



Community
Shares

STANDARD



Sacred Earth

community land project
and nature reserve

Share Offer Document

September 2016



The Offer Summary

Sacred Earth Communities Ltd is seeking investment from the community in order to raise capital to begin implementing our agricultural strategy and secure the future of the organisation.

We are aiming to raise £40,000 through community investment (with a maximum subscription of £50,000) in order to deliver our business plan. We need to achieve a minimum of £30,000 in investment in order to deliver our business plan with some minor revisions.

The minimum investment is £50 per investor, with a maximum of £7,500 per investor. The offer opens on 8th September 2016 and runs for 6 weeks, closing on 21st October 2016, or when the maximum target is reached, whichever is sooner.

The management committee reserve the right to extend the offer beyond this initial period if they believe doing so would benefit the share issue.

Our business plan can be downloaded from <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>

The Standard Mark

The Community Shares Standard Mark is awarded by the Community Shares Unit to offers that meet national standards of good practice. For more information about community shares, the Community Shares Standard Mark and the Community Shares Unit go to: communityshares.org.uk



This offer is being promoted by Sacred Earth Communities Ltd (of 4 Hall Cottages, Horebeech Lane, Horam, East Sussex, TN21 0HR) which is registered as a Community Benefit Society with the FCA (reg. no. TBC).

This offer is not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme and investors have no recourse to an ombudsman. You could lose some or all of the money you invest.





What is Sacred Earth?

Did you know that Horam has a wonderful nature reserve on the site of the abandoned Old Horam Brickworks? The 40 acre site of the derelict brickworks was purchased in 2011 by a Sussex-based philanthropist and has been closed to the public ever since, during which time it has been cleared of rubbish, regenerated, ecologically surveyed and partly reinstated for agricultural use.

Sacred Earth is the community organisation which is responsible for stewarding and caretaking the reserve and the surrounding site which consists of woodland, arable, pasture and a well stocked fishing lake.

We are an organisation with social, educational, agricultural, ecological and therapeutic aims. Just as everything in the web of life is interconnected, we see these aims as being fundamentally interconnected too.

In addition to our own projects and programmes we also support entrant farmers, rural craft entrepreneurs and nature-oriented therapists by providing affordable access to land, tools and infrastructure as well as mentoring and project management support. Our vision is to create a thriving community of land stewards, farmers, therapists, teachers, students, apprentices and volunteers working together on the land, supporting one another and the local community

in a variety of important ways. We're a passionate and dynamic organisation which is committed to exploring traditional and indigenous practices as well as finding new and innovative ways of doing things.

We're now approaching a stage in the project's evolution when we will once again be able to provide access to the general public, meaning that it will soon become a significant recreational resource for the local community as well as a carefully managed nature reserve.

Approximately 7 acres of the site comprises Wickerwood nature reserve: an inaccessible wetland area which is the locus of the huge wealth of biodiversity which can be found on the land. Sacred Earth has reached the second stage of a Veolia grant application which, if successful, will result in funding to help to provide infrastructure such as boardwalks which will providing sensitive access to the reserve as we begin to open the site to the local community, initially through the Friends of Wickerwood Nature Reserve scheme starting in 2017.



Why 'Sacred Earth'? Why support us?

A message from Sacred Earth founder Phil Greenwood

We chose Sacred Earth as our name because the underlying meaning of 'sacred' is that which fosters connection. It also implies a reverence for relationship with all things. We view the Earth as our mother because we are born from her and she provides everything we need: shelter, water, food, air, fire and connection with others – the essentials for human survival.

When we have strong relationships with these aspects - when we show respect and give gratitude and thanks for them, health and happiness often begin to emerge with ease from places of discomfort and anxiety. When we foster connection to self, to others, and the world of nature which surrounds us, we can begin to walk in balance - perhaps even in beauty.

This is our organisation's role in society today - to support, nurture and foster connection, especially in young people; to help establish healthy relationships with all things through community building, education, nature connection, and biodiversity in agriculture and conservation.

Our aim is to create a place where people can connect to the essentials that provide life, through food and farming, that provide joy and abundance through deep nature connection, play and creative expression, so that our communities can begin the return journey towards a 'culture of connection' rather than the disconnected one we live in today.

In honour of all those who have gone before us, and to leave a legacy for all those who are yet to come, the children, the unborn generations, we are compelled to ask the questions: How do we want to live? How do we want our children to live? How do we dream into reality the culture of connection all our hearts are yearning for?

Please join us and support our vision to become a beacon of possibility in the south east. Join us and help us to become a farm of the future, full of life and biodiversity. Join us and help us help those who are suffering to connect to themselves and the world around them. Join us to give a voice to all those beings who are not human, who cannot speak up for their needs and who deserve a voice in this world today. Join our community through this share offer. Let's work together to change things for the better, for all our relations. Thanks for your support.





Community Benefit Society

In 2016 Sacred Earth became a Community Benefit Society. This transition is instrumental to the future of the organisation in a number of important ways. Not only do we recognise that engagement with and the support of the local community need to become even more central to our ethos, Sacred Earth also requires an injection of capital (in the form of community shares and other funding streams) in order to take full advantage of this defining moment in our evolution as a community-focused organisation: This important period of growth requires a big surge of energy in 2016-17 in order to reach the next rung of our developmental ladder.

Community share offer

We're asking people to invest in the vision of what Sacred Earth could become if we're able to continue growing and climbing this ladder. Many members of our community recognise that more organisations like Sacred Earth are needed in order to continue highlighting the importance of connecting ecology with agriculture, education and health in order to build healthy and resilient communities. In the years to come we hope to offer a shining example and provide a roadmap for other organisations with similar objectives.

Our aims

Sacred Earth is taking practical steps to overcome the social, environmental and economic challenges which face our communities, finding ways of tackling these challenges which are inclusive, sustainable, regenerative, ecologically sensitive and in alignment with **permaculture, organic and biodynamic** principles. We are doing this through:

Stewardship

Responsible stewardship of the land using a range of traditional and modern techniques which aim to promote an increase in biodiversity for the benefit of local wildlife and the local human community.

Mentoring

Educating children, young people and adults in regenerative practices using experiential learning tools which unlock potential, promote health and wellbeing and nurture vital nature and community connections.

Growth

Growing food, medicinal herbs and raising animals in ways which reduce impact on the environment and builds economic and social resilience by developing a local food network which benefits the local community.



What you'll be supporting



Our Biochar kiln in action earlier this year

Sacred Earth Biochar

The aim of this new enterprise is to produce a variety of char-based products using our existing kiln and sell these products to small, medium and large-scale growers using our website as a shopfront. The enterprise will be closely integrated with our woodland management strategy and include an apprenticeship scheme and educational programme.

Hathor Farm

Hathor Farm will keep heritage breed pigs, chickens and sheep and sell produce directly to the customer. The produce will consist of meat, eggs and potentially wool/fleeces. Both the land and the animals will be cared for according to biodynamic principles. We will also run activities and workshops throughout the year for adults and kids which focus on biodynamic farming methods and animal care.

Sacred Seeds Herbal Project

Sacred Seeds is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) project focusing on the development of a medicinal herb garden at our Horam site. The project will be funded and promoted via a quarterly herbal box

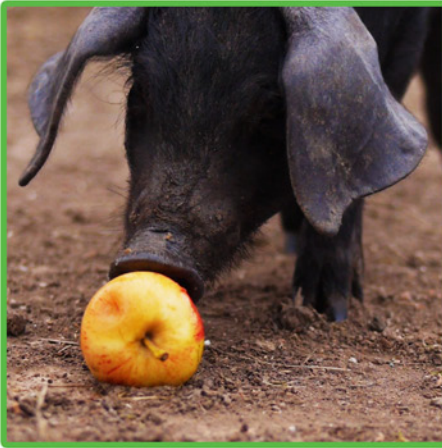
What is Biochar?

Biochar is charcoal which is made at lower temperatures than ordinary charcoal. Because it has a sponge-like structure beneficial microbes in the soil can colonise the biochar and so it becomes a "coral reef" of nutrients for plants to easily access through their roots. Not only is Biochar an effective soil conditioner and substrate for organic plant beds, it is also a proven way to sequester carbon in the ground: a small-scale, localised technique for mitigating against climate change.

which contains seasonal herbal remedies created by a team of qualified herbalists as well as information about the products for adults and children. We will also host regular volunteer days, community events and workshops on the land and elsewhere.



Sacred Seeds herb box



Ecotherapy

Sacred Earth is keen to support the emerging field of Ecotherapy, particularly with regard to tackling nature-deficit disorder (through our Earth Steward Apprenticeship and other educational programmes) and encouraging counselling in the outdoors, animal-assisted and horticultural therapy to take place on the land. We're working with Oliver Bettany (a counsellor and ecotherapist) to develop this aspect of our vision. Initially this will involve the construction of a dedicated ecotherapy space (probably a large willow dome) in a quiet corner of the land - an outdoor therapy space which will be rented by Oliver and other nature-oriented practitioners in the area for one-to-one and group therapy sessions.

Woodland crafts area

The preservation of rural crafts is an important objective for Sacred Earth, an aspect of our educational and social aims. As a result of industrialisation and globalisation (amongst other factors) skills which have been handed down for centuries are in danger of being lost, an issue which is increasingly receiving recognition. Consequently there is a

renewed interest in learning these skills, a workshop market which we're keen to capitalise on. We plan to build a woodland crafts area and invite a variety of craftspeople to come and teach workshops throughout the year, potentially generating a significant income for the organisation.

Site accessibility improvements

Although we have direct vehicle access to the site via Horebeech Lane, our main access point for the public is on the Cuckoo Trail, a short walk or cycle from Horam public car park. Although there is a public bridleway which passes through the land, we've identified another location which will provide easier access. At this spot we plan to build a wooden entrance gate, notice board and "honesty box" for sale of Hathor Farm eggs and other produce and products. We'd also like to commission a set of wooden sign posts to enable visitors to navigate the site more easily.

Other projects

Details of other projects this share offer will be helping can be found in our business plan available on our website: <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>



Ecotherapy in the woods with Oliver Bettany

Finances and funding

We have been operating solvently since 2011, during which time we have received a number of agricultural grants and an income from our education programmes which have enabled us to grow at a steady rate. Our current financial position is good. Our accounts can be downloaded from our website: <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>

We're now in a position to increase our rate of growth. We have identified the investment funding required and sources of funding to begin moving away from grant dependency. We're aiming to reach a funding total of £70,000 in our first year of operating as a Community Benefit Society, which breaks down as follows:

- **£15,000** - Grant from FEA Network (*Funding Enlightened Agriculture*)
- **£15,000** - Loan from CCF (*Co-operative and Community Finance*)
- **£40,000** - Community investment

Our grant dependency as an organisation reduces steadily over our first five years of trading as a Community Benefit Society, as a direct result of the growth we're predicting in our Biochar initiative and our education streams. During this period we will secure additional funding to cover this shortfall.

Our net losses in our first two years (see table opposite) are attributable to our 'start up' revenue funding requirements - salaries for our Biochar initiative as well as project management and running costs for the newly formed Sacred Earth Community Benefit Society. This loss is mitigated in our first year through the £70,000 of funding we are in the process of securing.

We've looked at contingencies for start up and future years and we're confident that our projections are realistic and reliable. Full details are available in our

business plan which can be downloaded from <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>

Our social, educational and environmental aims are a good fit with the mission of a number of foundations and grant awarding bodies such as the Veolia Environmental Trust, the Lloyds Bank Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Youth Fund and the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are confident of receiving additional grants from at least one of these bodies to support our revenue requirements in our first few years of trading as we work towards grant independence.

Sacred Earth will generate income from:

- Biochar sales
- Education programmes
- Workshops
- Rent
- Profit sharing scheme

Our new Biochar initiative and our established and expanding education programmes are the two income streams with the most potential. We see these streams as supporting our work with fledgling rural businesses and other social/community-oriented aspects of Sacred Earth, and as a way to wean the organisation away from grant dependency.

Our positive projections of 40% annual growth in our Biochar initiative are based on our confidence that this is a product that the market is primed for. Similarly, our projections for the growth of the education side of the organisation (25% annual growth over the next five years) are similarly confident, based on our experience in the sector, our appreciation that nature-based education is steadily increasing in popularity and the fact that this is a market we are only just beginning to tap into.

Five year headline forecasts

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Total income	£40,462	£50,652	£63,755	£74,821	£96,079
Total costs/overheads	£69,275	£55,922	£61,753	£72,719	£86,464
Profit/loss	-£29,765	-£6,324	£949	£1,048	£8,561

Note: Our net losses in our first year of operating as a CBS are entirely mitigated by funding from the £70,000 we are seeking to raise through this share offer and match funding. Additional funding will be secured to cover the shortfall in our second year.

A more detailed five year forecast is available in our business plan which can be downloaded from our website: <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>
A ten year financial forecast is available upon request.

What we're spending the money on

Our funding target of £70,000 will be split relatively evenly between our capital and revenue funding requirements in our first two years of trading as a Community Benefit Society. Not only will we be investing in infrastructure for our agricultural operations (e.g. a small tractor) and hydro electric and solar

power for the site, we'll also be developing an online shop for our website and investing in people skills to help with land management, marketing, communication and administration. Read our business plan for a full breakdown of how the funds will be allocated:
<http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>

Tax Break

We've applied to HMRC for Advanced Assurance that investment in Sacred Earth will be eligible for Social Investment Tax Relief. If it is then investors will be able to claim 30% of the value of their investment back against their UK income tax liability.

Keep your eyes peeled for an announcement on this as we expect to hear just before the end of September. Anyone investing on the basis of the potential tax break should check with their own financial advisor as to their eligibility and the means by which they will claim it.

Who's behind the project?

Sacred Earth Community Interest Company was set up in June 2011 by social entrepreneur and nature facilitator Philip Greenwood on land purchased by successful businessman and philanthropist Roger Ross who leased it to the organisation on a long term basis with a peppercorn rent.

Since then the project has been slowly finding its feet as a social enterprise with the help of a small and evolving group of community members and committed volunteers including Steiner and forest school teacher Victoria Mew, European martial arts and bushcraft instructor Mark Gilbert and physiotherapist and coach Suzanna Greenwood.

In 2015, Biodynamic farmer Emile Webber, Herbalist Alice Bettany and Ecotherapist and environmental campaigner Oliver Bettany joined the management team at a time when Sacred Earth had already begun to shift its focus to encompass not only its educational and ecological aims but also its agricultural and therapeutic objectives too.

This marked a significant turning point for the organisation as Sacred Earth began its transition to become a Community Benefit Society with the support of the FEA Network's (Funding

Phil Greenwood and Roger Ross

Phil met Roger while he was studying Biodynamic farming at Emerson College in 2008. They struck up a close and supportive friendship. When, a few years later, Phil took Roger to visit the Old Horam Brickworks which had recently gone up for sale, Roger was so inspired by Phil's vision for the regeneration of 40 acre site for community use that he agreed to purchase it. Roger is planning to put the land into a community held trust in the near future in order for it to be secured for community use for generations to come.

Enlightened Agriculture) Just Growth programme.

For more information about our history and the diverse skills and experience our management team bring to the project read our business plan which can be downloaded from our website: <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>



Sacred Earth team meeting in the woods with permaculture designer Peter cow

What are community shares?

Sacred Earth Communities Limited (trading as 'Sacred Earth') is using a form of investment called community shares (also called 'withdrawable shares') which are ideally suited to community-focused organisations like Sacred Earth.

Investors do not receive interest on the sums they invest and may withdraw their investment (in essence, get their money back) but only under certain conditions. Sacred Earth must first have the funds to support withdrawal and we are only expecting to be able to accept requests for withdrawal after five years.

Community shares can't be sold on or transferred. We will always have to

ensure that getting money back to investors is prudent, taking into account our objectives as a community benefit society. So, whilst we have a strong business plan that supports our plans for growth, and a desire to ensure a return to investors who have shown faith in our community, our wider community purpose will always come first.

This provides the final advantage – because it should be seen as a medium to long term investment, it is most attractive to people who share our values, rather than those who want an immediate return, ensuring that the people who will own Sacred Earth will be those people who invest on these terms.

What will investors get?

Every investor will be a member and co-owner of Sacred Earth and will get a stake in key decision-making – E.g. deciding who is on the management committee and on resolutions at our AGM.

For more information about voting please read our society's rules which are available to download from our website: <http://sacredearthland.co.uk/invest>

Under the law governing Community Benefit Societies, regardless of how much you invest, everyone has one vote. We believe this fits our ethos perfectly, because all investors will be equal with everyone else in their desire for our community to prosper, regardless of how much we can afford to invest.

After five years decisions about offering interest and withdrawals will be made by the Committee at the time. Should they be possible, withdrawals will be allowed on a first come first served basis. Members will be required to give three months' notice of their request to withdraw capital. We will not release more than 10% of the

total share capital per annum.

The current management committee judge that the projected performance of the business gives them confidence that they will be able to enable withdrawal by investors after three years of trading as a Community Benefit Society.

They also believe that this offer represents an excellent opportunity for them to significantly lower the costs of their borrowing as a society, to achieve social benefit to the local community of Horam and the wider community of Sussex.



Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if the offer fails to raise sufficient funds?

We need to reach a share offer fundraising target of £30,000 in order to deliver our business plan without significant revisions. If we do not reach this target we will not draw down on any investment and will review our business plan in order to identify if it can be reworked based on the funds we have raised. If we're able to produce a viable business plan on this basis we will contact investors to establish if they wish to invest in the new business plan.

Why would we stop at £50,000 if there was an appetite for people to invest more?

Because we have an aspiration to allow withdrawals after five years, every penny of investment return becomes something we have to support through the same fixed pot of surpluses. We've set a maximum beyond which we don't believe our aspirations would be realistic.

It's also likely that we will run another share offer in the future if we identify a need for further investment in one or more aspects of the business for which this kind of finance is appropriate.

What if the society becomes insolvent?

As an asset-locked Community Benefit Society, in the event of insolvency, our assets would be sold and after the proceeds had paid off any creditors, investors would get back their money in proportion to their investment. After that, any surplus assets will be distributed to other asset-locked community bodies in the area.

As we do not own the land we won't have

many assets to sell beyond the stock and equipment, so the reality is that investors would likely lose most of their investment as there would not be sufficient assets to cover the total investment made.

You won't be liable for any more money in any event, but neither will you have any right to compensation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme, or recourse to an ombudsman because Community Benefit Societies are exempt from the regulations governing public share offers.

It bears reiterating though that whether or not these things happen isn't dependent on some uncontrollable force like the weather, but whether we as a community can get behind something we own and operate, which is trying to make our community a better place to live and work, and we believe that community shares help us achieve that better than any other form of finance.

What happens if the land owner decides to sell the land?

This is extremely unlikely. Roger Ross has been a supporter of the project since it began and we have an excellent relationship with him. In fact, as a part of the transition we're currently undergoing we're working with Roger to put the land into a trust which will safeguard it for community use indefinitely.





Who can buy shares?

This offer is open to anyone over the age of 16.

Companies and other corporate bodies can become legal members of the society, though they will have to nominate a nominee when they make their application.

Clubs and other unincorporated groups (such as a group of friends or a family) can also buy shares, but whoever buys them will be the legal owner, and they need to make their own arrangements for how things like votes will be cast on their behalf, and how withdrawal payments will be repaid to everyone who contributed in the first instance.

What's the minimum investment?

The minimum investment is £50. This is because this is an investment proposal in a community business, not a donation to a good cause. There's also a cost of processing each investment now and every year that person remains an investor, so we can't set the bar too low or else it'll end up costing us more than we receive.

Is there a maximum I can invest?

The maximum investment is £7,500.

Do I need to buy blocks of £50?

Yes – the £50 is a minimum. Each share is £50 so you can buy any amount between £50 and the maximum of £7,500 in multiples of £50.

What if £50 is too much for us?

Individuals can club together as friends or as a family and buy shares collectively, but in legal terms, the share is owned by the person who completes the application form and it is to them that any withdrawal would be paid. It is the responsibility of the group to come to their own arrangements about exercising the rights and responsibilities of members.

Christmas is coming up – can I buy shares as a gift?

Yes, but get in touch with us, rather than using the application form. When shares are bought, there's a legal contract made between the investor and Sacred Earth, so we need to make special arrangements to ensure that the person who is having shares bought for them is still able to personally agree to that contract (and we can't do that until after the 25th so we don't spoil any surprises!)

Can I join the management committee?

Yes, it's likely we will be looking for prospective new members for our management committee within the next twelve months. In order to join the management committee you will need to be a shareholder and be voted on at our first full AGM (likely to take place in July 2017).

How to invest

Online

*We're running our share offer via **Crowdfunder.co.uk**, an online platform which specialises in community share offers. Crowdfunder uses Stripe to process payments with credit and debit cards.*

Crowdfunder take 2.5% commission and Stripe take a 1.4% transaction fee on every transaction. This means for every £100 invested via Crowdfunder there is a transaction fee of £3.90 which Sacred Earth absorbs.

In order to use the service, you need a valid email address to create your Crowdfunder account, and a UK debit or credit card. Once you've decided how much you want to invest, enter your credit card details into their secure service when prompted and Stripe takes care of the rest.

Offline

You can also apply by completing the form on the rear of this brochure (or downloaded from our website) and return it with a cheque for your investment to:

*Sacred Earth Communities Ltd
4 Hall Cottages,
Horebeech Lane,
Horam,
East Sussex,
TN21 0HR*

What happens to my money when I invest?

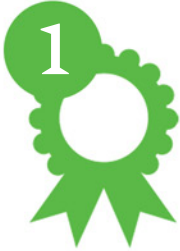
No cheques will be cashed and no money will be transferred from your account unless we reach our minimum investment target of £30,000.

If the offer is successful, online payments made via Crowdfunder will be transferred from your account on the closing date of the offer. Cheques from offline investors will be paid in as soon as possible after the offer closes.



Playing games at our Spring Equinox celebration

How you can help



Buy shares for yourself and your family



Visit our website sacredearthland.org.uk



Tell your neighbours, friends and colleagues



Share us on social media



Invite us to come and talk to a group or organisation

Sacred Earth is proudly supported by





Application to become an investor in Sacred Earth

Name.....

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Email.....

Phone.....

How many shares do you want to purchase

Min £50, Max £7,500 in multiples of £50.

If the share offer is oversubscribed and/or unable to offer you any or all the shares you have applied for, we will refund the difference by cheque to the address above unless we are notified otherwise.

£.....

Please tick the boxes below to indicate that you agree with the statements:

I confirm that I am 16 years old or older.

I have read the share offer document and understand and accept the terms of the share offer and the Rules of Sacred Earth.

I consent to using the email address above as the primary means of communication for official documents from Sacred Earth.

Signed..... Date / /

This offer closes on 21st October 2016 or whenever £50,000 is subscribed, whichever is soonest. The management committee reserve the right to extend this offer.

Please enclose a cheque for payment made out to 'Sacred Earth Communities Limited' and return the completed application form to: **Sacred Earth, 4 Hall Cottages, Horebeech Lane, Horam, East Sussex, TN21 0HR**

Sacred Earth will store securely the information you have provided and will not share that information with anyone else without your permission.