

About your business

Please tell us about your business.

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Nature of Organisation (E.g. Plc, Partnership etc).	Company Ltd by Guarantee
Number of employees:	TBC
Length of time Organisation has been operating	New Entity
Company Registration Number (Or alternative EU registration number).	
VAT Registration Number (Or alternative EU registration number).	

Cycle Hire & Catering business opportunity Dalby Forest, North Yorkshire

This Expression of Interest is being submitted by a potential new start Social Enterprise, 'The Forest Group'.

The Forest Group has a 3 pronged business plan for the Court Yard site:

Cycle Hire Operation: Mountain Bike hire, cycle retail and riding skills training.

Catering Operation: Cafe offering locally sourced healthy food options to cyclists and wider Forest Visitor community.

Employability & Training Provider: Provider of Accredited Training, Apprenticeship opportunities and Employment support and provision as a sub contract supplier to the Governments 'Work Programme'.

The Forest Group would look to work with existing occupants of the Courtyard area to market its provision for the benefit of all, as a true rural 'Cycle Hub'.

The Forest Group is staffed by previous managers of the present service provider, Mike Ellis and Mike Milen.

Mike Ellis: In addition to his period of time working in Dalby, Mike Ellis has over decade of experience in the Cycle trade in both retail and trade environments.

Mike Milen: has almost 40yrs competitive cycling experienced throughout Europe; is a board member of British Cycling, has worked in Retail Banking, Private Sector Welfare to Work & Business Development helping 3rd Sector Organisations and Community Groups move from grant dependency towards a future reliant on earned income.

The Forest Group will also rely on support from:

Steven Bell, former owner of Bells Stores and Bells Training, and now owner of Chapters Hotel & Restaurant, The House and a prime mover in the Entrepreneurs Forum.

Philip Hepple, who after a period in the music industry as tour manager for rock group Yes, has spent over 30yrs working in Private Sector Welfare to Work.

There is huge, and as yet untapped, potential to provide cycle related services from the Dalby site. Cycling and in particular, recreational cycling has seen unprecedented growth over the past decade but the present operator has failed to capitalise upon this in a proactive manner preferring instead to maximise the possible return from existing visitors. The Forest Group intends to work with national bodies (British Cycling, CTC), regional & local public sector, the 3rd and voluntary sectors to increase the profile of its operations and the visitor numbers.

The Forest Group is similar in aim to examples such as recycling.co.uk (North West based recycling business) and Jamie Oliver's 15 Restaurant; truly commercial enterprises offering 1st class service in a commercial world but which use the profit generated from their activities to pursue socially useful work as opposed to paying dividends to share holders. The Forest Group would use its surpluses to support and encourage the employment prospects of local unemployed people, providing employment opportunities and helping to overcome an individual's barriers to sustainable employment.

Main Activities & Income Streams

Cycle Hire: Recreational, High level experienced, adapted cycles and electrically assisted allowing access to forest by less physically fit.

Café Sales: Healthy, locally sourced options catering for cyclists, general forest visitors, groups and corporate bookings.

Repairs: Visitors bikes, general repairs, custom builds.

Training: Riding Skills Youth & Adult, Guiding & Maintenance, D of E, and Education outside the classroom.

Events: Work in partnership with BC Regional Events Team to look to promote a range of mass participation and competitive events for both On & Off Road participants. (Have been promoting events on BC National Calendar for over 10yrs)

Retail Sales: Use knowledge of the market place and regional strength of demand to place Dalby in the market as a destination shop for both On & Off Road customers. Look to establish an 'on line' retail offering.

Projected Audience

Bike Hire and Cafe; 30% of Bike Hire Income to be generated through a core group of A, B, C1 adult hire customers predominately males, but with a big emphasis on promoting cycling for women, utilising links with British Cycling through programmes such as the Cycletta initiative. Anticipated users would be generated predominantly from surrounding conurbations of York, Leeds, Hull, Middlesbrough and Darlington and the surrounding Yorkshire districts. Users are likely to be physically active seeking to engage in physical activity.

Anticipated 50% of Bike Hire Income stream coming from 'budget bike hire users' i.e. Bikes aimed at Green/Blue Cycle trail users. Forest Cycles plan to place significant emphasis on promoting inclusion and accessibility for a wide demographic, aside from the obvious young adult, A,B,C1 adults seeking to engage in outdoor physical activity. This wider group would include A, B, C1, C2, D adults – but crucially family groups as well as adults (men as well as women) likely to engage in more occasional physical recreational activity. The inclusion policy would take the form of a large fleet of children's bikes and bikes more accessible to less confident cyclists, almost run as a separate fleet of bikes, offered in tandem with a fleet suited to other user groups. Crucially we envisage a 'fixed cap' or target maximum price for a group or family of cyclists, aimed at offering a more accessible price for cycling as an occasional activity, especially for C2, D, E users, thus promoting well being and cycling as a healthy activity to user groups with limited access to physical recreation activities.

The final 20% of Bike Hire income is predicted to come from a more under represented demographic of socially excluded groups – elderly, less active users; ethnic minority groups; children who are disadvantaged/below the poverty line; E classified adults. Through the work of the Forest Foundation we aim to provide cycling for those unable to access cycling, either by sourcing funding or offering subsidised rates at pre-determined dates.

The Café user demographic would follow much the same pattern as above, but crucially would focus on targeting the café menu towards the wider forest user demographic, not focussed on 'cyclists' specifically.

Training/Events; Focus for both training and events will be centred on underrepresented groups, in particular; A, B, C1 women – developing links with British Cycling to provide structured training and events

to promote women's cycling; Ethnic minority groups through engagement with local community groups from surrounding conurbations; Elderly men and women through providing simple, informal opportunities for light to moderate physical activity and social engagement. Lastly, this focus on promoting inclusion/extending access would provide opportunities for children from below the poverty line/from a disadvantaged background. Although child poverty in the immediate Ryedale area falls under the Government target of 10% at 9% - the wider projected audience conurbations (excluding Harrogate) all fall outside this 10% with York at 12%, Leeds 21%, Redcar and Cleveland 23%, whilst Hull has 32% Child Poverty and Middlesbrough 34%.

Separate training and events designed to target corporate groups will provide a second income stream from this offer, working with companies to provide environmentally aware solutions to address health and well being, staff development and corporate social responsibility.

Finally, a third income stream to the training and events sector will come from School Groups, offering training and development tailored to meet each key stage, plus extracurricular activities such as D of E programmes. This would involve seeking AALA accreditation, a Learning Outside the Classroom certificate and establishing The Forest Foundation as a Duke of Edinburgh Adventurous Activity Provider.

The Forest Group are keen to promote the wider use of the forest and key to this, we believe, is to develop close working relationships with local partners to extend the training and events we offer beyond cycling. This would include a wider programme of adventurous activities with partners such as East Barmby Centre for sporting activities to skills based training such as Shelter Building or a 'tour of the night sky' in conjunction with the Forestry Commission and the existing FC offer.

Key Government Agendas

As a Social Enterprise looking to participate in the 'Work Programme' and improving job prospects for local People, The Forest Group would be delivering upon the Government's key Big Society Agenda. It is our intention to provide participants with the skills necessary to ensure that they have the best possible chances of identifying, securing and sustaining employment. Nothing fits better with the Big Society than a 3rd Sector Organisation using its endeavours to improve the life chances of local people.

Our promotion of physical activity and healthy eating for diverse groups helps deliver on key government health agendas, as does our intention to work with BC, local schools and community groups to boost take up of cycling, moving towards the Government target of 100,000 competitive cyclists before the end of 2013.

We intend to use our established contacts with CPI to make sure that Dalby benefits from the highest level of support with its desire to minimise its impact upon climate change. We have previous experience of partnership working on projects as diverse as Hydrogen powered bikes and Community run Anaerobic Digestion Power projects.

Community Benefit

As a Social Enterprise with local employability and outdoor activity as its core activities we would look to benefit the local community by reducing the numbers of local people looking for work, whilst also help improve the quality of life of those with whom we interact. In addition to our 'Work Programme' activities we would look to provide mechanic, retail, outdoor leader and catering training, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities to disadvantaged young adults and local school children.

We intend to establish a 'Forest Cycles Academy' – run as a cycling club with the support of British Cycling, to provide cycle training, support, and development opportunities to children up to the age of 18. We would expect this to lead to the formation of - A Cycle Race Team, focused around Junior development and linked to the Academy

Throughout 2012 we would work towards the establishment of a cycling club for the Dalby/North Yorkshire Moors area, with no commercial links to The Forest Group

'Shop Rides' - informal FOC rides throughout the week, to encourage engagement with the forest and wider Moors and Wolds area and to widen the potential membership pool of the Cycling Club.

We would look to run 'Activity Days' throughout the year, the primary aim of which would be engage local communities with the forest.

Uplift service or secondary operating site adjacent to Adderstone Field (or similar) to improve access to alternative sites within the forest for start/finish of cycling routes.

Encouraging Access

Further to providing specific training opportunities within the forest for underrepresented groups, The Forest Group will seek to build upon established links with community leaders across local conurbations such as York, Leeds, Hull, Middlesbrough and Darlington – engaging with communities by taking bikes and training to them, to encourage cycling as both a form of transport whilst translating the experience to encourage using the forest and cycling as a recreational activity.

A separate user group of less mobile users, specifically including physically, mentally and visually impaired users will be targeted through development of links with East Barmby Outdoor Centre and Get Cycling, a CiC company in York, to host inclusion days to provide access to adapted bikes and tandems for less mobile forest users. Further to this, in partnership with these organisations, the Forest Group will seek to establish a fleet of adapted bikes and tandems as part of the bike hire fleet at Dalby.

Environmental Impact

Where practicable, all food sourced from a 10-15 mile radius and able to be collected by bicycle. While this reduces the environmental impact of the Café, crucially for The Forest Foundation, these links to the local community have economic benefit to the surrounding businesses.

We aim to provide as many opportunities as possible to reduce the environmental impact of the day to day running of the centre. Examples could include a Wood burning stove to provide heating for Centre, installation of a rain harvesting system for the bike wash or investigating alternative fuel options to reduce the carbon emissions of the The Forest Foundation. We intend to investigate, through the use of existing contacts with CPI (Government funded alternative energy body based at Wilton Site), the potential of installing an Anaerobic Energy Power Supply.

The bike hire offer would include Incentives and promotion for use of public transport to reward transport choices which reduce the environmental impact. Through engaging with the local and wider community, we will provide links to the wider community to actively promote greener transport modal choices for travel to Dalby. This will include establishing a 'shuttle' service - utilising a bus service fuelled by bio-diesel, to and from Malton train station, and possibly wider destinations which promotes using alternative transport as a viable option for travel to Dalby.

Health & Safety

As a subcontractor under the Governments 'Work Programme' we will be required to work within the requirements of ISO 9001 with all that implies for Health & Safety and documented procedures for all activities likely to impact upon staff, clients and customers.