timeline for Implementation**

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Description automatically generated with medium confidence**

1. **Annexes**
   1. **Lauriston Farm Limited CCBS Charitable Objects**

The objects of the Society shall be to carry on any business for the benefit of the community by undertaking wholly charitable activities, that are based on the principles, methods and practice of anthroposophy as initiated by Dr. Rudolf Steiner (as summarised in the Appendix to these Rules), in particular but not limited to the following:

1. By advancing the education of people with a learning disability, and other people deemed to be in need, by the establishment and operation of a farm, that provides training and farm based educational facilities with the object of improving the conditions of life of the beneficiaries.
2. By relieving sickness, promoting and advancing good health, providing care and support to people with a learning disability and other people deemed to be in need.
3. By furthering the conservation maintenance and protection of the farm’s wildlife, its habitats and its historical, archaeological and scientific interest.
4. The Society shall be owned and controlled by its Members on a fair and equitable basis.
   1. **Appendix to Rules of Lauriston farm Limited CCBS**

As referred to in Rules 1 & 6 of Camphill Shares Lives Communities Limited this appendix provides a summary of the principles of Dr. Rudolf Steiner relating to the establishment and operation of Camphill Shared Lives Communities Ltd.

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925), an Austrian philosopher, scientist and social reformer, extended scientific research beyond the existing parameters of natural science to investigate the non-physical, spiritual realities of life. Using clear and accessible means for attaining spiritual knowledge, he offered insights that have inspired new approaches to medicine, education, the arts, architecture, agriculture, social reform and economics. As in the natural sciences, spiritual science employs objective methodologies which can be understood with rigorous thinking and empirically verified in practical activity. The name given to this new branch of science is 'anthroposophy', a Greek word meaning 'wisdom of Man'.

Anthroposophical principles as to curative treatment, education, medicine, architecture, agriculture, horticulture, art, science and religion form the basis of the life and activities of Camphill Shared Lives Communities, provided that every member of such communities shall be at liberty to follow the religion of his/her choice. Specific practices developed from the social and philosophical ideas of Rudolf Steiner should be integrated into the work of the Charity as far as possible.