



**LESS** Promoting  
Sustainable  
Living

## LESS (Lancaster District) CIC Business Plan 2014-15



Winner of SELNET's  
Environmental Champion Award 2013

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# Introduction

Going up to receive the 2013 SELNET Environmental Champions award for LESS I was put on the spot – how to get across to 200 people what LESS does in a 1 minute impromptu acceptance speech? What I came up with was “that our mission is to make the people of the area feel warm – warm on the inside and warm on the outside” through our local food projects and our home energy projects. Of course there is much more that we do – but it was the best I could manage on the spur of the moment.

The award was recognition for the work that we have been doing over the last 5 or so years on innovative community based projects to get people to take action on climate change – be that reducing their energy bills, helping them to buy and grow food locally or working on a climate strategy for the local council.

The impact of climate change is THE big issue that needs to be addressed by all of us. At LESS we are looking forward with this new business plan at ways that we can empower local communities to take action to mitigate and adapt to these impacts and in doing so become more resilient to the increasingly unpredictable ways that climate change impacts on our lives. To do this we realise that we need to change and adapt ourselves and are looking to do so through both developing our links with the communities we serve and by continuing to develop our own capacity to deliver successful projects.



Chris Coates  
Chair - LESS (Lancaster District) CIC

[www.lessuk.org](http://www.lessuk.org)

[www.lessenergy.org.uk](http://www.lessenergy.org.uk)

[www.lessismoregame.org.uk](http://www.lessismoregame.org.uk)

[www.oneplanetfestival.org.uk](http://www.oneplanetfestival.org.uk)

[facebook.com/lessuk](https://facebook.com/lessuk)

[twitter.com/lessuk](https://twitter.com/lessuk)

[youtube.com/FilmsbyLESS](https://youtube.com/FilmsbyLESS)

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LESS (Lancaster District) is a Community  
Interest Company limited by guarantee in  
England No: 6181400

# About LESS

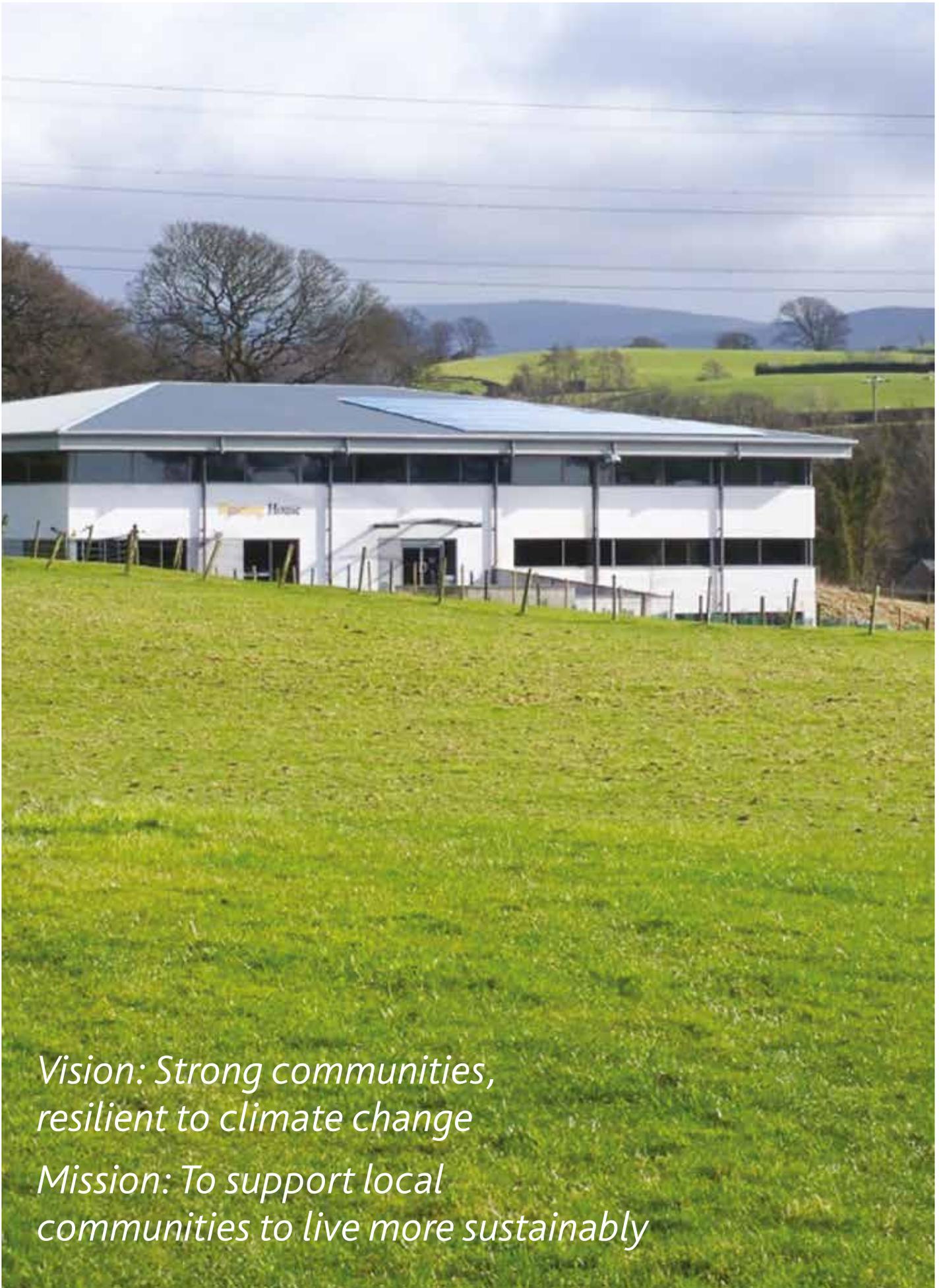
LESS (Lancaster District) CIC was set up in 2007 to provide practical support to help the residents of North Lancashire live more sustainably. Currently we are structured as a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales. However, within the next year LESS will be changing its legal status to that of Charitable Company with a trading arm.

We are located in Lancaster (UK) and work primarily within the Lancaster District and North Lancashire, and occasionally further afield in South Cumbria, with individuals, community groups, schools, and public and private sector organisations.

Currently, we have 5 volunteer Directors and employ 15 part-time staff, plus a number of freelance workers. In addition, 15 regular volunteers currently support our work through contributions of time and other resources. Our current income is made up of a number of grants and income generated by providing paid-for services.

LESS has a strong track record in delivering a range of sustainability projects with individuals, communities, schools and public sector organisations:

- Our flagship Energy Services work continues to tackle fuel poverty across Lancashire;
- Since 2010 we've worked with a range of community groups, schools and individuals to embed food growing within the Lancaster District;
- In conjunction with Lancaster University, our pioneering Less Is More game is exploring the use of digital technology to engage people in making sustainable choices;
- We work directly with the residents of Halton to fund sustainability work in their village from the income from photo-voltaic panels installed on a village building, and;
- LESS's Climate Change Action Co-ordinator researched existing carbon reduction action across Lancaster district, identified gaps in the response to climate change and made policy recommendations to Lancaster District Sustainability Partnership.



*Vision: Strong communities,  
resilient to climate change*

*Mission: To support local  
communities to live more sustainably*

# About the Business Plan

This Business Plan includes input from all members of staff, Directors and other key stakeholders. The plan covers a 12 month period from 1st April 2014, and will be reviewed on an annual basis by staff and Directors. The next review will take place in January 2015.

In order to develop this business plan, LESS has made the following assumptions:

- Climate change is real and will continue to affect communities globally, including within Lancaster District.\*
- To enable communities to become resilient to climate change, activities that raise awareness and deepen understanding about how best to live more sustainably are necessary.
- Community resilience to climate change and poverty are inextricably linked, and so the services we provide as a not-for-profit organisation are needed by local communities, particularly those who do not have the resources to access sustainable living by other means.

# Our Vision, Mission and Strategic Aims

## Vision:

Strong communities, resilient to climate change

## Mission:

To support local communities to live more sustainably

## Strategic Aims:

LESS aims to help communities to live within their fair share of the planet's resources while enabling everyone to meet their needs for a healthy home, food and environment by:

1. **Deepening understanding** of sustainability issues in local communities
2. **Strengthening** individuals and communities by **building skills** in sustainable living
3. **Giving down-to-earth support and advice** to individuals, communities and organisations to enhance their wellbeing and resilience to climate change.
4. **Making ethical products and services, and their local suppliers, accessible**
5. **Transforming LESS** into a financially and environmentally sustainable organisation

\* <http://tinyurl.com/qa32rea>

# Operational Objectives

See Appendix 1 for full Operational Plan.

## **LESS Organisational Development & Management:**

- Development of strategy for organisational development, including creation of additional development post
  - Structure Governance & Management
  - Publicity, Communications and ICT
  - Professional Development
  - Financial sustainability
- Development of a long term strategic plan for LESS

## **Food Projects:**

- Develop a 'food hub' to provide a practical demonstration and training facility for growing food.
- Continue to promote 'Gardener In Residence' and other income earning contract work
- Promotion of local produce to local consumers
- Secure funding for a project to connect consumers to provenance of their food and overcome barriers to buying local produce
- Increase skills amongst local residents to grow their own food.
- Work with local partners to develop a food growing network where food initiatives are better linked and potential volunteers have a single point of contact.

## **Energy Services:**

- Provide Home Energy Service across North Lancashire
- Continue to expand LESS Energy Services across Lancashire
- Deliver training on energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- Deliver Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) projects and develop new opportunities in this area
- Be seen as the Lancashire 'energy efficiency experts'
- Continue to deliver Halton Carbon Positive
- Run the LESS Energy Awards 2014
- Support Lancaster District Green Open Homes

## **Less Is More:**

- Deliver the Less Is More Project

## **One Planet Festival**

- Begin planning for the next One Planet Festival – 2015

## **Other Project Development & Funding:**

- Identify future avenues for funded project work

# Our Work

## Context, Competition and Customers

We work in a relatively crowded 'third sector' where there are many different organisations involved in working with communities around aspects of sustainable living. As far as we are aware, LESS is unique in Lancashire in working on multiple aspects of sustainability.

Food-growing and connection to food have burgeoned over the last few years as themes within community organisations and government policy for schools (e.g., School Food Plan, July 2013), and where once our work was marginal, it is now becoming more mainstream – which we are very pleased about! However, there is now increased competition for both work and funding in this area. Whilst this could be viewed as a threat, we have decided to view it as an opportunity and are actively developing new project work with other organisations focussed on local food.

Our Energy Services work in Lancashire focuses on bringing people out of fuel poverty and reducing domestic carbon emissions. Whilst there is no obvious local competition for our work we do face the challenge of energy companies attempting to fulfil their legal obligation to spend the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) element of their income from fuel bills by persuading people to accept e.g., replacement boilers rather than looking at the overall energy efficiency of their dwellings. Our new 'Warming Up The West End' project meets this challenge by bringing ECO grant funding opportunities to one of the most deprived areas of Lancaster District.

We aim to develop further strands of work in the future, identifying who is already doing similar work in the area, or how we can fill an existing gap. Where we believe we can add value to existing work we will actively seek to create partnerships with other organisations rather than duplicate work.

## Customers

Our current customers include both funders, and clients who have bought in our services. These range from national government departments to local community centres. We plan to expand our customer base to include large grant-funding bodies amongst our funders, and commercial organisations amongst our clients as part of the work of the LESS Trading organisation. See *Appendix 7 for a list of current customers.*

## Partners

Our current partners, with whom we are working to deliver current projects or develop new work, are:

- AECOM – an international building consultancy
- BARTER – a project of Lancaster University and Lancaster Ethical Small Traders Association measuring how local spending contributes to local wealth
- Claver Hill – a local charitable organisation with land available for food-growing
- Community Advice Network (CAN) – a network of Lancaster advice organisations
- The Dukes – a local theatre and arts organisation
- Firefly Energi – an energy consultancy
- Incredible Edible Lancaster – a local community organisation focussing on food sovereignty
- North Lancashire Citizens Advice Bureau – a sub-regional arm of the national CAB network
- Tadea – a national energy efficiency organisation

## Beneficiaries

Our beneficiaries are the most diverse of the three groups of people that we work with:

- Householders in the Lancaster district (Food Projects)
- Householders across Lancashire (Energy Services)
- Local community organisations, and their beneficiaries
- Lancaster University and LUSU staff and students
- Local people seeking voluntary work focussing on sustainable living
- Pupils of schools within the Lancaster District

# Our programmes & projects

## LESS Energy Services Programme

The LESS Energy Services Programme aims to reduce energy use and carbon emissions in hundreds of homes, and is free to our clients thanks to a mixture of grant funding and service delivery contracts. With the dual impact on local people of rising fuel prices and reducing incomes, we are increasingly focusing our work around people at risk of fuel poverty and the frontline organisations that support them. The impact of cold homes on health is increasingly recognised and is providing new funding opportunities. We are developing relationships with advice partners who can provide complementary services to our clients, such as debt and benefits advice. We are also working to ensure the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grant funding that energy companies are struggling to allocate to those in need is invested across Lancashire. In particular, our 'Warming Up The West End' project in Morecambe is providing holistic assessments of the improvements required in some of Lancashire's hardest to insulate properties.

Since 2010 we have surveyed over 650 properties and we are currently using funding from Lancashire County Council and Scottish Power Energy People Trust to expand across North Lancashire. We have also run dozens of energy bill clinics that help clients to save on average over £130 a year through tariff switching and better payment options.

Our Energy Services has recently expanded to include:

- A prestigious contract via the Big Energy Saving Network to train front line staff on energy saving, fuel poverty and tariff switching; and support vulnerable individuals with those same issues.
- A new awards event in association with Lancaster University to recognise businesses and individuals that are energy saving champions ([www.lessenergy.org.uk](http://www.lessenergy.org.uk))
- A partnership project with the national energy efficiency organisation Tadea – 'Warming Up The West End' – to bring Energy Company Obligation (ECO) grant funding opportunities to homeowners, tenants and landlords in the West End of Morecambe to help them insulate their homes properly.

*Energy is a hot topic nationally and we are looking to develop all of these services during 2014-15 to meet the increasing demand from local people for help with reducing their bills and staying warm.*



## WARMING UP THE WEST END

### Case Study: Mr B

Mr B (57) rents a house in a village owned by a remote landlord. He has very restricted mobility due to spinal disease and is often confined to his house. When LESS visited him his house was extremely cold, and he was wearing outdoor clothes to keep warm.

Mr B's heating system consisted of a very old boiler and one radiator in the hallway. He also had a coal fire which his condition prevented him from lighting. The house had no insulation, and the front and back doors didn't fit properly - the draughts from the front door made the radiator in the hallway completely ineffective.

LESS assisted Mr B by:

- Arranging for loft and cavity wall insulation to be fitted for free using a government grant
- Referring Mr B on to Lancaster City Council's Home Improvement Agency, who repaired and draught-proofed his external doors.
- Contacting the landlord and explaining the tax benefits of either fitting a new heating system, or modifying the existing one. The landlord has since fitted a new boiler and two more radiators.

Mr B reported that his home is now much more comfortable and he is no longer afraid of winter.

## LESS Food Projects

LESS has run numerous projects around food-growing, local food and 'slow' food, and we have recently completed our present arc of funded project work. Projects that formed part of this arc include:

- Plotting Onwards – this project supported local allotment associations to manage their sites more effectively.
- Off The Ground – this project ran from 2009-2013, and promoted food growing in the Lancaster District. The project transformed a field at the edge of a Council housing estate into a thriving allotment site, and worked with over 1000 people (including 19 schools, 7 community organisations and 19 households) to bring 7,000 m<sup>2</sup> of land into cultivation for food and improve 2,000m<sup>2</sup> of existing growing sites.
- Following research with local food producers and suppliers we produced a printed 'Little Book of Local Food and Drink' to complement our online Local Food Directory ([www.lessuk.org/directory.php](http://www.lessuk.org/directory.php)).

Following the success of Off The Ground we continue to work with several local schools and community organisations by delivering a paid-for 'Gardener in Residence' service as well as offering training sessions, school gardening clubs and co-ordination of practical gardening activities. We are also working closely with Lancaster University Students Union as part of their 'Edible Campus' project – advising on and designing planting schemes for their grounds.

*We are currently developing our next food related projects. These include working in partnership with other community food growing organisations to establish a community food growing hub site in Lancaster; and developing a project to connect consumers to the provenance of their food and overcome barriers to buying local produce.*

## Case study: Ambleside Road Allotments

Starting in summer 2010, the Off The Ground team worked with local residents to transform an unused field on Ambleside Road at the edge of the Ridge estate in Lancaster. They turned it into 37 allotment plots, 6 starter plots, 3 communal composting areas, 2 polytunnels (with rainwater harvesting), a tool store, a compost toilet and an edible hedgerow over the course of three years.

The site is completely organic, and has communal facilities designed to make the best use of a small site, but also to encourage plotholders to come together as a community and share experience, skills and resources.

Throughout the course of the project the Off The Ground team worked with plotholders to develop Ambleside Road Allotments Association - In April 2013 management of the site was formally handed over to group. The site has also won three RHS North West in Bloom 'It's Your Neighbourhood' Level 4 Thriving Awards (2011 - 2013). The compost toilet also won 2nd place in the Permaculture Association Best Compost Loo in the World Award 2012!

Off The Ground was funded by: Big Lottery Local Food Fund, Awards for All, and earned income.



## Less Is More

In November 2013 LESS secured £15,000 funding from Lancaster University's Catalyst Project for a 4-month project researching the feasibility of developing a digital game to promote sustainable living. Catalyst is a £1.9M project, funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), which brings together academics and communities to jointly imagine and build the next generation of tools for social change, and to explore innovative, bottom-up technology-mediated solutions to major problems in society.

The Less is More project provides 'proof of concept' for a Lancaster-based game that sets real-life sustainable challenges, which are rewarded with online recognition and / or physical rewards. The aim of the game is to encourage people to consume less and make more sustainable lifestyle choices. A member of LESS staff is working with a Lancaster University researcher on this project and we are involving local partners including Lancaster & Morecambe College.



The research aims of the project include testing the different theories of recruitment to sustainable practices proposed by gamification (intrinsic and extrinsic rewards), Cultural Theory, behaviourist models behind the government's Behaviour Change programme, and social practice theory.

*This research will help shape all future LESS projects and how we engage with local communities on sustainability issues.*

# One Planet Festival

Lancaster's One Planet Festival returned in October 2013 with three weeks of events, workshops and films aimed at celebrating sustainable living and inspiring action on climate change. This was the fourth One Planet Festival and it proved to be the biggest and best yet. The biennial festival is organised and run by volunteers with support from LESS staff and Directors.



## Case study – One Planet Festival 2013

In 2013 we partnered with 8 organisations to hold 15 informative, inspiring and fun events at venues across the city.

Over 500 people participated in activities and the festival's website received over 2,800 views, helping to disseminate the message of sustainability far and wide.

Events included the One Planet art exhibition, a sustainability themed Gardeners' Question Time, a 5k Good Gym run to help out at a local food growing project, an Energy Saving Fair held in partnership with Transition City Lancaster and a sustainable transport stall in Market Square, where you could try out a Penny Farthing.

One of the key festival partners was local independent theatre The Dukes who, as well as screening films, hosted the One Planet half term takeover with daily activities aimed at helping children understand and get involved in sustainable living. Activities included learning how to animate fruit and vegetables, building a bug hotel, creating recycled art and a Garlic and Potions Halloween workshop. All these events were very well attended and The Dukes' café reported a 40% increase in sales during the half term week.

LESS secured £1,500 from Lancashire County Council's Green Partnership Awards and United Utilities to support the running of the festival. For more information and photographs about the festival visit [www.oneplanetfestival.org.uk](http://www.oneplanetfestival.org.uk)



GoodGym event at the 2013 One Planet Festival

# Finances & Fundraising

## Where we are

At the beginning of 2010 LESS employed a single member of staff and had a turnover of around £30,000. At the end of March 2014 our turnover was over £200,000 and at the time of writing we have 15 part-time staff. This is clearly a fast and large expansion for a relatively small voluntary sector organisation to achieve. Like all not-for-profit organisations, we are largely dependent on grant funding, which by its nature is short term. This makes long term financial planning challenging, especially when, as now, one large grant is coming to an end and future funding bids are still in development. An additional issue is that there are few sources of repeat grant funding, which means that we have to ensure that we don't become over-reliant on one source of funding.

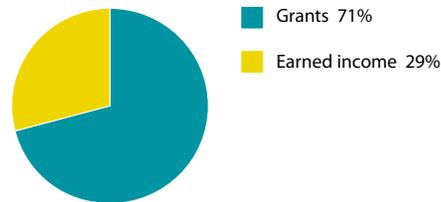
Our largest expense is staff salaries – and staff are essential to delivering project activities, our second largest expense, followed by organisational overheads, e.g. rent and insurance. LESS calculates costs for projects on a case-by-case basis, incorporating a proportionate amount of organisational overheads into funding bids. As part of the business planning process we are also moving towards adopting a more strategic approach to developing project costings and looking at the way we cover overheads. Our expected income and expenditure in 2013-14 shows how LESS works to balance income and expenditure over a typical year.

## Where we aim to be

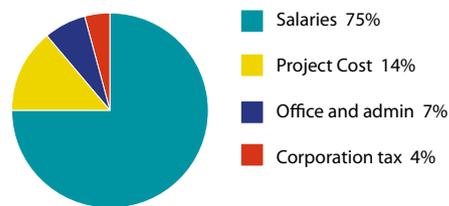
In 2014 LESS will become a Charitable Company with a trading arm, which will enable us to access a wider range of grant funding than is possible as a Community Interest Company. Some of our current activities cannot be classified as charitable, and so the trading arm makes it possible to continue with these, and confers on us a small tax advantage. All profits of the trading arm will be transferred to the Charitable Company.

Our expenditure is forecast to increase in the coming year because we are increasing the number of 'core' staff, including a new Development Co-ordinator post and additional hours for finance and administration posts. These posts are being built into all new grant and contract budgets as proportionate organisational overheads. Our current budget forecast for 2014-15 includes grants applied for and contracts currently under negotiation, and leaves a small shortfall of just under £6,000 which we are confident of meeting via additional grant funding or generating earned income. In a worst case scenario, if all our grant applications and contract negotiations are unsuccessful we would have a shortfall of £86,000. This much larger funding gap is still not an unrealistic amount to seek from grant funding and earned income, and as our current situation allows us approximately 7 months running costs at current staffing levels we are confident that we will be able to raise this.

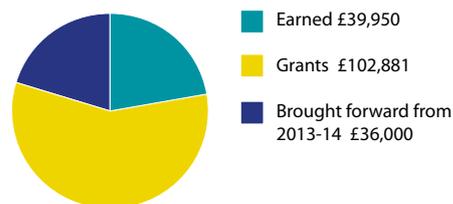
LESS Expected Income 2013 – 14:  
£214,000



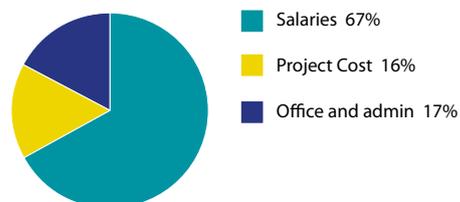
LESS Expected Expenditure 2013 – 14:  
£176,655



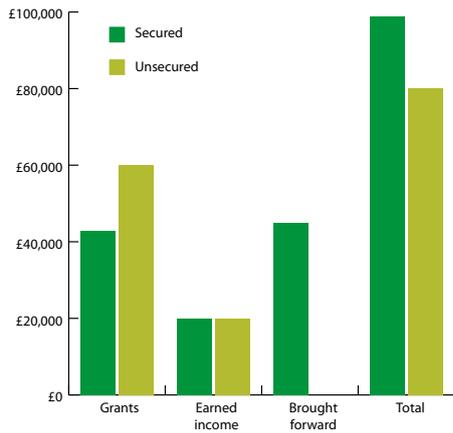
LESS Forecast Income 2014 – 15:  
£178,831



LESS Forecast Expenditure 2014 – 15:  
£184,755



## LESS Secured and Unsecured Income 2014 – 15



Bringing in continued grant funding is one of our key challenges. We need to build a diverse portfolio of funding streams – long and short term; small, medium and large – to provide organisational stability. We are seeking to expand the range of projects we deliver, and in particular we aim to identify a 'third strand' to add to our Food and Energy Services Programmes. We are starting to look beyond traditional grant funding routes and are actively investigating novel funding methods such as crowdfunding to be able to deliver this work.

We need to carry out additional work to assess what funding streams are appropriate for which areas of our work, and in the

case where two or more projects may seek funding from the same source, a process for prioritising. In addition, some funding sources are higher risk than others (e.g., crowdfunding, social investment) and a full assessment of risk and benefits needs to be undertaken before going down these routes. See *Appendix 6: Sources of Funding* for more details on identified funding sources.

## Reserves

LESS started 2013-14 with approximately £7,000 of reserves. Part of this is designated to cover staff redundancy costs, should this be necessary. At the end of 2013-14 we expect to have funds in hand of £45,000 which will be used to cover costs in the first part of 2014-15. LESS currently doesn't raise enough spare funds to build up a more substantial reserve. Our financial management covers this through careful financial planning and regular budget monitoring, in order to avoid shortfalls and keep within our means.

Most unrestricted earned income goes towards continuing project activities but could be used to build a reserve if other funds were brought in. We could consider inviting donations and legacy giving as two ways to potentially increase reserves, but this would likely be a slow process and only bring in a limited amount of income.

Developing a formal reserves policy is essential for our change to charitable status, and these options will be considered during this process.

# Appendices

## 1: Operational & Risk Management Plans

Reviewed by Directors and Project Co-ordinators on a quarterly basis.

LESS Operational Plan: 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015							
Area of Work / Objective / Sub-objective	Action	By whom	Due by	Outcome	Strategic Aims	Risk Mgmt	
<b>LESS Organisational Development &amp; Management:</b>							
<b>Development of strategy for organisational development, including creation of additional post</b>	Identify funding routes for Development Co-ordinator Post	Funding Co-ordinator and Directors	30/4/14	Funding routes for Development Co-ordinator post identified	5	2.1.b ♦ 2.1.d ♦	
	Change legal status from CIC to Charitable Company	Directors	31/3/15	LESS becomes Charitable Company. <i>LESS Trading</i> established as separate organisation	5	2.5.a ♦ 2.5.b ♦	
				Embed organisational perspective across organisation – reduce project-focussed 'silo mentality'.		2.1.b ♦ 2.1.d ♦ 2.3.b ♦	
	Develop Volunteer Co-ordination strategy.	Directors	Ongoing	Beneficiary and volunteer involvement integrated across all work	1, 2, 5	2.1.c ♦	
				More effective volunteer deployment within organisation			2, 5
				Volunteer Co-ordination Strategy			5
	Refine monitoring and evaluation frameworks for organisation and projects.	Directors and Co-ordinators	Ongoing	Consistent and effective monitoring and evaluation frameworks in place across organisation.	5	2.4.a ♦	
	Develop the capacity of the Directors, including recruiting more Directors.	Directors & external support	Ongoing	Number of Directors increased.	5	2.1 – all ♦	
				New Directors have skills needed by LESS	5		
				All Directors receive appropriate support and CPD.	5		
	Develop flexible and appropriate project and personnel systems	Directors (esp Personnel Director) and Co-ordinators	Ongoing	Review of project and personnel systems takes place and is incorporated into long-term strategy.	5	2.1.d ♦ 2.1.f ♦	
	Develop a model for costing future projects more appropriately, including reviewing salary scales and structures and incorporating full cost recovery principles.	Directors, Co-ordinators and Finance Manager	30/6/14	A flexible costing model for all future projects is available to people developing bids for LESS.	5	2.1.d ♦ 2.5 – all ♦	
An updated staffing structure and salary scale are developed.				5			
<b>Publicity, Communications and ICT</b>	Review and improve our publicity and communications strategy	Directors and Co-ordinators	30/4/14	A clear and actionable plan for future publicity and communications is drawn up.	5	2.2c ♦	
	Develop an ICT strategy	Director for ICT	30/4/14	A clear and actionable ICT strategy is drawn up.	5	2.1.a ♦	

<b>Professional Development</b>	Staff and Directors CPD needs are assessed and appropriate CPD opportunities identified.	Directors and Co-ordinators	Ongoing	Ensure that all staff, volunteers and Directors have access to appropriate continuing professional development	5	2.1.d <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Financial Sustainability</b>	Explore diversifying income streams, including charging for services where appropriate.	Directors and Co-ordinators	Ongoing	Project Co-ordinators incorporate charged-for services into their areas of work	5	2.5 – all <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
	We will continue to identify appropriate funding opportunities for LESS with regard to future project work and organisational development.	ALL	Ongoing	Organisational awareness of potential funding streams for future project work.	5	2.5.a <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Development of a long term strategic plan for LESS</b>	Organisation of annual organisational 'away day'	All, esp Directors and Co-ordinators plus external support	30/6/14	All staff, Directors and volunteers have opportunity to contribute to long term strategic development.	5	2.1.f <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>
				Clear, actionable, jointly-owned strategic plan for LESS covering 2015-2020	5	2.1.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.1.f <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>
<b>Food Projects:</b>						
<b>Develop a 'food hub' to provide a practical demonstration and training facility for growing food.</b>	Continue working with Claver Hill Food Hub Steering Group	Food projects team	Ongoing	LESS involved in partnership to develop new food growing hub in Lancaster	1-3	1.c <span style="color: gold;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>
<b>Continue to promote 'Gardener In Residence' and other income earning contract work</b>	Continue to deliver contracts with community organisations and schools	Food projects team	Ongoing	Delivery of existing contracts continued	1-3, 5	2.5.a <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Promotion of local produce to local consumers</b>	Ensure online Local Food Directory is kept up to date	Food projects team	Ongoing	Online food directory listings are accurate and accessible	3-4	2.2.c <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.2.d <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>
	Secure funding for a project to connect consumers to provenance of their food and overcome barriers to buying local produce	Food projects team	31/5/14	Funding secured for project.	1-5	2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>
	Establish Growing Our Local Food Economy Project (GOLFE)	Food projects team	30/8/14	LESS begin delivering GOLFE project .	1-5	2.6.a <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>
<b>Increase skills amongst local residents to grow their own food.</b>	Secure funding to develop food growing opportunities – in partnership with Claver Hill Food Hub	Food projects team with Claver Hill Food Hub	Ongoing	Funding secured for site development and project delivery	1-5	1.c <span style="color: gold;">◆</span> 2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
	Develop facilities to provide high quality training opportunities at Claver Hill and via outreach.	Food projects team with Claver Hill Food Hub	Ongoing	Food growing training and volunteering opportunities available to Lancaster residents	1-5	2.1.c <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
	Secure contracts and funding (eg Lancashire Adult Learning) to fund provision of training.	Food projects team	Ongoing	LESS has capacity to continue delivering training.	1-5	2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Work with local partners to develop a food growing network where food initiatives are better linked and potential volunteers have a single point of contact.</b>	Maintain Lancaster Growers Network	Food projects team	Ongoing	Team meetings	1-3	1.c <span style="color: gold;">◆</span> 2.2.a <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.2.b <span style="color: gold;">◆</span>

Energy Services:						
<b>Provide Home Energy Service across North Lancashire (Lancaster, Ribble Valley, Wyre and Fylde districts)</b>	Maintain existing level of service for Home Energy Service	Energy Services Team	Ongoing	Home Energy Service available free to all households in these areas	1-4	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
	Recruit new volunteers/ upskill volunteers from other organisations	Energy Services Co-ordinator	Ongoing	Greater capacity to undertake work and support Energy Officers	2, 5	2.1.c <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
	Secure funding to secure Energy Officer posts into 2015	Energy Services Co-ordinator	30/11/14	LESS Energy Services have sufficient funding to operate with 1 year reserve	5	2.5 – all <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Continue to expand LESS Energy Services across Lancashire</b>	Review the potential funding and opportunities to expand service, particularly into Preston and Blackpool	Energy Services Co-ordinator	28/2/15	More people can access our services and LESS is able to access funding from a wider range of partners	1-5	2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Deliver training on energy efficiency and fuel poverty</b>	Training of Lancashire residents in energy efficiency and renewable energy courses	Energy Officers	31/7/15	Expected target of 200 learners met	1-3	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
	Securing contract to replace Big Energy Saving Network and delivering to frontline workers and vulnerable clients	Energy Services Co-ordinator	31/3/15	80 frontline workers trained, 200 vulnerable consumers trained in 2014/15	1-2, 5	2.5 – all <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
<b>Deliver Green Deal and ECO projects and develop new opportunities in this area</b>	Manage partner agencies and project consultant to produce report for Lancashire Energy Officers and Directors of Public Health	Energy Services Co-ordinator	Final report complete by May 2014	Provision of effective research and recommendations, increase in awareness and appreciation of LESS	3	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
	Continue 'Warming Up the West End' ECO pilot	Energy Services Co-ordinator	Ongoing	ECO funding secured for this area and referral fees generated.	1-5	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
	Build on study and pilot to provide a broader Green Deal and ECO referral and support service across Lancashire	Energy Services Co-ordinator and Energy Director	28/2/15	More households are able to access ECO. LESS has a more secure income stream.	2, 3, 5	1.a <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
<b>Be seen as Lancashire 'energy efficiency experts'</b>	Develop training, policy and consultancy role across Lancashire	Energy Services Co-ordinator and Energy Director	28/2/15	LESS generate income via delivering consultancy services on energy efficiency	3, 5	2.1.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.2.c <span style="color: red;">◆</span>
<b>Continue to deliver Halton Carbon Positive</b>	Develop new uses for Halton Carbon Positive funding	Energy Services Team	Ongoing	Funding used effectively to support parish residents and community groups	1-4	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
<b>Run LESS Energy Awards 2014</b>	Secure sponsorship, agree categories, promote and hold an awards event	Energy Services Team	31/12/14	Good practice recognised and shared. LESS profile increased	1-3	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
<b>Support Lancaster District Green Open Homes</b>	Support Open Homes event in May	Energy Services Team	31/05/15	Good practice is recognised and shared. LESS profile is increased.	1-4	2.2.d <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
Less Is More:						
<b>Deliver Less Is More Project</b>	Deliver Less Is More Project	Less Is More Co-ordinator	30/04/14	Proof of concept tested for virtual game offering real-life rewards for sustainable behaviour choices.	1-5	2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
One Planet Festival:						
<b>Begin planning for the next One Planet Festival</b>	Begin planning for next One Planet Festival 2015	One Planet Festival team	Ongoing	Evaluation of previous One Planet Festival completed, and draft plans for next event begun.	1-4	2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.1.c <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.6.a <span style="color: green;">◆</span>
Other Project Development & Funding:						
<b>Identify future avenues for funded project work</b>	Begin investigation of additional project strands and potential funding routes	Directors & all Co-ordinators	Ongoing	Additional project strands for future work identified.	ALL	2.5.b <span style="color: red;">◆</span> 2.5.c <span style="color: green;">◆</span>

## LESS Risk Management Plan: 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2015

Risk	Potential impact on LESS	Probability of occurrence	Severity of impact	Urgency	Mitigation Strategy
<b>1. External Threats</b>					
<b>a. Restructure of Green Deal ECO element</b>	Loss of an income earning project – much of current Energy Services development is linked to ECO	High	High	◆	Need to develop ideas and opportunities around alternative potential Energy Service Projects - if the government decides to reduce the benefits available to organisations such as LESS, we have other avenues to explore for funding.
<b>b. Public sector funding cuts</b>	Reduced opportunities to access funding	Medium	Medium	◆	LESS currently receives funding from a number of local and national government sources. Whilst these are numerous, the overall amount of the funding is relatively small in terms of grants being sought by the organisation.
	Increased competition for funding	Medium	Low	◆	LESS has strong contacts within local government and is able to access information about funding streams relevant to our work with relative ease. We anticipate that our good relationships and strong track record make us strong contenders for available funding.
<b>c. Increased interest in food growing leading to more food growing by organisations and grassroots groups</b>	Increased competition for local food growing work	High	Low	◆	This risk can be re-framed as a potential opportunity to create and be involved in food-growing networks which allow LESS to work in partnership with other local food growing organisations. This in turn could lead to opportunities to develop wider-ranging funded projects than would have been possible on our own.
<b>2. Internal Weaknesses</b>					
<b>2.1 Strategy and Co-ordination</b>					
<b>a. Lack of ICT strategy</b>	Staff unable to effectively carry out their work due to ICT infrastructure not being fit-for-purpose.	High	High	◆	The Director responsible for ICT has agreed to develop an ICT strategy and implement changes to ICT infrastructure (e.g., establish VPN to enable home-working, etc).
<b>b. Lack of strategic plan for future development beyond the short term</b>	Organisation not resilient enough to meet future challenges	Medium	Medium	◆	The production of the Business Plan is the first step in addressing a lack of long term strategic plan, and Directors are committed to engaging in long term strategic development of the organisation.
<b>c. Lack of volunteer co-ordination</b>	LESS appears to be disorganised to external organisations and volunteers, and also fails to make good use of volunteer resources	High	High	◆	Co-ordination of volunteers is part of the longer term strategy currently being considered by Directors.
<b>d. Overview of organisational management needs to be improved</b>	May prevent effective delivery of organisational objectives, with consequences for securing funding and delivering projects.	Medium	High	◆	This risk is currently being addressed through the process of creating the 2014-15 business plan and will continue with review of staff structure, creation of Development Co-ordinator post (dependent on funding), etc.
<b>e. Generally a reactive rather than proactive organisation</b>	LESS may miss opportunities for e.g., funding, networking, etc	High	Medium	◆	Capacity for project co-ordinators and workers to take advantage of opportunities needs to be created and maintained – hopefully this will happen as part of the review of staffing structure.
<b>f. LESS going through a period of intense change</b>	Lack of job security leads to risk of losing key staff or difficulty in recruiting new staff	Medium	Medium	◆	Internal change appropriately managed by Directors and staff – including involving all staff in development of strategies for organisational development.

2.2 Perception and External Communications					
<b>a. Lack of LESS presence at strategic events / meetings / networks</b>	LESS may not be involved in crucial networks and events where we could make an impact.	High	High	◆	LESS staff engage in a greater range and variety of external strategic events, meetings and networks. Where necessary LESS initiate such networks (e.g. Lancaster Community Growers Network).
<b>b. Perception that LESS 'takes over' things it is involved with</b>	External groups and agencies are less likely to join with LESS in partnerships or invite us to participate in their work	Medium	Medium	◆	LESS aims to maintain a presence at external networks and meetings relevant to our strategic aims, but without any attempt to 'take over'. Analysis required of why / how it is thought that LESS 'takes over' things it is involved with.
<b>c. Lack of coherent external communications strategy and marketing</b>	External stakeholders and potential beneficiaries are unaware of us and our work.	High	High	◆	LESS develop a recognisable 'brand' and are consistent in marketing and communications, and make better use of all types of media.
<b>d. Low-profile - a lot of people don't know who we are and what we do</b>					
2.3 Identity, Culture and Internal Communications					
<b>a. Poor internal communication</b>	Knowledge and expertise not accessible, and risk of duplication of work.	High	High	◆	Internal communication as an organisational weakness is mainly a result of staff being all part-time and in and out of the office. It is beginning to be addressed, e.g., a whiteboard has been introduced to ease in-office communication, and a project documentation system is being trialed. These and existing meetings (e.g., office meeting) could be used more effectively.
<b>b. "Silo mentality" with regard to project work</b>	Focus on delivery of individual projects and strands of work prevents us working as "LESS" and towards our continued existence as an organisation.	High	High	◆	Internal work on organisational development now begun: production of business plan, review of organisational development, funding bid for Development Co-ordinator post, etc.
2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation					
<b>a. Need to improve monitoring and evaluation framework for projects and organisation</b>	LESS lacks evidence for future projects / funding bids, and may lack consistency in approach to monitoring and evaluation across projects.	Medium	Medium	◆	Overall LESS monitoring and evaluation framework to be developed and project-specific frameworks will feed into it. Collection of relevant evidence via consultations and other methodologies has begun via new project development and will be maintained.
2.5 Funding					
<b>a. No free reserves or stable source of funding</b>	LESS is unable to undertake exploratory project work (e.g., options assessment for future project work) or extend / create core posts.	High	High	◆	Development of reserves policy as part of legal requirement for change to charitable company will take place in the coming year. Directors to review strategic decision-making regarding the use of unrestricted (including earned) income. Opportunities to charge for services should be taken where possible or appropriate. Income from LESS Trading will be transferred to LESS.
<b>b. May be unsuccessful gaining funding for projects in development</b>	Projects developed both by LESS and in partnership with other organisations can't take place. Lack of paid work for relevant staff. Beneficiaries do not receive services	High	High	◆	LESS will identify as many different funding routes as possible for our projects in development, and funding routes suitable for our organisation. If one bid is unsuccessful another may be submitted to an alternative funder. Becoming a charitable organisation may open up further avenues for funding.
<b>c. Staff currently on extremely short term contracts – risk losing key staff</b>	Lack of job security leads to likelihood of key staff moving on and therefore reducing skills within the organisation	Medium	Medium	◆	LESS will attempt to secure long-term funding for projects where possible (e.g., three years) and ensure that exit strategies for project development are implemented at least 12 months prior to project end date.
2.6 Project Delivery					
<b>a. Projects fail to deliver their objectives</b>	Loss of reputation with beneficiaries, volunteers, funders and other partners	Low	High	◆	Each project requires individual risk management strategies to be drawn up as part of project management process

## 2. Existing Resources

### Staffing

LESS has a wealth of skills and assets via Directors, volunteers and paid staff that we should seek to retain. These skills may have come about through extensive experience working in a particular field or from formal training and qualifications.

- Specialist horticultural skills, especially in organic food growing and forest gardening. Qualifications held by staff include:
  - City & Guilds Level 3 in Work-Based Production Horticulture
  - RHS General Certificate in Horticulture
  - RFS Forestry
- Specialist knowledge of energy efficiency measures in domestic and commercial properties, and knowledge of current building regulations. Qualifications held by staff include:
  - Non-Domestic Energy Assessor Level 3
  - Domestic Energy Assessor Level 3
  - NEA Energy Awareness Level 3
  - Green Deal Assessor Level 3 (x 2)
  - Domestic Energy Advisor Level 3
- Professional personnel and financial skills. Qualifications held by staff include:
  - Membership of CIPD
  - Management Diploma Level 5
  - ACCA plus over 15 years experience in voluntary sector finance
- Training and teaching skills. Qualifications held by staff include:
  - PTLLS
  - PGCE
- Emergency First Aid. Qualifications held by staff include:
  - Emergency First Aid
  - First Aid in the Workplace
- Staff also have extensive experience in:
  - Community development and / or supporting small voluntary organisations
  - Project Management
  - Knowledge of funding environment and bid writing

### Physical assets and resources

LESS owns:

- Solar PV panels, generating 28kW power, which are hosted on the Wenning House building in Halton, near Lancaster. The organisation hosting the panels receives free electricity, whilst LESS receives the Feed In Tariffs. The panels generate on average £9,000 per annum for LESS.
- IT equipment - replacement value of £2,600
- FLIR E40bx Thermal Imaging Camera – approx replacement value of £2,500
- Horticultural equipment, e.g., strimmer, tools, etc – replacement value of £1,000
- Horticultural equipment, eg. strimmer, tools, etc - approximate worth?

### Intangible assets:

- High reputation and good will amongst many communities of Lancaster
- Strong links with Lancaster University and Lancaster University Student Union, with benefits including collaboration on developing research ideas, and hosting student placements.
- LESS has connections with a wide variety of networks and organisations, from local to international. Current analysis of these shows that we have 85 connections, 26 to different networks, 59 to organisations.
- Good relationships with our funders, partners, local schools and community organisations



Produce from the Ambleside Road Allotments

# 3: Internal and External Analyses

LESS has carried out three separate exercises to analyse Future Trends, its operating environment (Political Economic Social Technological Legal Environmental) and internal strengths and weaknesses (Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats). All LESS staff and Directors were involved in contributing to the process. The results of the PESTLE and Future Trends analyses have been presented together as there was significant overlap. The original results contained a great deal of detailed information – where possible this has been condensed, and results have also been grouped into broad themes. The outcomes of the PESTLE analysis have been fed into the 'Threats' and 'Opportunities' section of the SWOT analysis. As can be seen, the 'Opportunities' section is large and complex, and far outweighs the other sections.

## PESTLE & Future Trends Analysis

### Political

#### National Government

- General election due within next year
- School Food Plan
- Green Deal
- Redefinition of 'fuel poverty'
- Free school meals for all KS1 schoolchildren from Sept 2014
- Scottish Independence Referendum Sept 2014

#### Local Government

- Lancashire County Council review of woodland management
- Continued 'outsourcing' of services
- Cost cutting

### Economic

#### Reliance on capitalist model of economic growth

- Rise of the supermarkets

#### Local Urban Development

- Heysham Link Road
- Castle and Luneside developments
- Redeployment of Lancaster Castle

#### Local industry / large employers

- Universities
- NHS
- Heysham Power Station
- Supermarkets

#### Austerity / Recession

- Benefit cap and bedroom tax
- People struggling to pay for food and heating
- Disproportionate effect on rural economy
- Relative local poverty compared to national average
- Increased use of food banks both nationally and locally
- Low interest rates

#### Rising Cost of living

- Rising cost of imported food

- Continued rise in energy prices
- Lancaster District 3rd worst area in England in terms of fuel poverty

#### Domestic energy supply and infrastructure at risk

### Social

#### Demographics

- Recently retired baby boomers
- High youth unemployment
- Two universities in Lancaster, a third in Preston: large university population locally

#### Combatting rising cost of living

- Increased interest in food growing, in allotments, gardens and public spaces
- Continued interest in reducing energy bills

#### Continuing public health campaigns that have clear links to growing your own food

#### Media

- Growth in use of social media
- Increase in media multi-tasking

#### Life expectancy

- Increasing nationally
- Below average in over half the districts of Lancashire

#### Barriers to activism

- Difference between individual & population / community behaviour change
- Compassion fatigue preventing action
- Devolvement of agency to 'higher authority'
- Slaves to work / life schedule

#### Attitudes to science

- Belief (or not) in science solving the planets problems
- Increased awareness / acceptance of climate change

### Technological

#### Increased risk of power cuts

- Risks to vulnerable people

#### Domestic renewable technologies

- Domestic renewable technology will continue to be developed - still be less than UK need / capabilities
- Cost of solar panels continues to fall, and subsequently feed-in tariffs have reduced – can expect this trend to continue

#### Local Energy Infrastructure

- Banks Wind Farm
- Heysham Power Station

#### Accessibility of internet technology

- Increase in smartphone usage / ownership
- Significant number of people not connected to internet

### Legal

#### By Apr 2018 it will be illegal to rent out properties below energy efficiency rating 'E'

#### Legal barriers to land ownership

#### Legal barriers to political resistance

- Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill 2013-14 – AKA the 'charity gagging bill'

### Environmental

#### Climate change

#### Declining insect pollinator populations

#### Domestic supplies of oil and conventional gas dwindle

- Shale gas explored as an alternative
- Increased exploratory drilling and resistance

#### Increasing global scarcity of resources

#### Increased risk of food shortages

# SWOT Analysis

## Strengths

**Organisationally equipped to co-ordinate local change**

**All paid and voluntary personnel and their skills**

**Trusted Organisation**

- Independent
- Trusted by organisations and individuals

**Unique services in the locality**

- Home Energy Service
- One Planet Festival

**Collaborative internal working style**

## Weaknesses

**Internal communication**

**Strategy and Co-ordination**

- Lack of ICT strategy
- Lack of strategic plan for future development beyond the short term
- Lack of volunteer co-ordination
- Overview of organisational management needs to be improved
- Missing opportunities when they are presented to us
- LESS going through a period of intense change

**Perception & External Communication**

- Lack of LESS presence at strategic events / meetings / networks.
- Perception that LESS 'takes over' things it is involved with
- Lack of coherent external communications strategy and marketing
- Low-profile - a lot of people don't know who we are and what we do
- Not "plugged in" to all the relevant networks that we could be

**Identity & Culture**

- "Silo mentality" with regard to project work
- Generally a reactive rather than proactive organisation

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

- Need to improve monitoring and evaluation framework

**Funding**

- No reserves or stable source of funding
- Staff currently on extremely short term contracts – risk losing key staff

## Opportunities

**Opportunities (contd in next column)**

- Growth in use of social media
- Could make better use of social media to promote work / take a position

**Increase in smartphone / tablet ownership**

**Digital Divide**

- Less Is More Game

**Existing income streams**

- Scope to do more work in Halton due to FITs income

**LESS going through period of intense change**

- A genuine opportunity to review our organisation

**Organisationally equipped to co-ordinate local change**

- Opportunity to undertake meaningful engagement with beneficiaries to determine the future focus of our work
- Opportunity to become the leader in landscaping and mapping activity in the area; and serving the needs of community / district

**Claver Hill – potential for new LESS food growing site**

**Increased risk of food shortages**

**Rising cost of imported food**

**Increased interest in food growing, in allotments, gardens and public spaces**

- Demand for allotments continues to outstrip availability
- More food growing by organisations and grassroots groups - more opportunities to work in partnership

**Public sector funding cuts**

- Possibly more likely to support land transfer for allotments if cost reductions can be shown
- SLA with Lancashire Adult Learning

**Energy Infrastructure**

- Domestic energy supply and infrastructure at risk - Increased chance of power cuts - refrigerated food no longer practical, so fresh, local and seasonal food in greater demand
- Local onshore wind turbine project – Overton - Warm Zone funding available in Lancaster District

**School Food Plan (July 2013)**

**Free school meals for all KS1 schoolchildren from Sept 2014**

**Gardening included on National Curriculum(in Design & Technology)**

**Continuing public health campaigns with links to food growing**

- Development of chargeable work for schools, e.g. Gardener in Residence

**Lancashire County Council review of woodland management**

- Potential for "third strand", e.g., woodland management

**Participation in relevant networks**

- Affordable Warmth Group
- Sustainable Food Cities
- New LESS informal networking events
- Lancaster Community Advice Network

**Recently retired baby boomers and high youth unemployment**

- Increased demand for volunteering opps

**Continued interest in reducing energy bills**

**Green Deal / ECOS & CSCO**

**Domestic supplies of oil and gas dwindle**

**Lancaster District 3rd worst area in England in terms of fuel poverty**

- Funding might be available to address Lancaster District's fuel poverty situation
- Development of Home Energy Service

## Threats

**Green Deal**

- ECO element restructured by government

**Public sector funding cuts**

- Threat to external funding sources
- Increased competition for funding

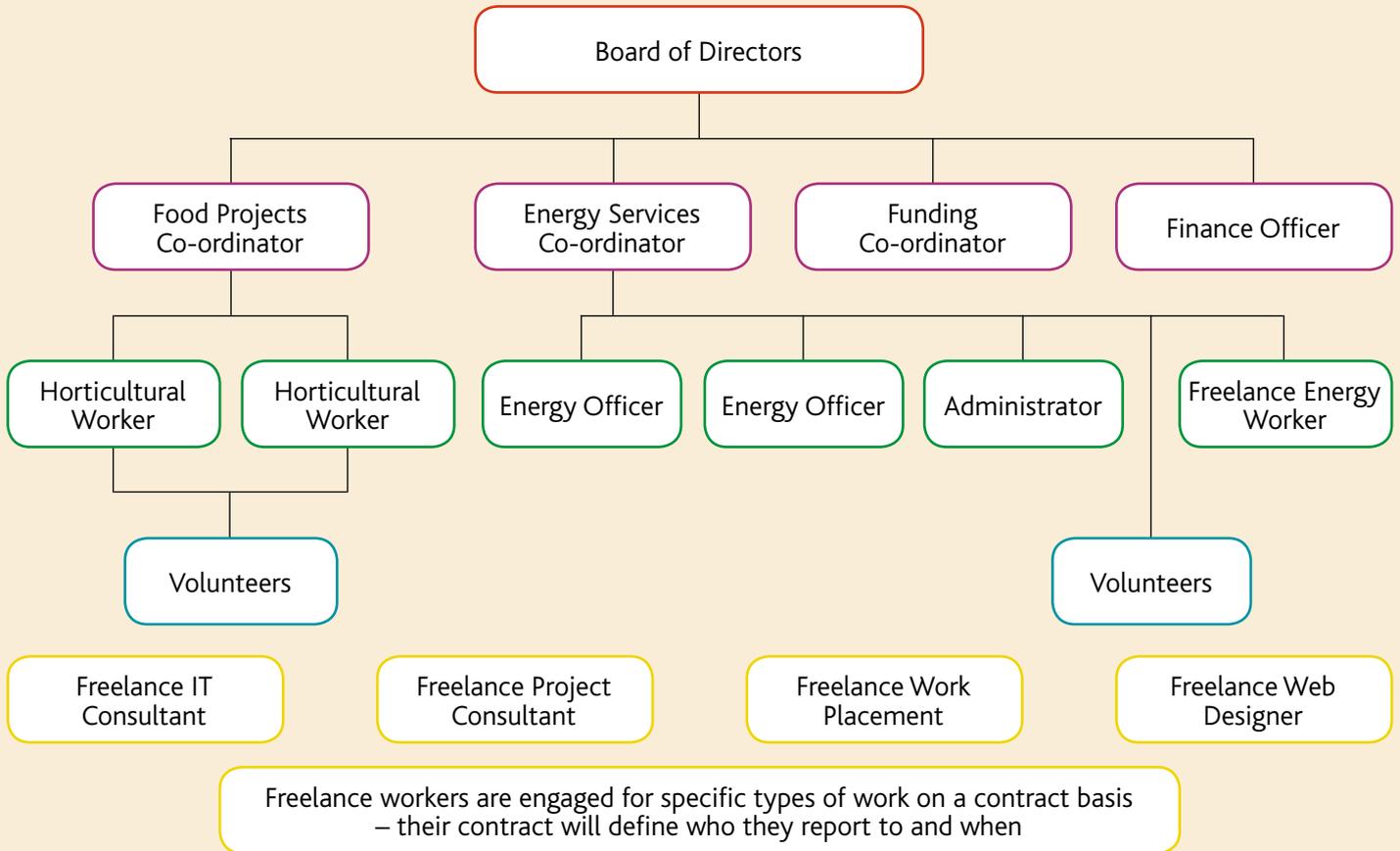
**Loss of "trustworthy" image or status if we work in the wrong way or with the wrong partners**

**Increased interest in food growing, in allotments, gardens and public spaces**

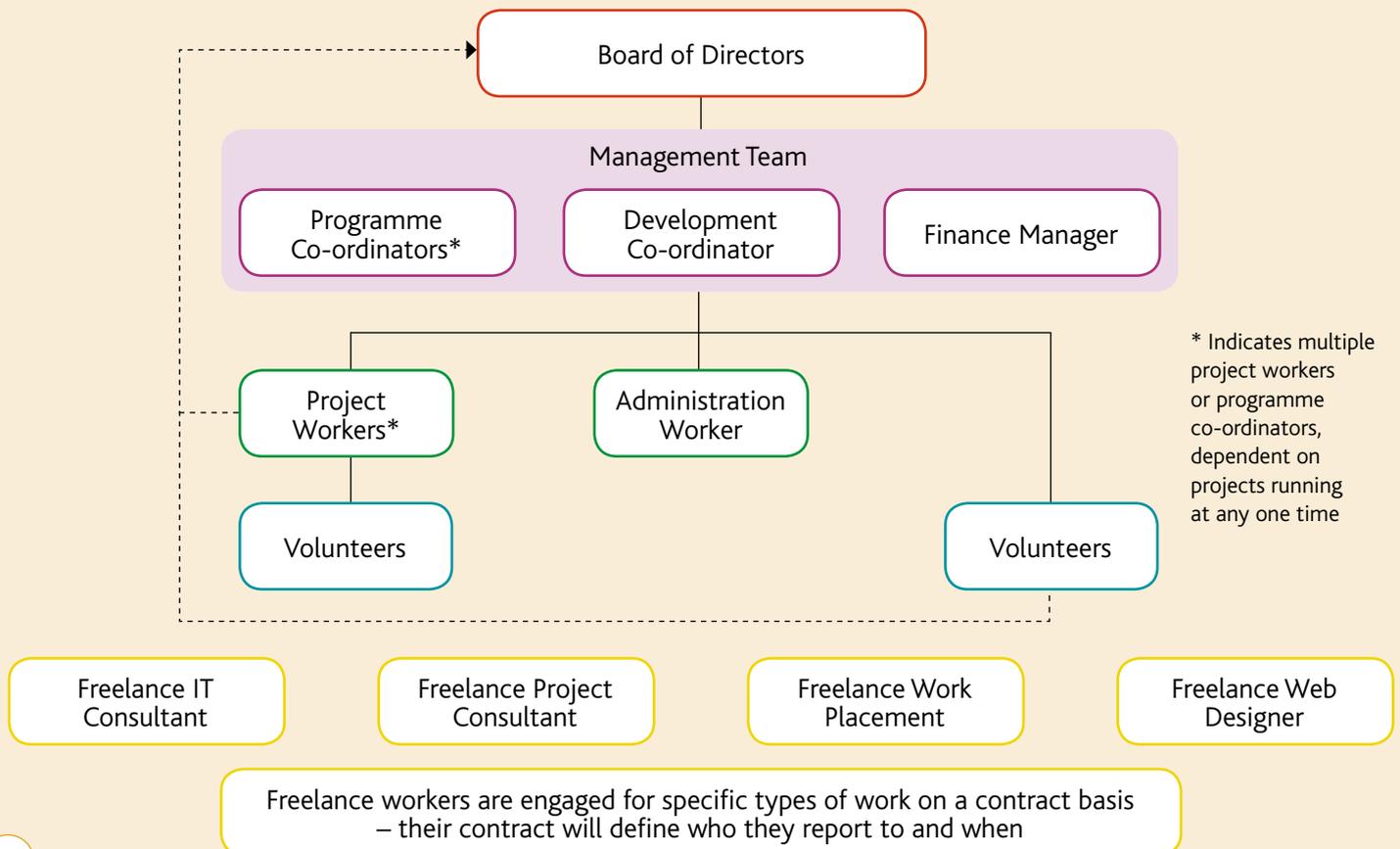
- More food growing organisations – both organisations and grassroots

# 4: Staffing Structure

LESS currently has the following staffing structure – which is under review:



Below is a proposed future staffing structure for LESS, which will be adopted by the end of the 2014 financial year, or after the next major tranche of funding, whichever is soonest:



# 5: Monitoring and Evaluation

As an organisation, LESS carries out various monitoring and evaluation activities in order to assess whether our work is achieving measurable outcomes, and continue to improve the ongoing delivery of our projects and activities. Each project has its own aims and objectives, and therefore its own monitoring and evaluation plan which will feed into the organisational one below, and this will be the responsibility of the relevant Project or Programme Co-ordinator. On page 24 below is our Monitoring and Evaluation Plan showing the relationship between our strategic aims, milestones we have identified as important to us in measuring progress towards the aims, what we want to measure, how we will measure it and when we will implement this. **The responsibility for implementing this plan lies either with the Directors, or with the organisation's Management Team if the new structure has been adopted (see page 22).**

## Monitoring and Evaluation Activities

- Monitoring – data collection – about all the activities and services we offer and who participates in them, plus internal information about staffing and finances.
- Ongoing evaluation takes place during activities we deliver to help us to improve what we're doing, usually on a quarterly basis possibly more frequently if required by funders.
- End-of-project evaluation is done at when project activity is completed to assess outcomes, impact on stakeholders and overall success.
- Long-term project follow up evaluation takes place at periods of 12 months (or longer) **after** project activities are completed to assess the long-term impact of our work on individuals, communities and organisations.
- Periodic evaluation of the organisation usually occurs on a quarterly basis to assess how we're meeting our strategic aims, as part of our business planning cycle, with strategic aims themselves being reviewed annually.

## Monitoring and Evaluation Methods

A range of quantitative and qualitative research methods will be used to gather the information to measure our work against the Monitoring and Evaluation Indicators. As a minimum these methods will include:

- Records of the range of activities, interactions and services we offer
- Circulation lists and publicity records
- Event attendance registers
- Surveys and feedback forms (both paper and online)
- Focus groups
- One-to-one interviews
- Case studies
- Contextual observation
- Measuring web site / social media traffic
- Sign-ups for pledge systems and activities that LESS have initiated
- Knowledge testing (as part of training)
- Network learning events
- Partner workshops
- Peer review
- Photographs
- Other internal project records (e.g., project files).

## Results, reporting and dissemination

The information and data collected will enable LESS staff and Directors to reflect on what is working, what isn't doing so well and what action we can take to improve things. Identifying problems and risks at an early stage will mean we can amend our Business Plan and project delivery plans accordingly.

Outcomes and reports produced by both our projects, and LESS as an organisation, will be disseminated via appropriate media – this could include written reports, presentations at events, press releases, making electronic copies available via our website and publicising via social media channels. We will also aim to use the outcome of evaluations as a valuable tool to lobby local and national policy makers to ensure that learning is not lost. The results of will also be key in informing future project development work and strategic plans for the organisation.

# LESS Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Milestones	What we measure	How we measure it	Timescales
<b>Giving down-to-earth support and advice to individuals, communities and organisations to enhance their wellbeing and resilience to climate change</b>			
Individuals, communities and organisations that LESS works with receive good quality support tailored to their needs	Types of activity offered	Portfolio or calendar of activities / projects being delivered	April 2014 onwards
	Activities offered are publicised widely and appropriately	Publicity materials, circulation lists, etc	
	Number of individuals and / or households that request support	Records of requests for support	
	Number of organisations that request support		
	Number of activities or interactions held or offered by LESS	Attendance registers where appropriate	
	Likert scale score of 1-10: If we haven't received a score of 10, what could we do to bring the score up to 10?	End-of-activity evaluation forms and / or interviews	
LESS receives and makes referrals	Number of referrals from external agencies	Referral records	
	Number of referrals onto external agencies		
	Number of internal referrals between LESS projects		
Individuals, communities and organisations that LESS works with report and / or demonstrate increased resilience	Estimated financial savings (£s)	Activity monitoring compared with national figures	
	Estimated carbon savings (kg)	One-to-one interviews with a sample of individuals	
	Estimated food produced (kg)	Questionnaires	
	Individuals, communities and organisations involved in LESS activities report increased resilience	Focus group activities Activity evaluation (formative and summative)	
<b>Strengthening individuals and communities by building skills in sustainable living</b>			
LESS offers training or volunteering opportunities	Number of volunteering or training opportunities offered	Portfolio of formal and informal opportunities being delivered and publicity materials, circulation lists, etc	April 2014 onwards
	Number of accredited qualification routes offered		
Individuals involved in LESS activities increase personal development and improve their long term prospects	Number of people taking up opportunities	Attendance registers Observation (e.g. photographs, etc)	
	Number of hours individuals spend in volunteering or training	Individual development records (which will include evaluation tools such as one-to-one interviews)	
	New skills acquired		
	Participants go on to further study or work	One-to-one interviews and / or follow up questionnaires with a sample of individuals after a period of time	
Sustainable living skills become embedded in communities	Skills acquired by individuals positively affect communities	Focus groups with volunteers / trainees from specific communities	
		One-to-one follow up interviews	
		Long term evaluation – revisiting same community or project 12 months after activity completion	
		Case studies of communities	
		Observation of outcomes of project work – e.g., allotments handed over to community association	

Milestones	What we measure	How we measure it	Timescales
<b>Making ethical products and services, and their local suppliers, accessible</b>			
People know where to go for ethical, local products and services	No. food directories circulated	Record of number of directories circulated (and where to)	April 2014 onwards
	No. of local suppliers mentioned in various LESS materials (e.g. local food directory and HES report)	Local Food directory and Home Energy Service reports	
	No. HES reports sent out	HES database	
	No. of info sheets circulated as part of project work	Records kept by project co-ordinators / workers	
	Hits on local food directory part of website	Website 'back-end' statistics	
	Did people know where to source local, ethical services and products before interaction with LESS?	Include questions in all project follow-up work, including one-to-one interviews, focus groups and questionnaires	
	Do people know where to source local, ethical services and products after interaction with LESS?		
People are better able to afford ethical, local products and services	Track change in relative affordability via project follow-up work		
<b>Deepening understanding of sustainability issues in local communities - picks up some 'deep issues' from the other three preceding aims</b>			
Reduced consumption	Reduced energy consumption	Analysis of existing info gathered by LESS via Home Energy Survey process and food project follow up work	April 2015
	Reduced spending on food		
Individuals, organisations and communities share resources	Increase in local skill sharing initiatives	Monitoring of local networks and media and / or LESS involvement in any of these initiatives	
	Increase in physical and / or online resource sharing locally		
	Increase in local business-to-business sharing		
Sustainability becomes more embedded within organisations	Organisations involved in interactions with LESS alter policy and practice to be more sustainable	Long term evaluation process (e.g. 12 months, 24 months after project end) focussed on project outcomes rather than individual beneficiaries	
LESS influences policy and practice		Periodic focus groups with communities / organisations worked with	
		Build relevant questions into existing client feedback, e.g., school policy changes, and / or effectiveness.	

Milestones	What we measure	How we measure it	Timescales
<b>Transforming LESS into a financially and environmentally sustainable organisation</b>			
LESS becomes financially sustainable	LESS has a reserves policy	LESS policies	
	Development of free reserves	Financial reporting systems	
	Funding bids bring in sufficient income to cover project costs AND overheads		
	Contracts for earned income bring in sufficient surplus to create reserves		
	Mix of funding: Proportion earned vs grant income		
Beneficiary and volunteer involvement is consistently integrated across all work.	A number of beneficiaries and / or volunteers agree to become Directors	Register of Directors	April 2014 onwards
LESS is 'in the loop' with external organisations and structures	Increased invites to networking and / or strategic events	Record of involvement (e.g. delegate lists, etc) in networking and / or strategic events	
	Increased involvement in local strategic work		
Governance and internal processes become more sustainable (walking the talk)	Staff are fulfilled and happy at work	Staff reviews and exit interviews	
	Information flows throughout the organisation	Staff meeting notes	
		Quarterly or annual staff surveys	
	System specific strategies are in place for e.g., IT, communications, funding, etc	LESS internal strategy documents	
		Minutes of Directors Meetings	
All the 3 measures above	Peer-review by members of other similar organisations (can apply to all of the above)	April 2015 onwards	
	PQASSO or other quality assurance process		
LESS develops long term organisational strategy	LESS has a long-term organisational strategy	Operational plan review – quarterly basis	April 2015 onwards
		Business plan cycle – annual basis	
	LESS identifies areas of need and develops new projects to meet them	Funding bids are written and projects funded	

# 6: Sources of Funding

The following have been identified as potential sources of funding for LESS:

## Grant funding

- Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
- Henry Smith Charity
- Tudor Trust
- Reaching Communities (Big Lottery)
- Power to Change Fund (Big Lottery – from 2014)
- Banks Renewables Warm Zone funding
- Ecology Building Society Charitable Foundation
- Heritage Lottery Fund (some food growing work may count as cultural heritage)

## Income generation via trading:

- Renew Service Level Agreement with Lancashire Adult Learning for delivering training
- Increase Gardener in Residence contracts
- Specific workshops and training to public or commercial sector organisations

## Sponsorship / partnership

- Heysham Power Station
- Tadea

## Social Investment / Loans

- Charities Aid Foundation
- CharityBank
- Seeds
- Funding Circle

## Crowdfunding

- Buzzbnk
- crowdfunder.co.uk
- Spacehive
- Crowdcube
- peoplefund.it

## Soliciting Donations

- Paypal button on website
- Justgiving
- Encouraging legacy giving

# 7: LESS's Customers 2014-15

## Grant Funders



## Clients





## **LESS (Lancaster District) CIC Business Plan 2014-15**

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LESS (Lancaster District) is a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee in England No: 6181400