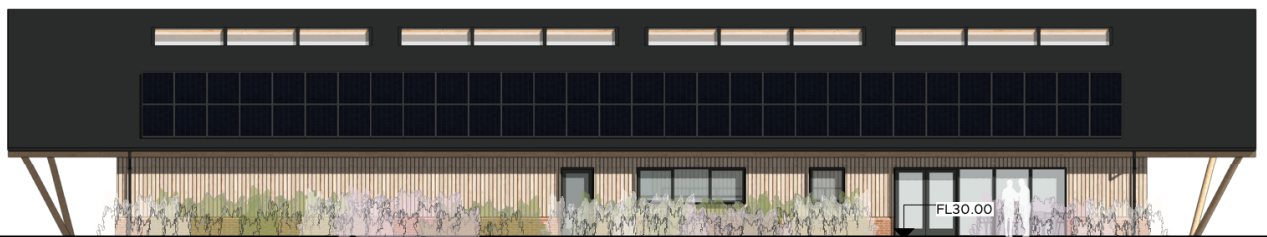


MARKET FIELD GROWS

NURTURING BRIGHT FUTURES

PLAN AND VISION
DECEMBER 2022



In partnership with
LANSWOOD



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– EXECUTIVE SUMMARY –

I have been the Head of Market Field School for 30 years, dedicated to providing exemplar education for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and supporting their families through the challenges they face.

We established our Academy Trust, The Hope Learning Community, to further our vision.

Market Field Grows is a further innovation which has the potential to change many of these outcomes for the better - creating futures full of promise and productivity.

School days are the best days of your life, they shouldn't be the only days. This is not Rolls Royce we are after but future proofing investment so it is more of an electric car.

The current financial costs of inaction are astounding.

EXAMPLE OF ONE LOCAL FAMILY:

Twin boys left Market Field School in 2006 care is costing £250,000 per annum so this has cost £4million in 16 years.

Approximately 20 young people finish their education at The Hope Learning Community each year, only one will get a job.

This is nothing compared to current emotional cost – this is crippling.

When you have a child, it gives birth to a dream. You aspire to do everything in your power to enable their dreams.

Imagine being totally and absolutely powerless, how would you feel?

Then imagine as you grow older and weaker, they become stronger and more dependent.

We must make take action so the dream that is nightmarish for many can change.

You have this power; please use it for good.

Gary Smith

Gary Smith OBE
Executive Head
Hope Learning Community

- INTRODUCTION -

No one can deny the urgent need for a radical change in the approach to employment for people with special educational needs (SEN). For too long a significant proportion of our population has been ignored; members of our community which, given the right support and guidance, can secure and retain paid employment and work within a variety of sectors providing essential community services.

Market Field Grows has the potential to change many lives. Not just the lives of the young people who are educated and employed, but the lives of their families and carers.

We have given careful consideration to the business activities at Market Field Grows to ensure:

- We have a robust and viable business model
- Jobs are created across a variety of sectors
- The working environment supports a SEN college curriculum
- Collaborations and partnerships have been established with local organisations and experts
- The site sees a biodiversity gain and supports wildlife and conservation
- The local community are involved
- There is scope for growth and scaling up

This vision and proposal document will clearly demonstrate:

- How our plan and vision has been developed
- Previous potential sites
- The business activities proposed for the site
- Employment and training projections
- Collaboration with other organisations
- A conscientious approach to conservation
- Our corporate structure

Day by day, month by month, year on year a concern and worry for all these families is: what happens when our child finishes full time education?

Working with our parent and student stakeholder group, the plans for Market Field Grows have been five years in the making; a vision for bright futures for young people with learning difficulties and autism.



OUR STUDENT STEERING
COMMITTEE

Only 5.1% of
people with a
learning disability
will secure paid
work in their
lifetime.

- PROCESS -

In April 2018, Naomi Andrews joined the Hope Learning Community as a project manager. Naomi's primary goal was to ensure that when young people with SEN, finish their full time education paid employment is secured and retained.

For the first year, Naomi set out to discover what was working within this sector and more importantly what was going wrong. Travelling and researching projects around the country and researching projects overseas, a vast amount of information was gathered and lessons were learned, upon which we could model our own plan and vision for change:

- Existing supported internship and apprenticeship programmes were highly effective in cities and large towns, however, failed in rural areas lacking large employers.
- Learning on the job works - aligning a college curriculum with hands on experience produced a good employment outcome, in some cases up to 62% of the young people ended up with a paid job.

A great example of this is Foxes Academy in Somerset and The Lighthouse Futures Trust in Leeds. We have picked up elements of these models within our plan and vision.

- Job carving is a fantastic approach; splitting roles into smaller jobs amongst a group and providing dedicated training to just that element. For instance, rather than training a cafe team member to work the till, clear tables, prepare coffees and prepare cakes, teach a team member to look after the coffee, or clear tables or prepare the cakes. Teach one job really, really well.

A great example of this has been adopted by Marriot Hotel Group; the management found that room turnaround times could actually be decreased by

giving each person a specific job, such as changing the bed, changing the towels, setting up the hospitality tray, replenishing toiletries and moving from room to room just carrying out their singular job. These team members are often graduates of The Foxes Academy.

- Ongoing support is always needed. It's no good finding someone a job and then just leaving them to it; research shows that without ongoing support it is unlikely a job will last more than six months. This is a crushing disappointment and can put someone back years in terms of confidence. This can take the form of a job coach, or indeed just someone checking in every week or so.
- Employers and the general public wanted to find out more about how they can support young people with SEN into work, with the right training employers are really happy to adapt a workplace or system to ensure a successful outcome.
- Treat everyone as an equal and let everyone have a voice. Make a person feel valued.
- Give people a chance to find their feet whilst working alongside people who are kind, knowledgeable and considerate.

SETTING UP THE CHARITY

A corporate vehicle and recognised organisational platform was needed. An organisation which could support our plan and vision, whilst generating an income and acting as an employer.

Options included a standard limited company, a community interest company, a company limited by guarantee or a charity. We decided a charity was the best way forward and an application was submitted to the Charity Commission in early 2020, not the best time. However, we were granted charity status in August 2020.

Secondly, we needed a business. A business which tapped into a burgeoning market and fulfilled a need locally, whilst creating as many varied employment opportunities as possible and aligned with SEN college curriculums.

So, more research was undertaken and over the next year the plan for Market Field Grows calcified.

FINDING A SUITABLE SITE

Whilst carrying out this research and developing a business plan, we set out to find a site. As a newly formed charity, it seemed improbable we would find the funds to purchase a suitable area of land in the region. We also found that most suitable areas of land were already earmarked and optioned for housing; farmers and landowners were very reluctant to even contemplate selling at agriculture rates.

We were not discouraged. Working with the charity bank, we did have potential to get a sizeable mortgage to purchase a site for development and three separate bids were made:

- A group of barns in circa 3 acres in Great Bentley. We were outbid by a developer.
- A children's nursery and residential home set in 5 acres in Ardleigh. The owner opted for another purchaser who could access funds quickly.

- A large, former nursing home in the centre of Colchester set in circa 1 acre. Our closed bid did not meet the requirements of the vendor.
- The perfect site in Mistley was offered to us for a very good price, however, challenges with the current owners did not permit us to follow this path.

With these four failed bids behind us, we:

- Approached Essex County Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council to secure land by way of a Community Asset transfer. However, no council land is available for transfer or lease.
- The Board at the University of Essex were approached to see if we could deliver an enterprise on circa 1 acre, catering specifically for the needs of the student cohort. Although an area of land was identified and a business plan presented, the Board decided the area would be put to better use as office space.
- We presented our idea directly to the Garden Community team at Colchester Borough Council, before the organisation was disbanded and reformed as a collaboration between Tendring and Colchester.
- Spoke at length with the owner of a group of barns in Wivenhoe, who after some consideration decided we were not the right party to sell to.
- Teamed up with a developer whose Director at the time supported our project and dedicated 4 acres within their planning application. Within a day or so of the submission, he left the company and the development plans were scrapped.

This is just an example of the prospects we have chased.

We have been focused, resilient, determined and never given up.

– ENTERPRISES –

Our business plan and model has been carefully considered. Each element of the business has been included to ensure:

- The creation of a financially robust business.
- We meet the needs of the local community.
- Creating a 'destination' site appealing to visitors.
- An array of jobs are created in different sectors.
- The work and training aligns with a SEN college curriculum.
- Job skills can be taken to other employers.

As we gain confidence, we will introduce other enterprises, being considered are a micro-brewery and pizza restaurant.



LIBRARY

An unusual addition to our site, but one which is much needed within the local community. Our library will focus upon providing a quiet, warm and welcoming environment for families with young children to read, play and socialise. Likewise, somewhere for the older generation to meet. The focus for teenagers and adults will be conservation, horticulture and wildlife. We would like to provide a well rounded selection of reference books to read in the library or borrow and take home; a selection of books which will spark interest in the natural world. Alongside our books, we will host talks, photography and art workshops.

PLANT NURSERY

Working with the team at Beth Chatto Gardens and Education Trust, Market Field Grows will be developing their own plant nursery. This element of the project will support an NVQ Level 1 and a RHS Level 1 qualification, which is to be delivered by the Beth Chatto Education Trust. To get us off the ground, the plant team at Beth Chatto are donating seeds and cuttings so we can grow our own stock. Our plant sales on site will be limited (as to not compete with Beth Chatto who are located very close by), but this will enable us to grow all our own plant stock for the site and will also supply our flower farm, gardening and maintenance enterprise. The nursery will be headed up by one qualified and experienced, full time member of staff from day one.

Our team and Market Field College students will undertake skills training in the following areas:

- Crop rotation and planning
- Cultivation
- Harvesting
- Looking after the land
- Biodynamic / organic principles
- Bed preparation



BAKERY, CAFE, CATERING

Our catering and hospitality offering will be centred around our bakery. Already, six young people from Market Field College are receiving training within a professional kitchen at Zeelandia (the largest importer of commercial bakery goods in the Country). Every day we will bake and sell high quality bread, cakes and pastries to sell in our shop, serve in our cafe and deliver within the local area.

Our team and Market Field College students will undertake skills training in the following areas:

- Catering & cooking
- Food preparation
- Weekly & seasonal menu planning
- Kitchen tidying, cleaning & using the dishwasher
- Stock taking, inventory & ordering
- Bookings and reservations
- Taking food orders
- Waiting tables
- Clearing tables
- Using the till and cashing up
- Producing menus and marketing material
- Deep cleaning
- Event catering

MARKET FIELD STORES

Alongside our Market Field Food Cafe & Bakery we will run Market Field Stores. The shop will stock produce from our horticulture enterprises; seasonal produce, flowers and items produced by our team and volunteers. We will also be a platform for local producers and growers to merchandise and sell their goods. We are keen to introduce an eco-shop element so that people can refill containers with every day items such as washing up liquid, washing powder, coffee, tea, pulses and rice etc.

Our team and Market Field students will undertake skills training in the following areas:

- Merchandising and display
- Operating the till
- Stock taking and inventories
- Helping customers
- Cleaning and tidying
- Labelling and producing marketing material
- Gift wrapping and packaging





COMMUNITY AND EVENT SPACE

The cafe area and outdoor space will be used for community events, business meetings, parties and social gatherings.

We will be able to cater for events from our kitchens and this will support a qualification in hospitality and catering.

The library will also be used for external groups - including playgroups, art workshops, photography sessions and community groups and gatherings.

FLOWER FIELDS AND FLORISTRY

As awareness grows of the environmental impact of the cut-flower industry consumers are looking for home grown alternatives.

Flowers are often at the centre of life's biggest turning points, from birth to marriage to death, but, until recently, few would have asked questions about where those flowers came from and what the cost might be, beyond the price tag.

50% of British households bought cut flowers in 2021. The pandemic disrupted growers and florists, both logistically and when events, such as weddings, ground to a halt, but people still bought flowers to stay connected to family members and friends.

According to Defra, only 14% of cut flowers sold in the UK are grown in Britain. The remaining 86% come from the Netherlands, or from warmer countries, such as Ecuador, Kenya and Ethiopia. Supermarkets sell "seasonal" flowers, such as roses in February, without much explanation as to which country's season that is, though it is safe to assume that roses are unlikely to be thriving in the cold British winter months.

Our main horticulture business will be home grown flowers and floristry. Selling to the public, florists and directly to venues in the area. We will also offer a delivery and events service.





WORKSHOPS

What can be saved from landfill? Our team will re-purpose, re-use, save and sell everyday items that would otherwise be thrown away. Working together to promote a sustainable culture through creativity, practical skills and ingenuity. Saving bottles, plant pots, bicycles, boxes, ornaments, chairs, tables, spectacles, cds, pens, lampshades, bags, trousers, picture frames..... the list is endless.

Our team and Market Field College students will undertake skills training in the following areas:

- Drawing and sketching ideas
- Researching methods of construction
- Upholstery
- Woodwork
- Painting
- Spraying
- Bicycle reconditioning
- Marketing and merchandising
- Organising re-purpose events and pop up shops

The workshop spaces will also be used for our produce and flower processing and floristry workshops.

HERBS AND SPICES

As well as some seasonal vegetables and flowers, the herbs and spices will be processed and then sold in the shop or delivered to local restaurants, cafes and pubs. We are also placing focus on the more unusual ingredients and intend to grow lemon grass, chillies and heritage varieties of vegetables and tomatoes in our polytunnels.

MARKET FIELD GROWS CONSERVATION

The new site will become the headquarters of our successful conservation and maintenance enterprise. Somewhere we can safely store equipment, our vehicles and provide training to new team members. Using our expertise, we can also deliver training to external groups.



- WHERE WE ARE TODAY -

As we set out on this journey, we knew it would be a long and often difficult path. We knew there were young people who needed support now; like thousands before them would not be able to find and retain work.

Whilst working on our larger ambition we found the time and energy to set up another enterprise under the charity, which has proved a roaring success: Market Field Grows Conservation and Maintenance.

In the summer of 2021, Naomi started to look at what gaps there were in the labour market, what industries were flourishing. One sector kept emerging - The Green Economy. Central government, The Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission (amongst others) were offering large grants and funding opportunities to Councils and land owners in the area to rewild large swathes of the Essex Countryside.

Further conversations with Mike Wadham of the Big Green Internet demonstrated that although the grants and trees were available, a reliable, local workforce was not.

This is when we created Market Field Grows Conservation. In November 2021 we secured funding from Essex Community Foundation for a team leader salary for six months. We secured funding for a truck and equipment from Sanctuary and a conservation philanthropist provided The Big Green Internet with the funds to pay the salary for a team.

We recruited six young people who were in the last year of college, two worked each day alongside our team leader.

Our team planted 46,424 trees across Essex over five months.

We have the most experienced and skillful planting team in the area and our reputation and quality of work has enabled us to secure further contracts this winter with Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council and private land owners.

We are now self funding, having gained contracts with Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council. We have sufficient work to support two teams and have already created a total of 12 jobs.



FROM LEFT:
KAI, JOE, SAM, DENIS,
BRAD & LIAM



– CREATING A GREEN FUTURE –

Our proposed site is located within the Essex County Council Climate Focus area, where they are seeking to accelerate land use changes to make the area more resilient to climate change. To inform our plans and vision, we have sought advice from:

- John Meehan - The Head of Climate Adaptation & Mitigation for Essex County Council.
- Mike Wadham - Founder of The Big Green Internet.
- Tom Moat - Senior Forestry and Woodland Officer for Essex County Council.
- Dave Ward - Beth Chatto Education Trust.
- John Little - Founder of The Grass Roof Company.
- Chris Gibson - Conservationist previously with Natural England.
- Essex Wildlife Trust.
- The Tree Council

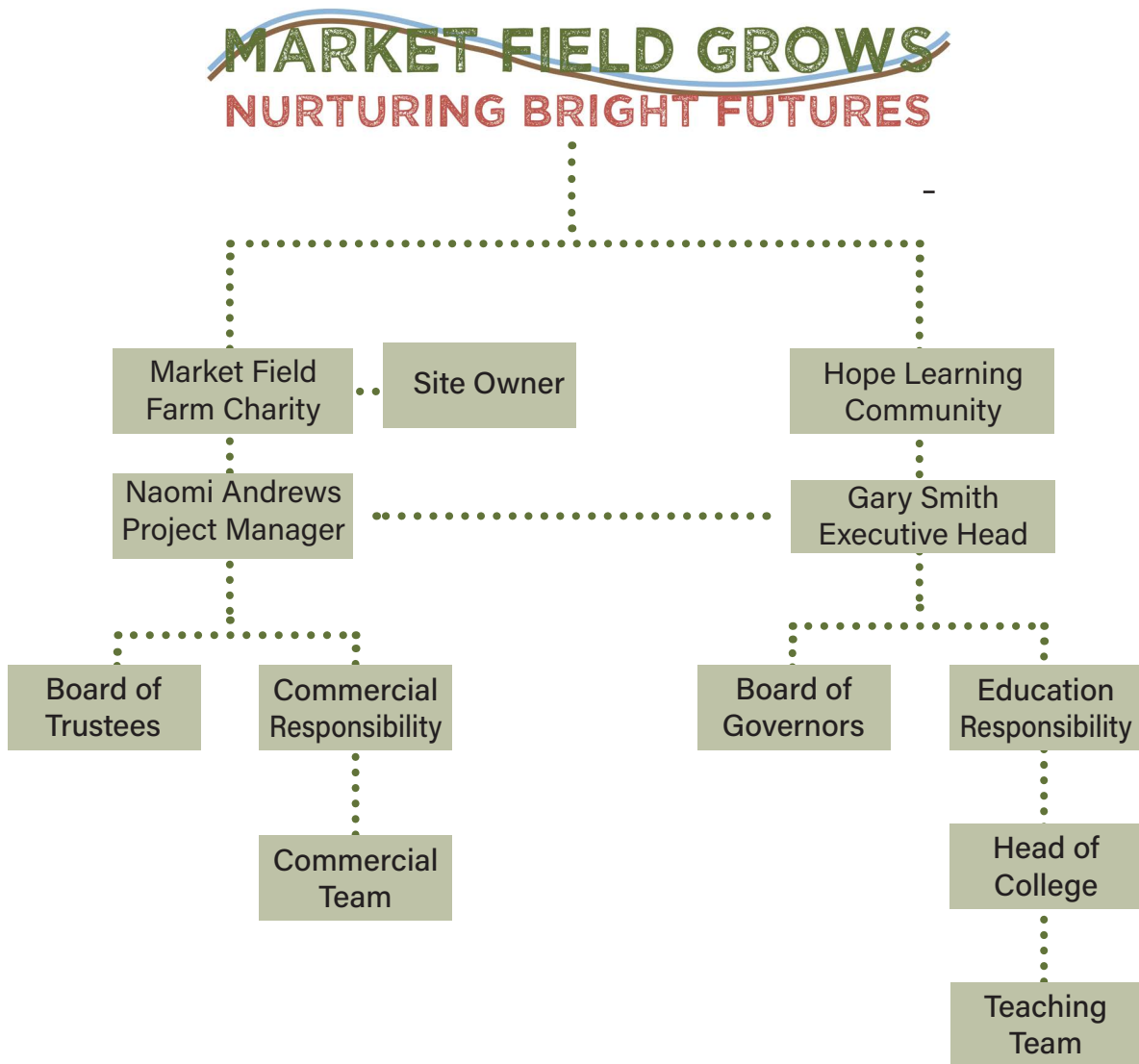
The plans for Hope Grows align with the Climate Focus programme and fully embraces an all round approach to conversation:

- Using native species hedging we will plant wildlife corridors around the whole perimeter of the site, which will link into the woodland to the north east corner, adjacent to the proposed housing.
- All planting across the site will be beneficial to insects and pollinators. Working with Beth Chatto Education Trust we will cultivate and plant a wildlife friendly scheme across Market Field Grows and within the proposed housing buffer zones and gardens.
- We will not use pesticides or harmful chemicals within any of our enterprises.
- Water harvesting and storage is an integral part of the infrastructure.
- Grey water from the kitchens and bathrooms will be used for irrigation.
- We will create and use our own compost from green waste on the site.
- The buildings will be heated using air source heat pumps and electricity will be supplied via solar technologies.
- Car charging points will be located within the car park.
- Bee posts and banks will be integrated throughout the site.
- A ecology survey will be carried out before any work is undertaken, this will be a continued process throughout building and once we open our doors. We will involve our trainees, graduates and local children in the monitoring and survey process.

- STRUCTURE -

The site and buildings will be owned by the Charity, Market Field Farm. The Charity will also be responsible for the commercial activities on the site and ensuring the business is run responsibly and profitably. All profits will pay the salaries of the commercial team and be fed back to the Charity to support further work and development.

The Hope Learning Community will make an application to the Secretary of State for significant change so that the site can be used for college placements. Once this has been achieved students will be able to attend Market Field Grows and be supported by teaching staff, paid for by the Hope Learning Community via their usual ESFA funding.



- COLLABORATION -

We know that to deliver a successful enterprise, we need to work with other organisations, organisations who are experts in their field, who can guide and help us and with whom we can build long term relationships.

We continually seek out new partners who can help us develop and deliver our aspirations.

LANSWOOD

Lanswood: our development partner.



Paddy & Scott: our cafe partner.



Beth Chatto: delivering our RHS Level 1 qualification & helping set up the nursery.



SCF: Provided us with start up funding in 2021/2022.



ECF: provided us with start up funding.



CBC: planting 4000 trees for CBC in 2022 / 2023.



Zeelandia: providing bakery training and help with our bakery business model.



Griffin Chapman: our business advisors.



ECC: working with the Sustainability, Forestry, SEN and Employment teams.



Sanctuary: corporate sponsors and maintenance contract client.



TBGI: our major tree planting partner - together with have planted 46,000 trees.



Latimer and Clarion: Garden Community - setting up a further site and providing conservation services.



EWT: helping us with ecology studies and client to remove circa 0.5m plastic tree guards.



Sparta: Corporate sponsors and promoters of neurodiversity in the workplace 2023.

- DEVELOPMENT & GROWTH -

The commercial enterprises at Market Field Grows will be delivered in three stages:

- STAGE ONE
 - Bakery
 - Cafe
 - Shop
 - Library
 - Events
 - Space Hire
- STAGE TWO
 - Horticulture, including kitchen garden
 - Flower beds and floristry
- STAGE THREE
 - Commercial workshops, including furniture

We have focused our development stages on enterprises which will deliver an income and create the majority of jobs and training opportunities.

In addition to income generated from our Market Field Grows enterprises, we will, for the first three years require additional funding by way of philanthropic gifting, corporate sponsorship and foundation funding applications.

- Circa £100,000 will be required to purchase equipment and furniture.
- Circa £250,000 will be required to cover the first year financial deficit.
- Circa £150,000 will be required to cover the second year financial deficit.

Year three sees us generate adequate income to cover our costs.

Although not included in our business projections, we do have scope to provide day services at Market Field Grows; allowing us to receive personal budget payments so that young people can access activities on site within our horticulture and animal enterprises. It is not the direction we wish for Market Field Grows, however, does provide additional income if required.

We are prepared to see opportunities and grasp them in order to see the financial success of the charity.

We have identified sources for funding and already these funders have been made aware of our project. These include:

- Heritage Lottery Fund
- The National Lottery Fund
- BBC Children in Need
- The Ironmongers Foundation
- Henry Weston Fund

We are researching the set up of a monthly charity donation scheme via Just Giving. An extensive PR campaign would launch the scheme once planning permission is granted. Our aim is to secure circa £10,000 per month via this donation scheme - 1,000 donors at just £10 each per month.

- OPPORTUNITIES -

These figures demonstrate the anticipated levels of employment generated, alongside the number of student numbers supported.

SEN college curriculums generally run over two - three days per week, it is likely therefore that the student numbers will be in the region of 70, the numbers below represent a daily attendance.

The figures are for full time jobs and student numbers. Many jobs will be split into part time roles; which will increase our reach.

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Commercial jobs	10	12	15
Graduate jobs	5	15	22
Teaching jobs	8	10	11
Total paid roles	23	37	48
Students	27	34	34



