

Visualising A Shared Future

A COMMUNE IN THE NORTH



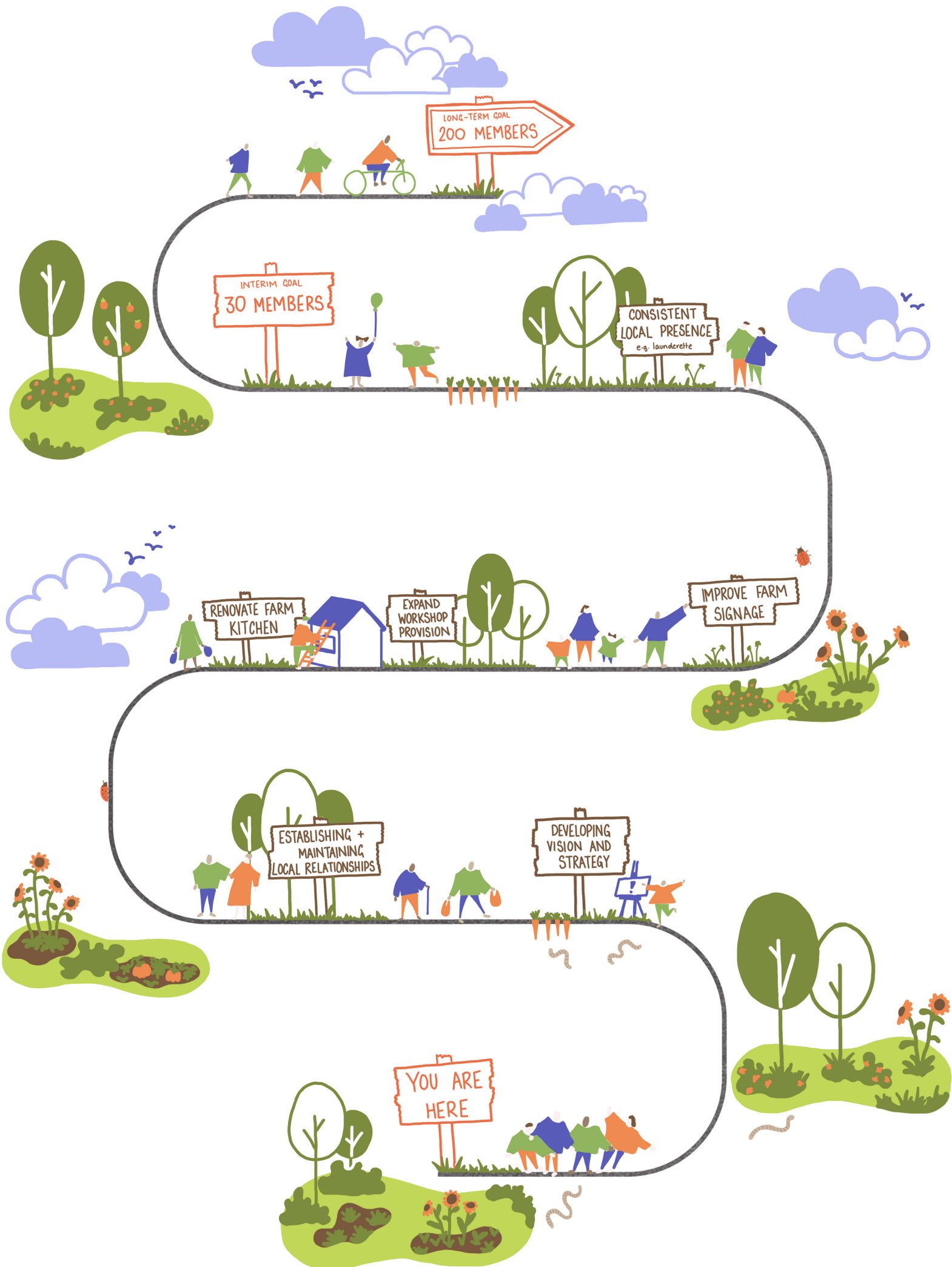
Introduction

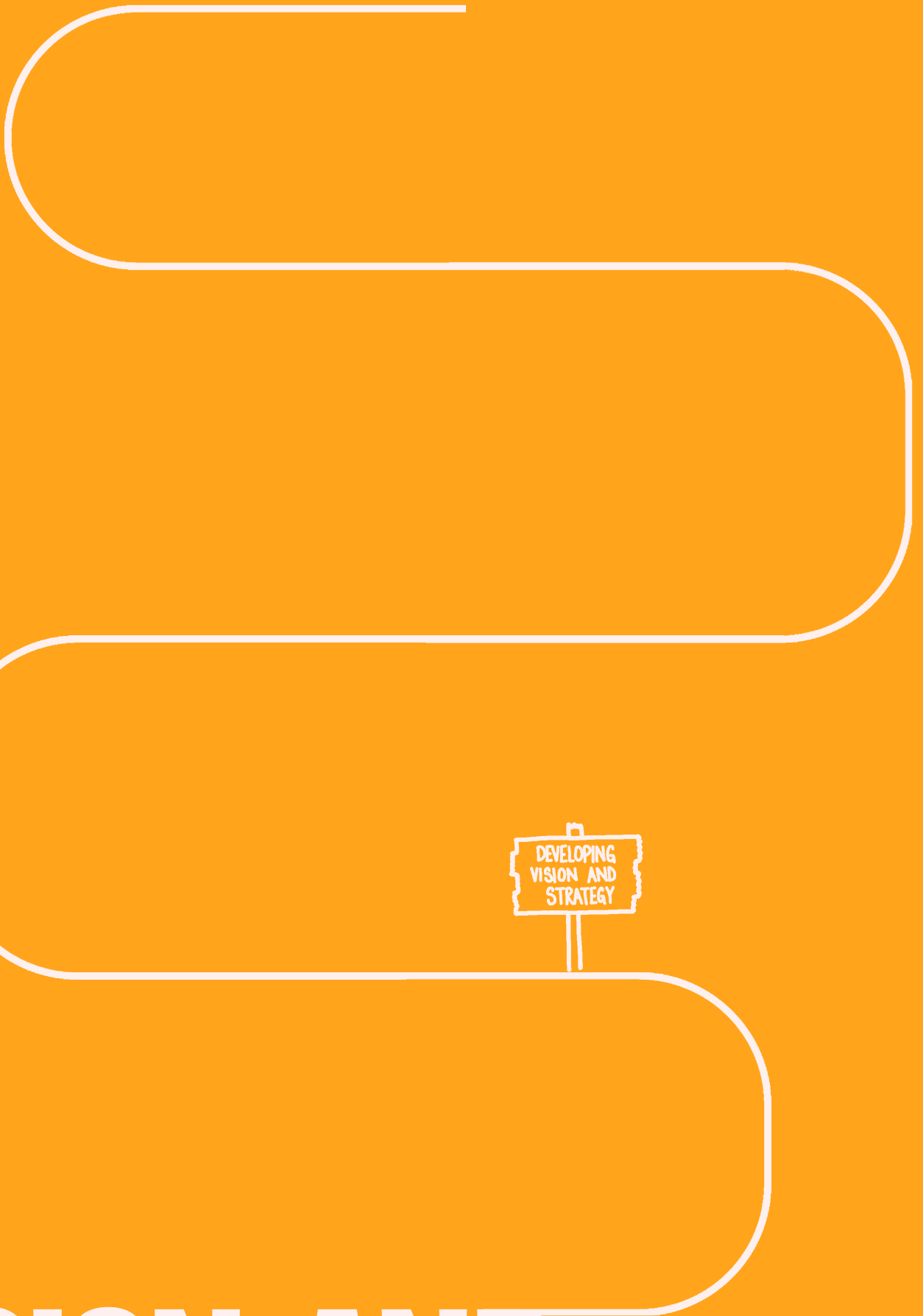
A Commune in the North is a community-driven initiative based in Bentley, dedicated to fostering connection, creativity, and mutual support among both their members and local residents. Rooted in principles of collaboration and inclusivity, the commune provides a space where individuals can share resources, skills, and ideas to strengthen community wellbeing.

Through outreach, workshops, and local partnerships, we aim to build a more sustainable and connected relationship between ACitN and the town of Bentley.

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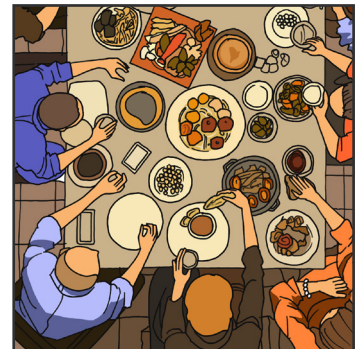




VISION AND STRATEGY

Manifesto

EGALITARIAN COMMUNITY



CARE FOR ECOLOGY AND FOOD

PRIORITISING MUTUAL AID



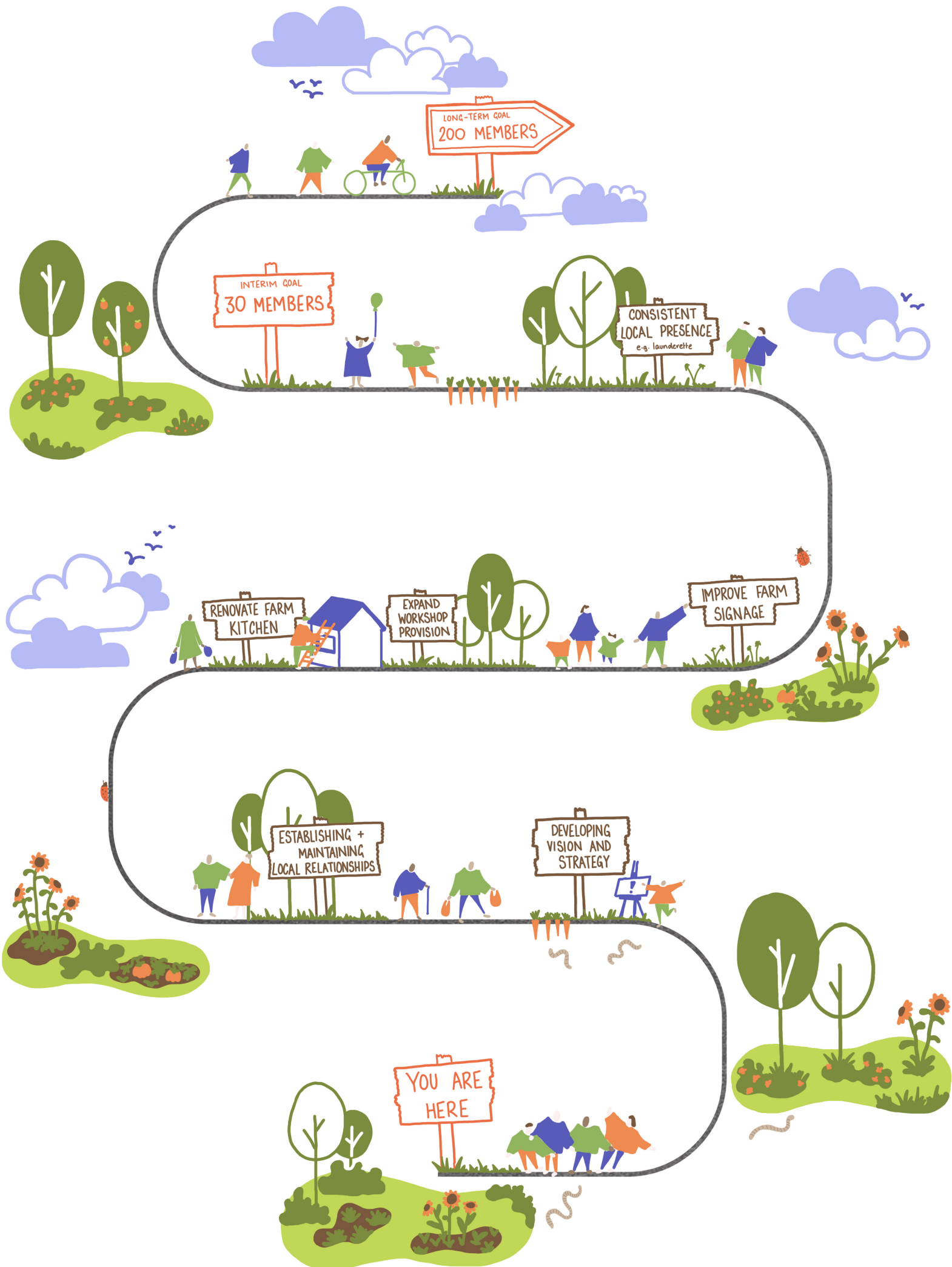


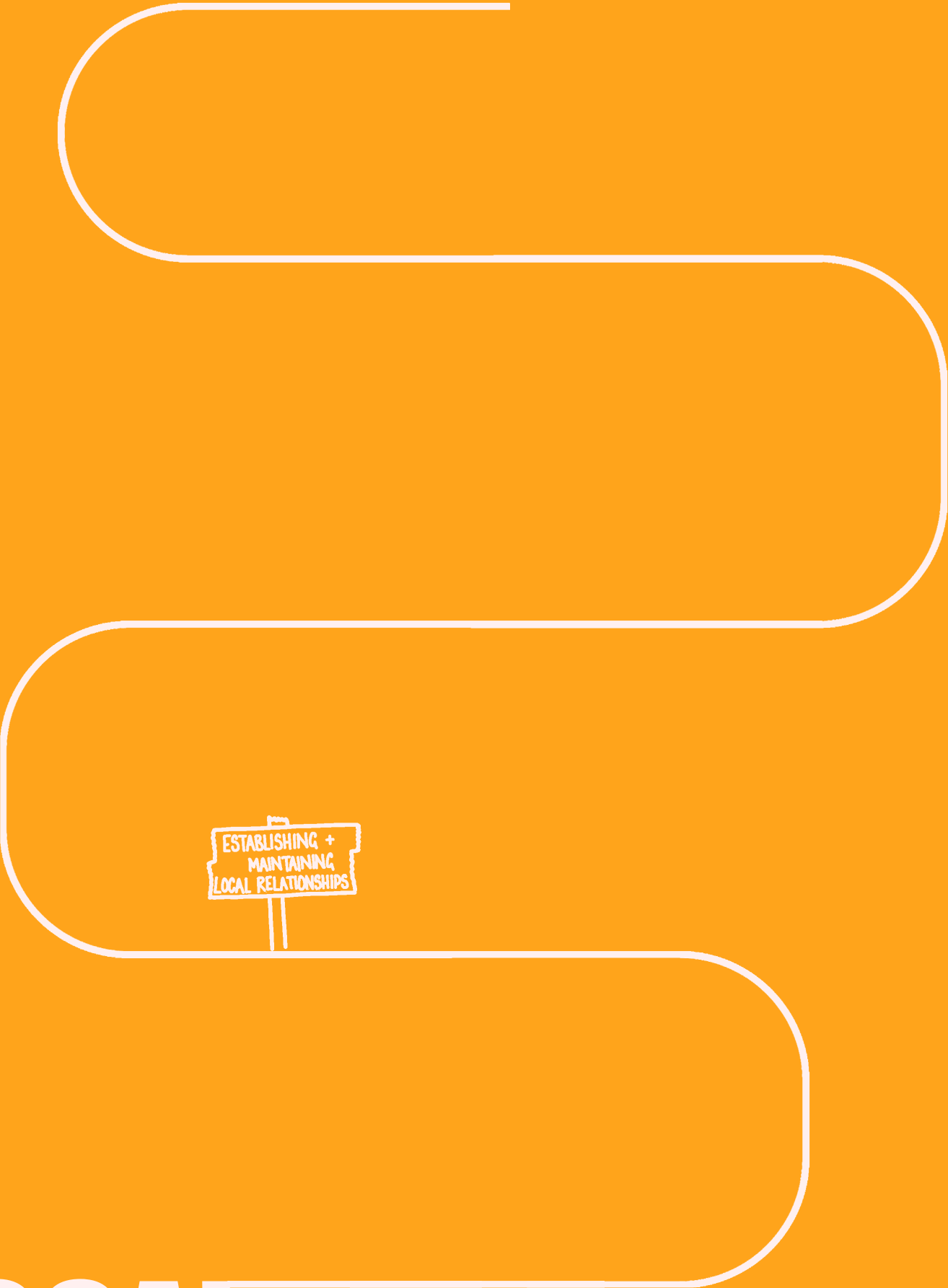
COMMUNITY **LEARNING**

AUTONOMY FROM THE STATE



COOPERATION **MAKES IT HAPPEN**

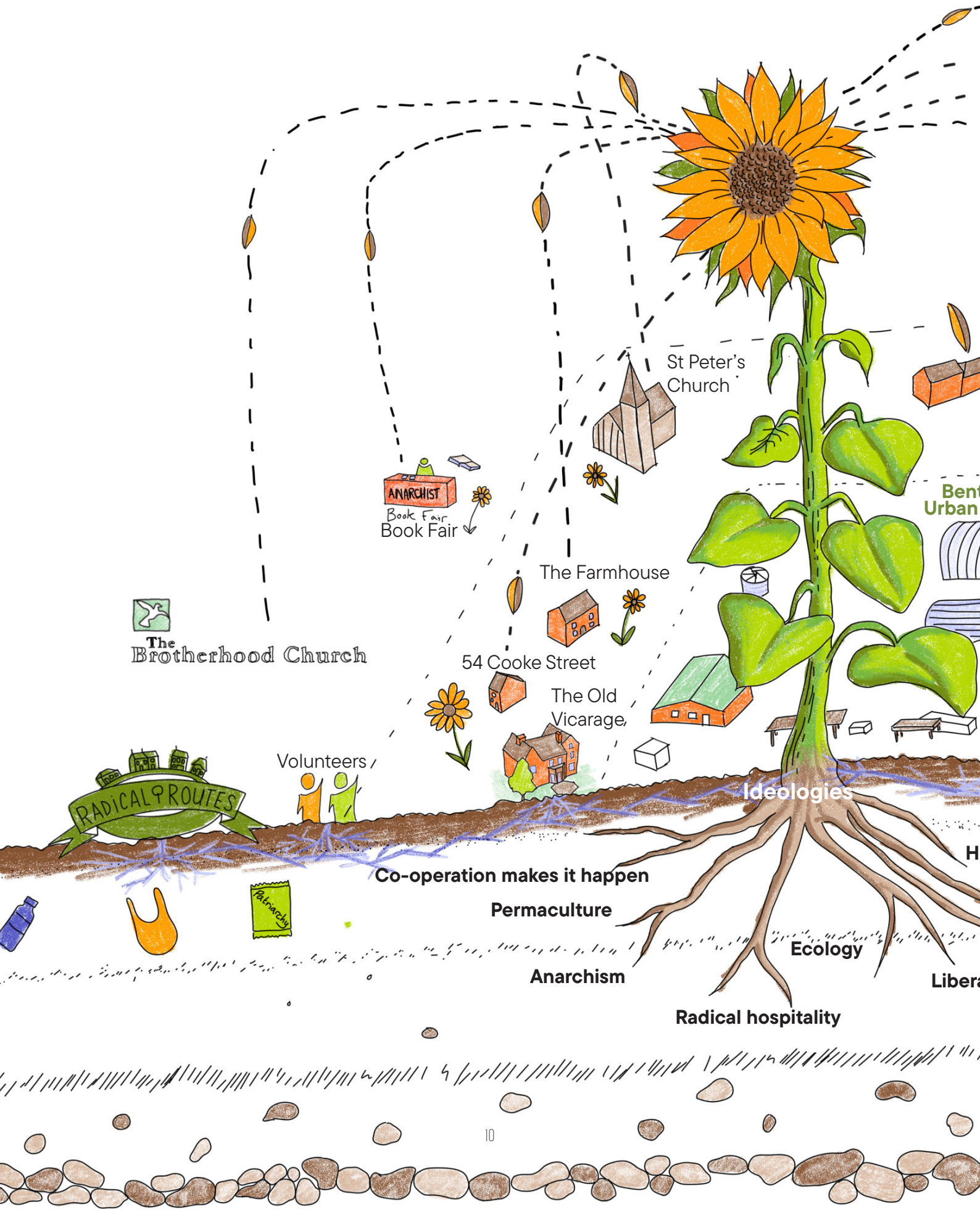


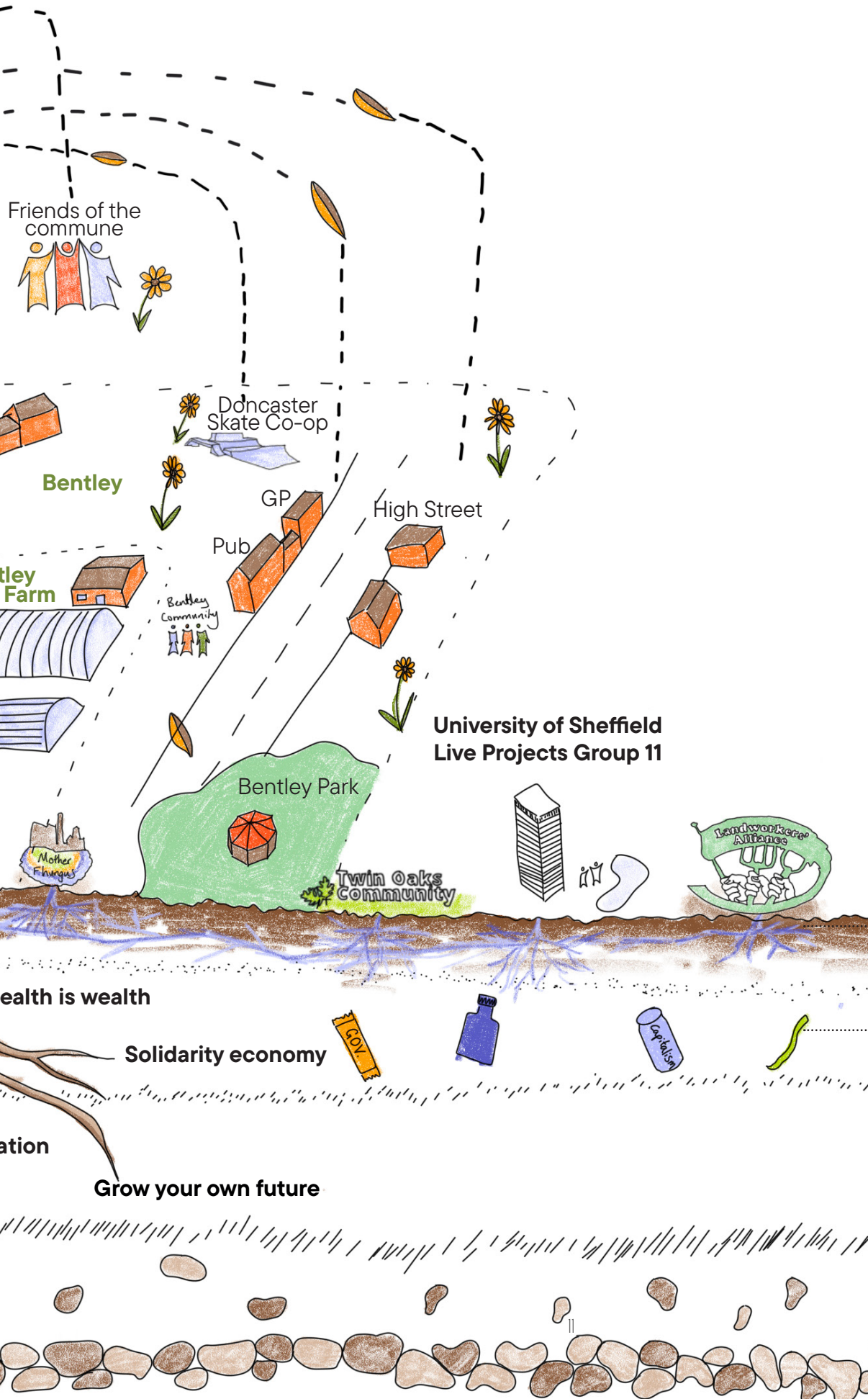


ESTABLISHING +
MAINTAINING
LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

LOCAL RELATIONSHIPS

Stakeholder Mapping





Friends of the commune

Doncaster Skate Co-op

Bentley

GP

High Street

Pub

Bentley Community

University of Sheffield Live Projects Group 11

Bentley Park

Twin Oaks Community

Landworkers' Alliance

Humus Layer

Solidarity economy

Harmful Objects in Soil

Grow your own future

Bentley Community Opinion Research

Online Survey

To understand how people living in Bentley feel about Bentley Urban Farm, the Live Project group constructed an online survey and left QR codes around town for people to anonymously share their opinions. Below is an account of some interesting responses:

How did you hear about Bentley Urban Farm?

"I heard about it from St Peters Church"

So, what did you get up to and what did you enjoy the most?

"I loved visiting, exploring the place and I am looking forward to getting involved."

Can you describe what you think Bentley Urban Farm does?

"Focusing on self-sufficiency, growing natural produce from the earth, helping the environment rather than hindering it."

Do you think a place like Bentley Urban Farm is important for the Bentley community?

"Yes, it brings healthy food to nourish our bodies and a beautiful community space and feel, sense of belonging."

Is there anything you would change/ add about Bentley as a place?

"Reach out to other local businesses that have mutual views and community values and help each other by sharing social media posts or hosting joint events."

Any suggestions for how Bentley Urban Farm could better connect with local people like yourself?

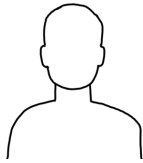
"More accessible places and activities for people who are lonely and for places to network with each other more for the community, rather than try and outdo each other to be the best."



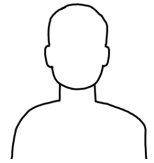
Bentley Urban Farm

The Live Project group travelled to Bentley High Street to talk to passers-by regarding what they know about Bentley Urban Farm. The questions asked were the same as those in the survey.

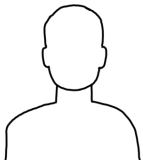
"The people in Bentley need a mentor. We have no help"



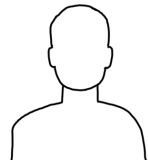
"It would be great if Bentley Urban Farm had a presence at big local events"



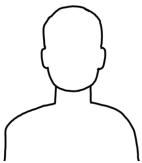
"Lots of people are out of work and therefore have lost hope"



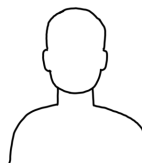
"I am happy to volunteer"



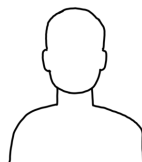
"Bentley Urban Farm should put posters up around town"



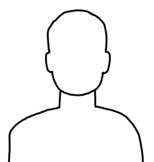
"Bentley has an issue with diabetes and high blood pressure"



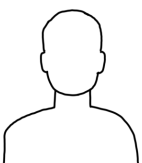
"Would like to see more advertisements on Facebook groups"



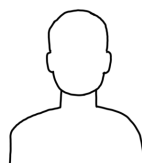
"Bentley Urban Farm is a great place for families to visit"



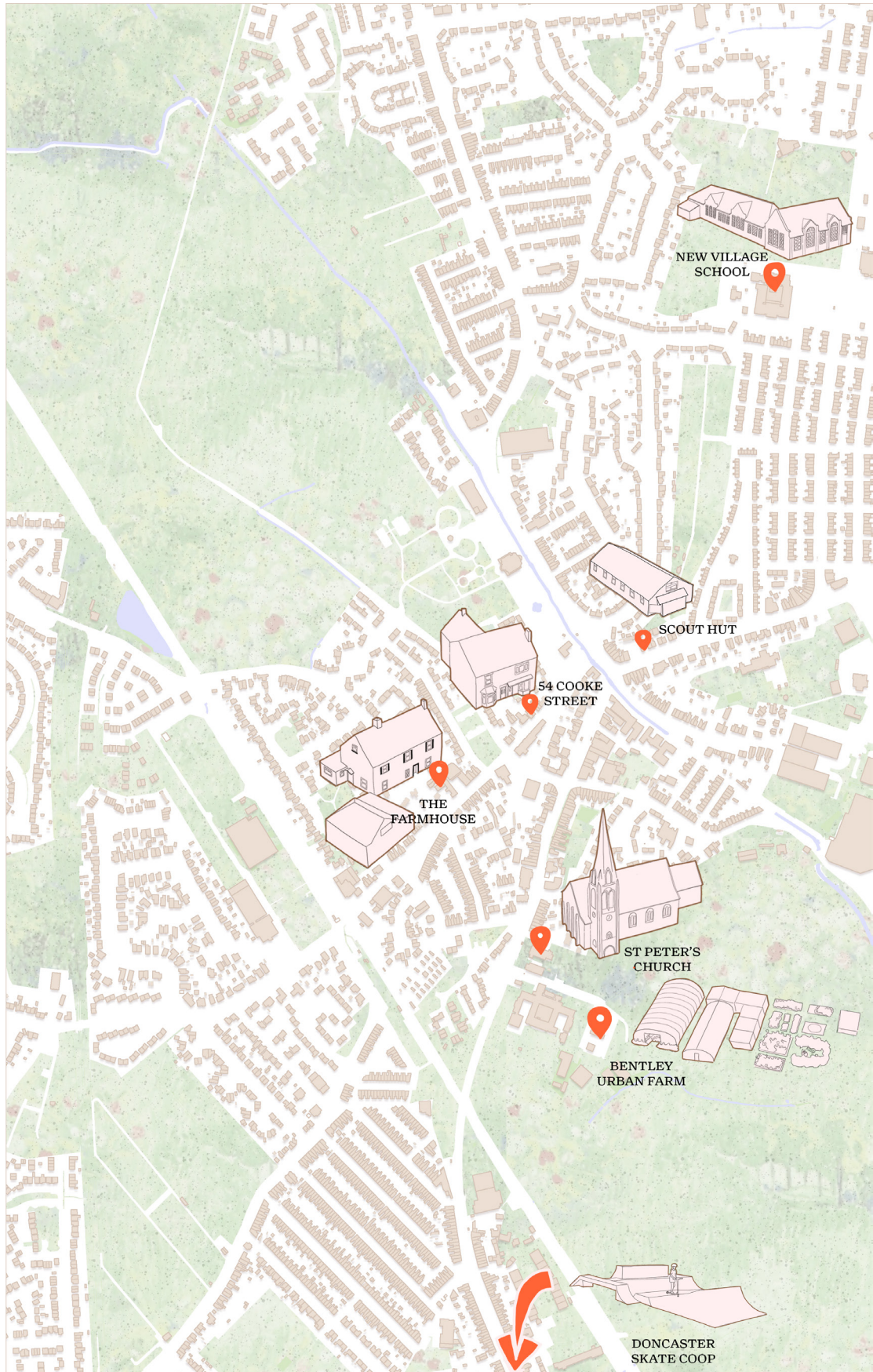
"Advertising Bentley Urban Farm and healthy eating would be beneficial to be displayed in the GP."



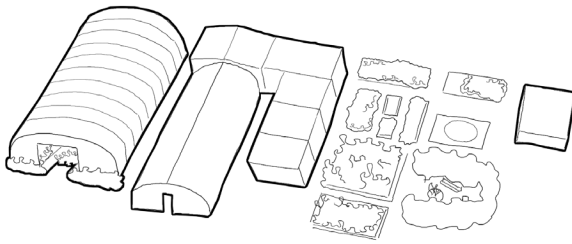
"Bentley has a generally older population, so posters are useful to raise awareness"



Commune Ecosystem



Bentley Urban Farm

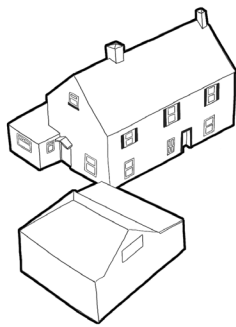


The commune runs the farm alongside volunteers who contribute their time and knowledge to ensure the farm runs smoothly and continues to be an asset to the local community.

What does ACiTN do already?

- Alternative provision classes for an hour every Tuesday
- Community meals hosted at the farm
- Festivals for people to visit
- Hosts workshops and teachings
- Volunteer work
- Food growing

The Farmhouse



The Farmhouse is the larger of the two properties owned by ACiTN, where four of the seven members currently live.

What does ACiTN do already?

- Cook for each other and also guests to the house/farm
- Includes a timber workshop, from which a carpenter operates
- Working on renovating the house

The Old Vicarage

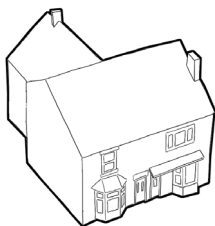


The house that owns the field adjacent to the farm

What does ACiTN do already?

- Exchange produce for the use of the field.

54 Cooke Street

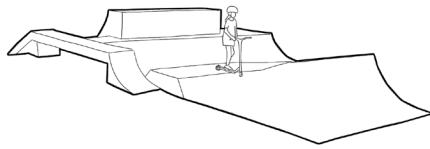


54 Cooke Street is the second house owned by ACiTN, where the other three members live.

What does ACiTN do already?

- Working on renovating the house and garden
- Operates occasional event catering business from the kitchen

Doncaster Skate Park



Doncaster Skate Park is a co-op run business and the only indoor skate park in the area.

What does ACiTN do already?

- Provides pasties to the cafe, made with produce from Bentley Urban Farm

New Village School

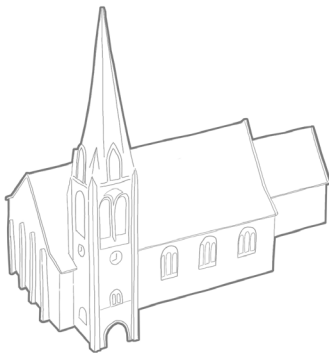


New Village School is a local primary school in Bentley.

What does ACiTN do already?

- Kids have previously come to use the farm. Opportunities with Harrison College to reintroduce this

St. Peter's Church



St Peter's Church hosts a variety of community events and is a social hub for the surrounding area.

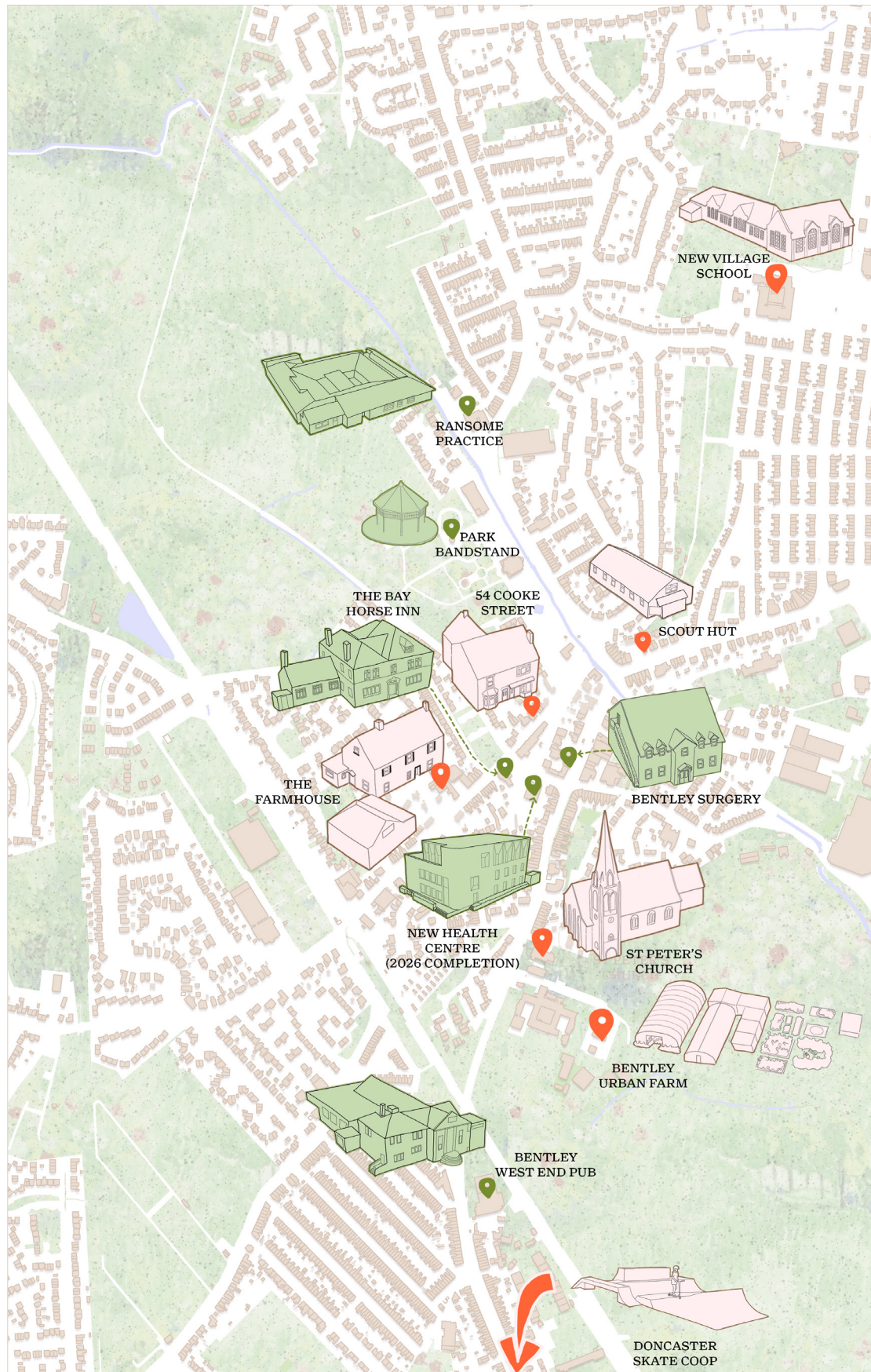
What does ACiTN do already?

- Wednesday coffee mornings are run by the church every week for the local community in Bentley. In the past, Bentley Urban Farm has contributed by composting the used coffee cups.
- Providing produce for Harvest Festival
- Community meals
- A joint ceilidh as a fundraiser for the farm

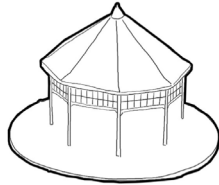
Further Opportunities

- The farm can begin to reintroduce the coffee cup service to further improve their relationship with the church and community
- Church use of the fire pit for worship
- Bentley Urban Farm can attend to engagement with the church, potentially a stall to each week by composting the used coffee cups

Future Engagement Opportunities



Park Bandstand



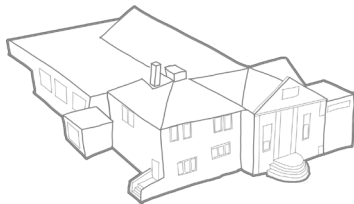
The Park bandstand acts as a monument/focal point within Bentley Park.

What could ACiTN do?

- Have their stall stationed here to encourage engagement with the community
- Community swap shop
- Temporary library
- Spread the word about their ethos and values
- Have their stall here during large community events at the park, e.g. Bonfire Night, to maximize community engagement

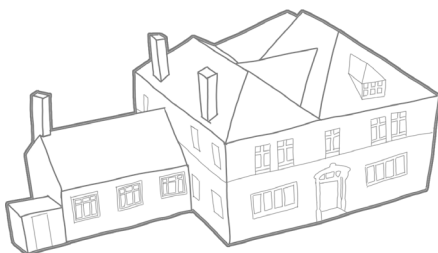
Pubs in Bentley

West End Pub



Pubs are a good place for people to congregate and socialise casually.

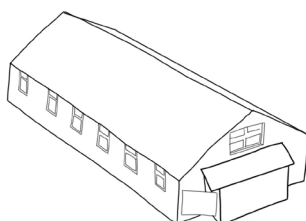
The Bay Horse Inn



What could ACiTN do in each pub?

- Hang up posters for locals to see, advertising the farm
- Frequent the pub to meet people in person

Scout Hut



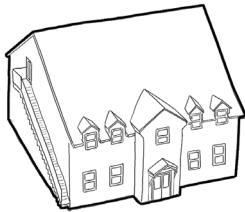
The Scout Hut is where the local scouts club meet for weekly sessions.

What could ACiTN do?

- Opportunities for scouts to use the farm

Bentley GP Surgeries

Bentley Surgery

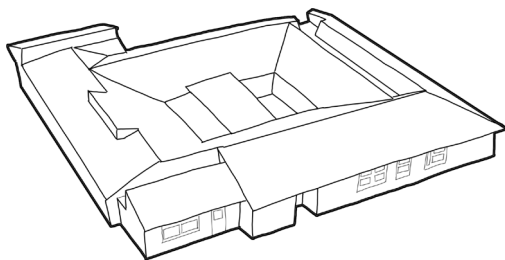


Bentley Surgery, Don Valley Centre and Ransome Practice are three GP centres located within the Bentley area. Don Valley Centre and Ransome Practice are soon to combine to become Bentley Primary Care Centre in a new building under construction near Bentley High Street, set to complete in 2026.

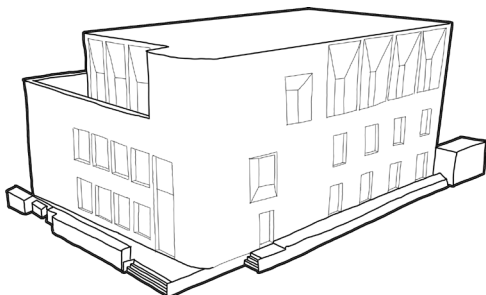
What could ACiTN do?

- Bentley Urban Farm could host a 'healthy eating club' where doctors refer patients to the farm to spend time outdoors and learn about healthy lifestyles and growing your own food.
- BUF can put posters in the foyer to encourage people to visit the farm and eat healthily.

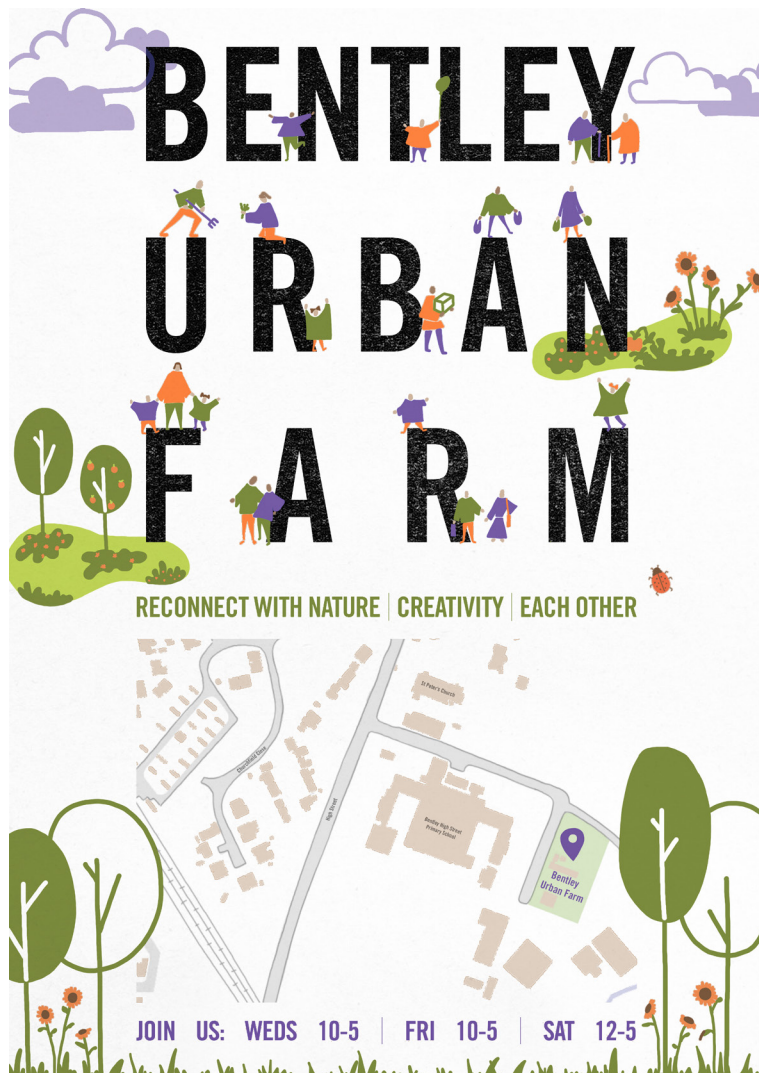
Ransome Practice

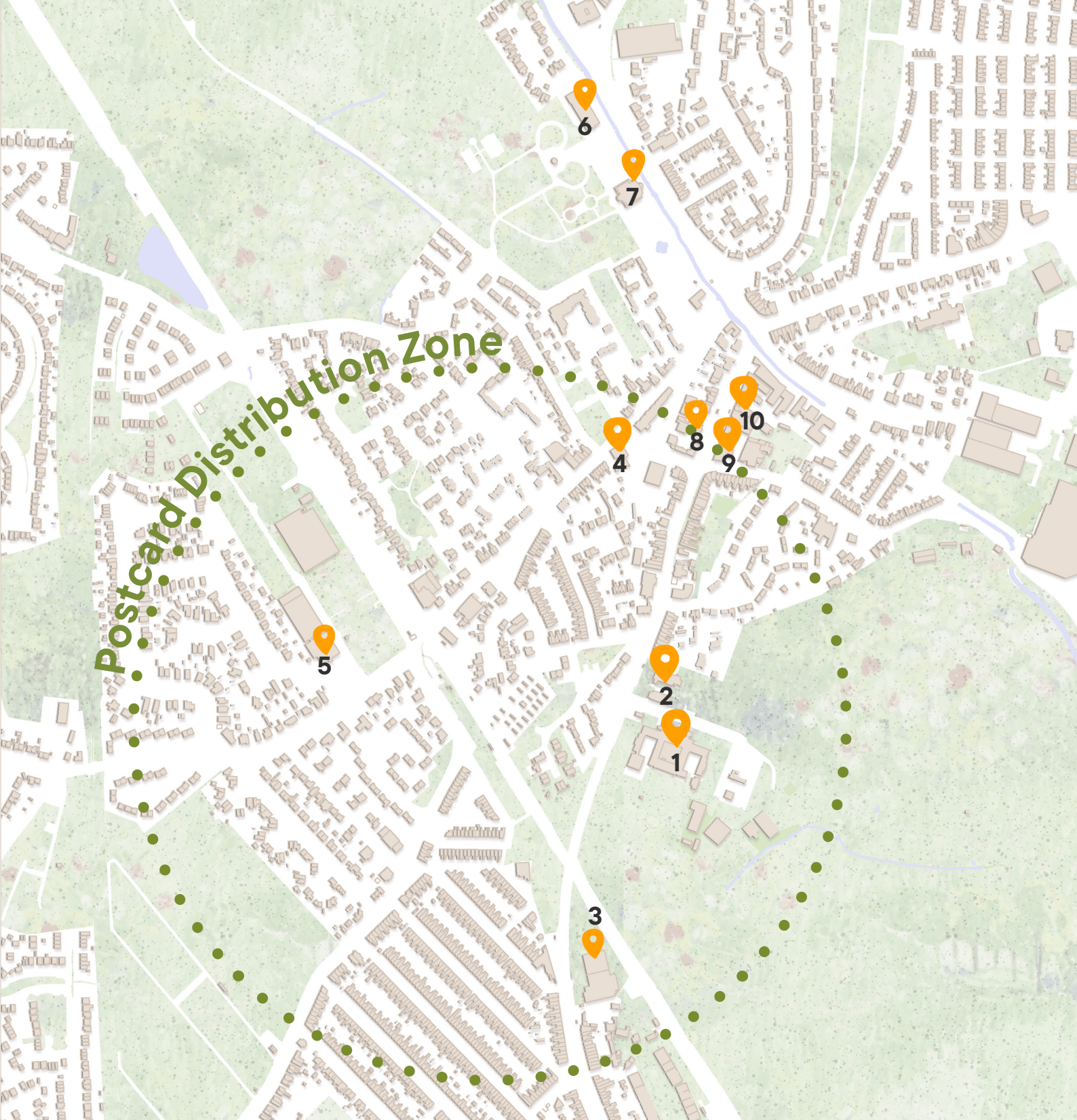


Bentley Primary Care Centre (2026)

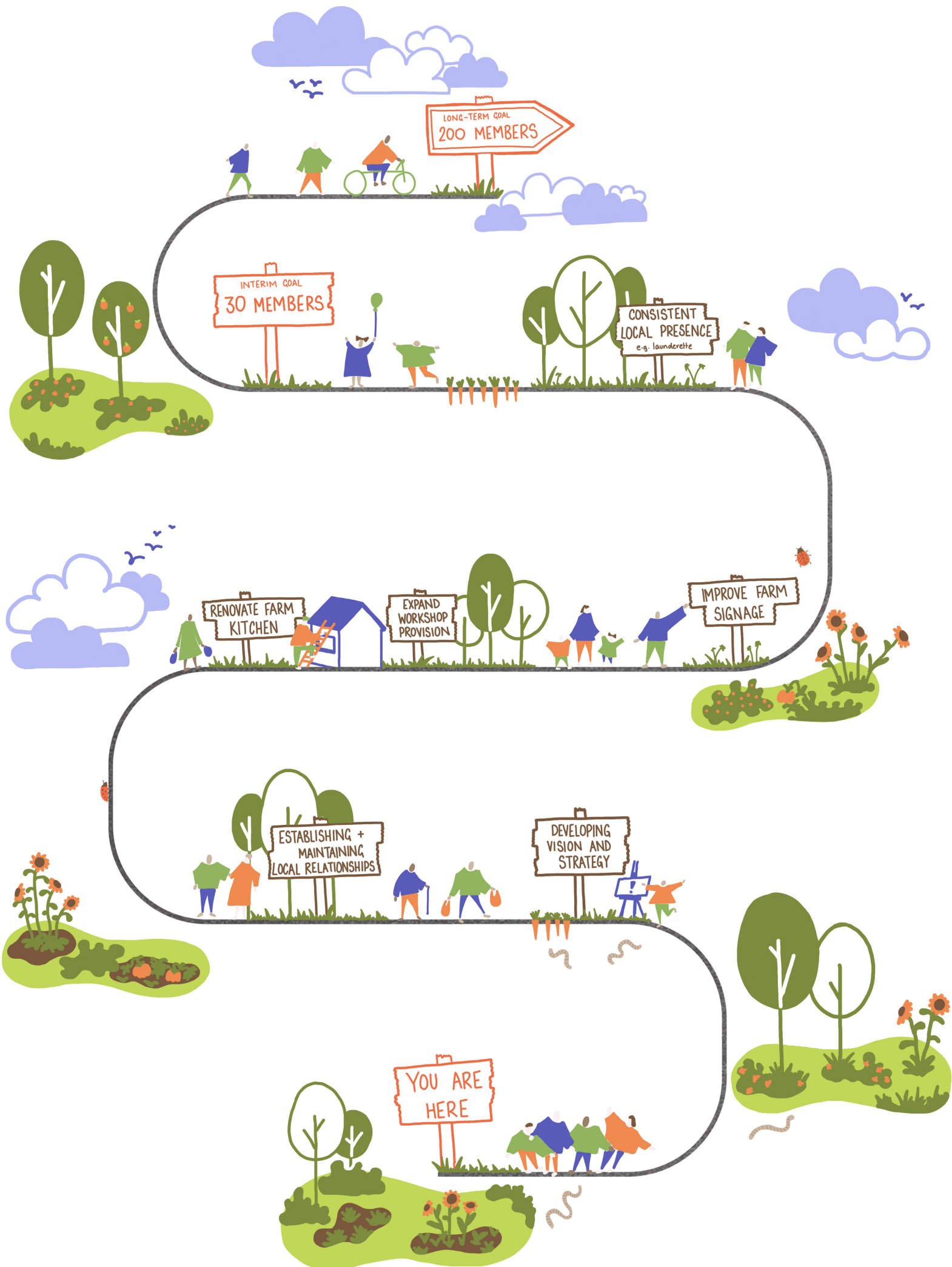


Engagement Strategy





1. Bentley High Street Primary School
2. St Peter's Church
3. West End Pub
4. The Bay Horse Inn Pub
5. Supermarket
6. Bentley My Place
7. Bentley Pavilion
8. Bentley Surgery
9. Well Pharmacy
10. Holden's Chemist





WORKSHOP OPPORTUNITIES

Workshop Springboard



Greenwood Crafts

ITEMS	EST. COST (£)
Foraged greenwood	0
Tools & consumables	20
Printing	5
Safety & setup	10
Total for 6 people	35

Potential Collaborators:
Finnbar Lucas
Friends of Ecclesall Woods

Weaving

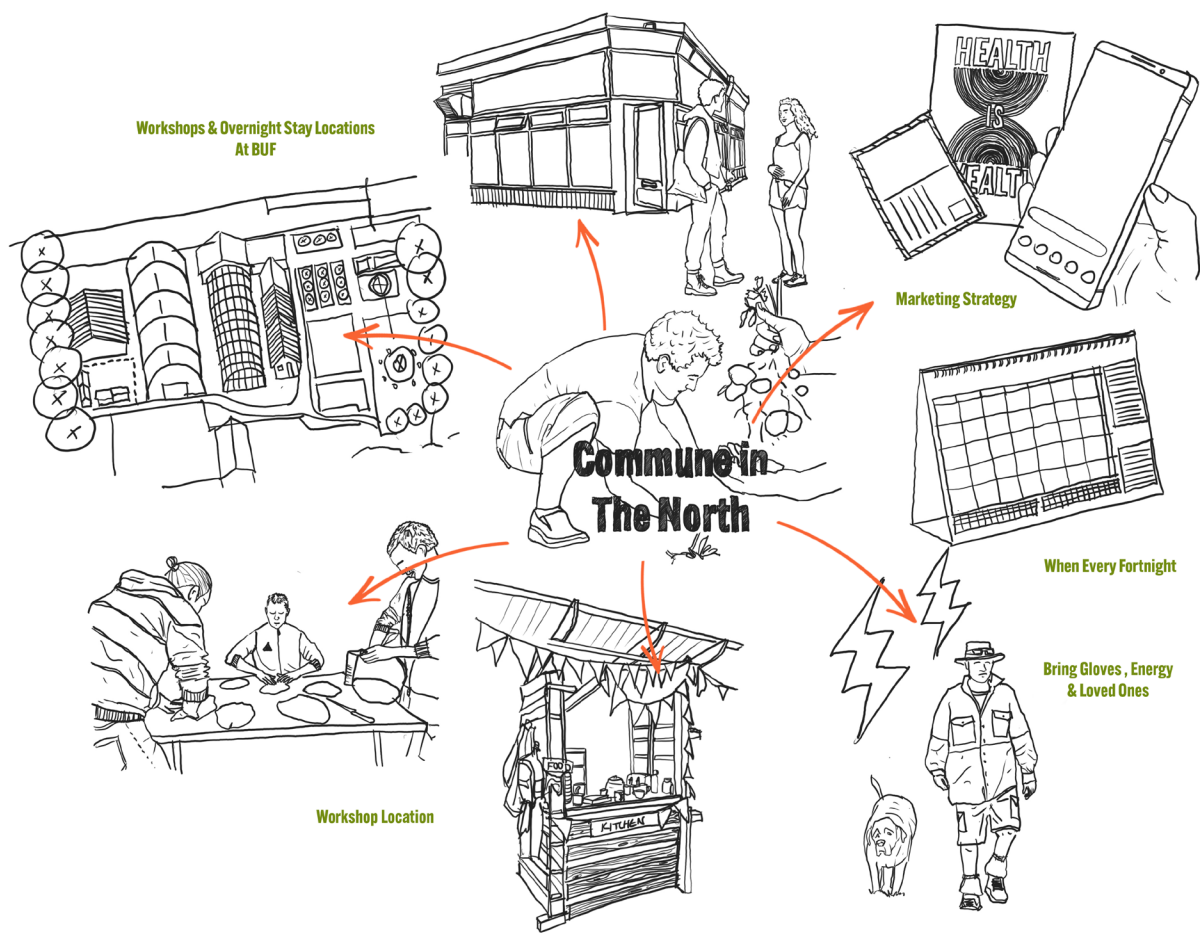
ITEMS	EST. COST (£)
Foraged Materials	0
Tools	20-30
Printing	5
Cleaning	5
Total for 10 people	30-40

Potential Collaborators:
Christine @ Art Room UK

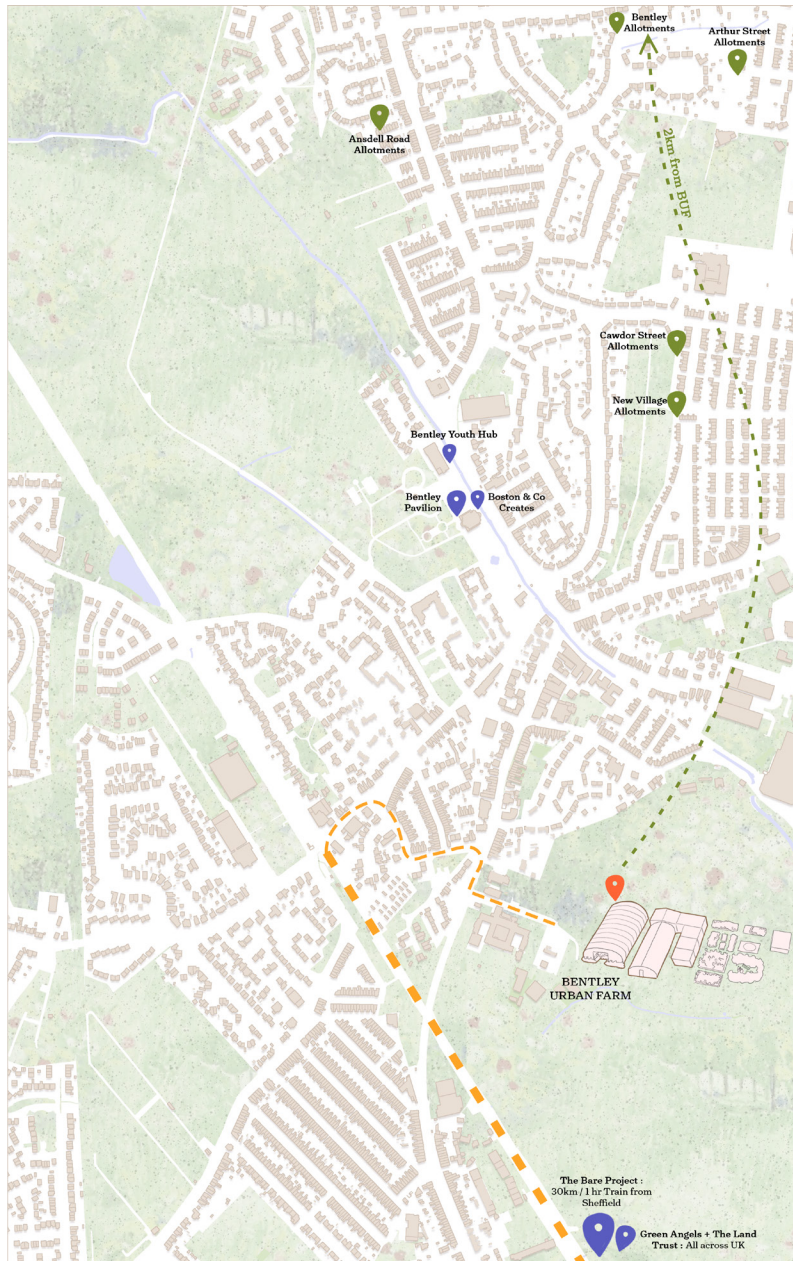
Pickling

ITEMS	EST. COST (£)
Foraged greenwood	0
Tools & consumables	20
Printing	5
Safety & setup	10
Total for 8 people	35

Potential Collaborators:
Social Pickle, Sheffield



Potential Workshop Collaborations



Bentley Allotments

Neighbourhood Allotments managed by Council & Locals

Location: All allotments within a 15-30 min walk from BUF

Contact Person: Ms Emma Wadey, clerk@bentleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

What they need: Advice, Bartering, Materials for Planting



Bentley Youth Hub

A safe space for children and young people to meet friends, participate in activities and have fun.

Location: A 15-min walk from BUF

Contact Person: City of Doncaster Council / Youthhubs@doncaster.gov.uk

What they need: Advice on social action, workshop ideas, and a place to socialise



Bentley Pavilion

A vibrant community hub that provides a range of support, services, events and projects.

Location: A 10-min walk from BUF

Contact Person: Bentley Pavilion - Manna bentleypavilion@manname.uk

What they need: Workshop ideas, more collaborations in the community, and volunteers for community work.

In Bentley



Boston & Co Creates

A new Community Interest Company (CIC) dedicated to enriching the local community through events, workshops, and creative initiatives.

A not-for-profit organisation who reinvest their earnings into projects that bring people together, support local talent, and provide accessible opportunities for learning and creativity.

Location: Bentley Pavilion, Doncaster

Activities:

- Exhibitions, public art projects, or workshops that inspire people to create
- Support for small businesses

Outside Bentley within Reach



Green Angels + The Land Trust

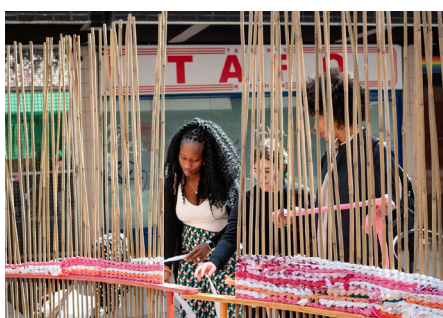
Free environmental training courses for adults

They are a national charity that deals with the long-term management and sustainable funding of public open green spaces as community and environmental assets.

Location: All around the UK

Activities:

- Scything workshops
- Woodland management courses
- Introduction to organic growing
- Bushcraft & survival course
- Biweekly wild yoga classes
- Exhibitions, public art projects, or workshops that inspire people to create
- Support for small businesses



The Bare Project

A theatre and interactive arts company.

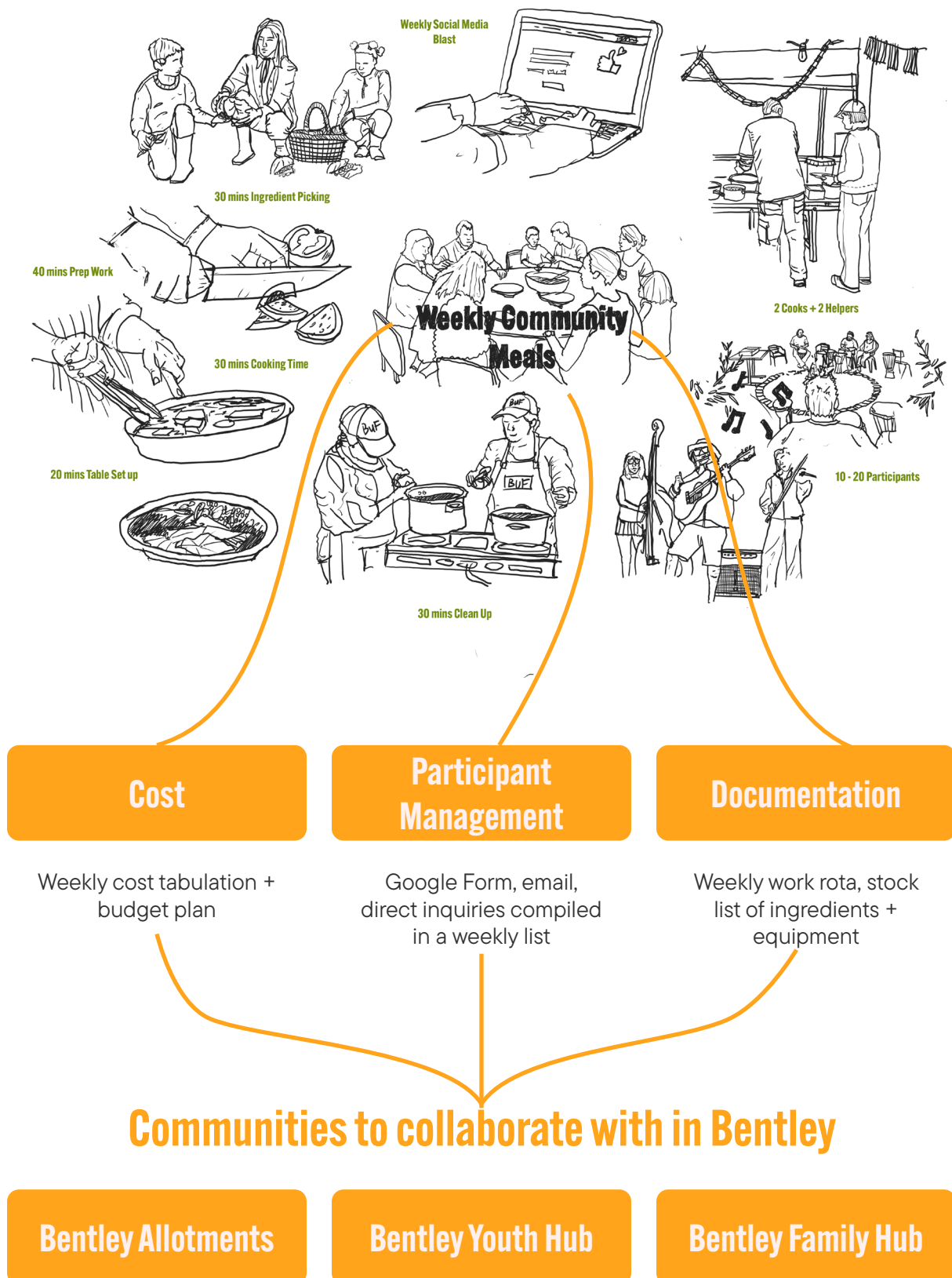
The organisation creates bold, research-driven art that sparks dialogue about the future and social change. Working collaboratively with communities, they make imaginative, playful, and politically engaged projects that foster solidarity and support an environmentally just world.

Location: Sheffield and all around the UK

Activities:

- Hapag Ugnayan Potlucks: An international exchange for female creatives and land workers in the UK & the Philippines
- Common Threads: “together we will weave a ‘living room’ in the city centre” which will be animated with performances, meals, music and workshops.
- The Story Swap Cafe: methodology for story collection and building community collaborations. The premise is simple: gathering stories in exchange for a hot drink.

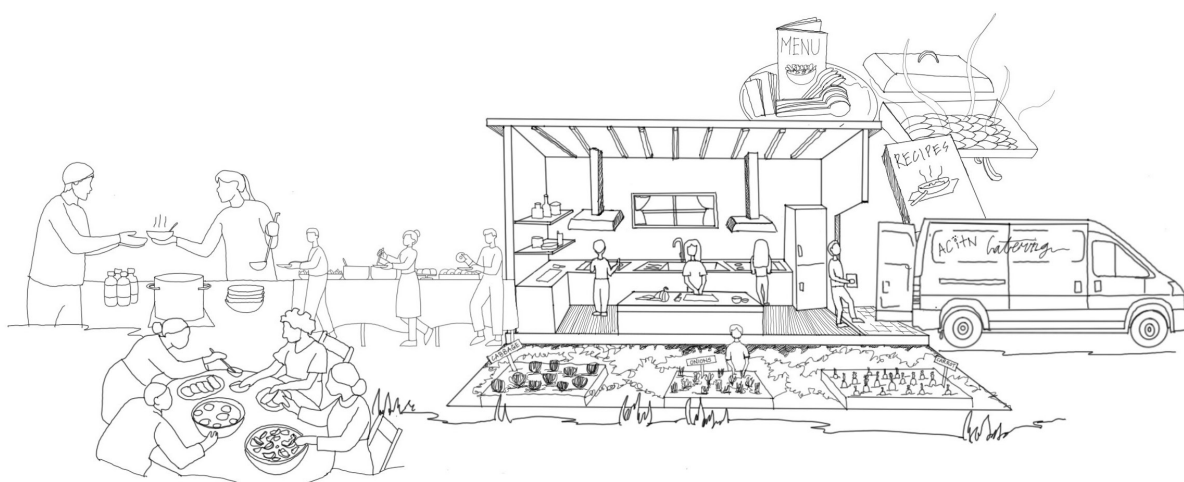
Community Meals Initiative

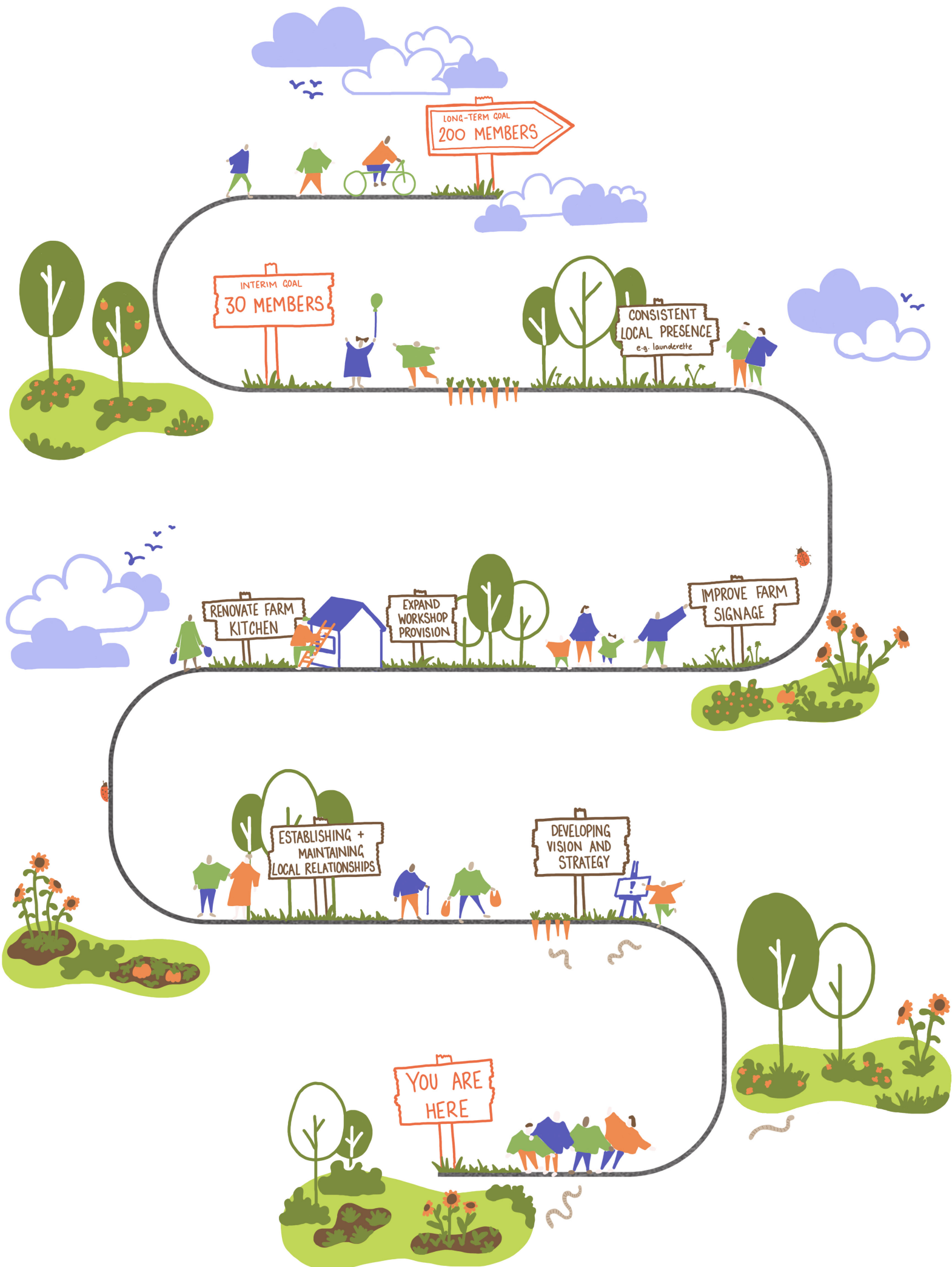


Community Meals @ BUF + Manna Kitchen reopened



Charity meals & small-scale vegan catering







**CONSISTENT
PRESENCE**

Granby Four Streets (CLT)



Who are they?

Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust (CLT) is a community led initiative that strives to provide housing at a continuously affordable price, using 13 houses transferred to them by Liverpool City Council. The trust owns the land the houses sit on, and when the value of the land increases, this money is invested into their communal benefit.

“Creating a thriving, vibrant mixed community, building on the existing creativity, energy and commitment within the community, where people from all walks of life can live, work and play.”

Granby is a neighbourhood in Liverpool that previous to the CLT’s intervention had run into disrepair during a period of failed regeneration initiatives. Their manifesto is to breathe new life into Granby and its High Street to celebrate the character and energy that the area once had.

How do they engage with the local community?



Granby Market

They have a monthly stall at Granby Street to engage with the local community, setting the stage for their future businesses.



Shopfronts

Granby Four Streets’ plan is to renovate the empty shops at the junction of Cairns Street and Granby Street. This is to help the community to revive life at Granby Street.



Greening Granby

Starting with their Winter Garden, Granby Four Streets want to continue planting in public and social spaces.

How do they get funding?

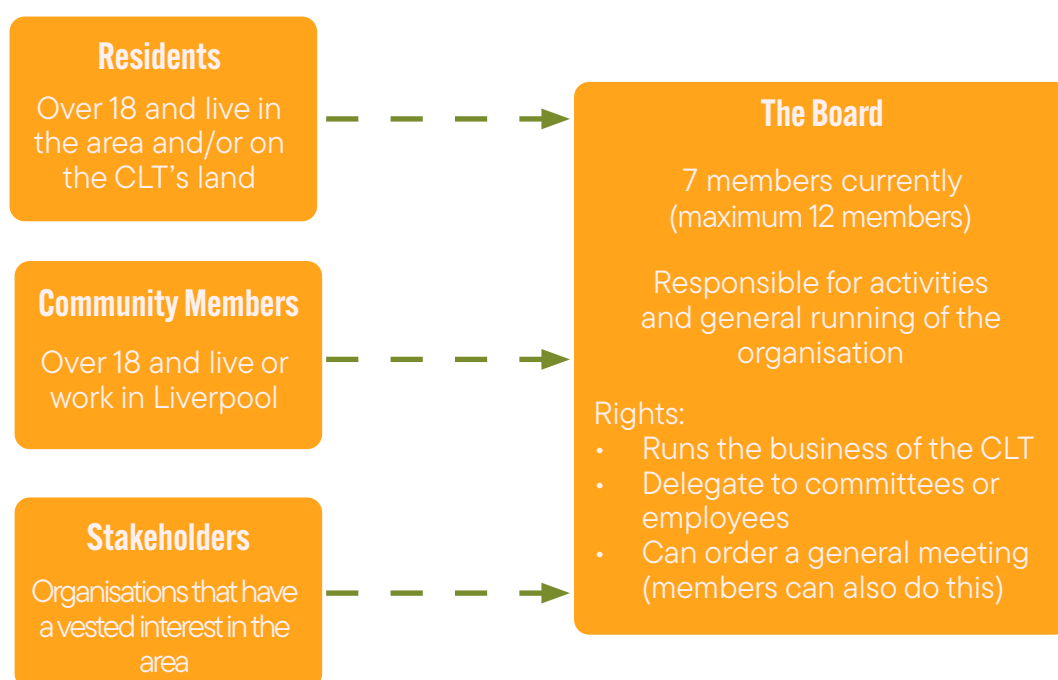
Granby Four Streets CLT have formed many relationships over time with groups who financially support their vision.



The Boards:

The three groups below are those who qualify to be part of the Granby Four Streets CLT's board. The board must have equal representation from each of these groups. The responsibility of the board is to run the organisation and their activities.

The board holds a yearly general meeting within six months of the end of the financial year. At these general meetings, the board changes hands to a completely new set of board members who have been appointed within the rules.



Key Findings

- Granby Four Street has renovated 13 previously unused houses.
- They have started by attending the Granby Market with a stall with hopes to raise funding to bring life back into the shopfronts in the area.
- Their board structure mandates an equal number of members who live in the area as members in the CLT, to ensure all voices are heard.

Squash Liverpool



Who are they?

Founded by artists in 2010, Squash is a community organisation operating in Windsor Street, Liverpool.

"Ours is a 100-year vision, manifesting through arts and culture and rooted in nature; we're transforming our Windsor Street neighbourhood into a people-powered place, known around the world for being a playful, innovative, resilient & loving community where everybody thrives."

Squash is a CIC - Community Interest Company. A CIC is a limited company that seeks to benefit the local community rather than private stakeholders. Squash's ethos is rooted in improving health and wellbeing by implementing their 'essential tools': art, creativity, and food.



How do they engage with the local community?



Seasonal events



Land-based rituals & festivals



Growing food



Cooking



Volunteering



Craft skills

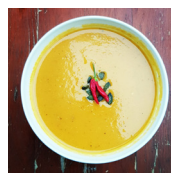


Participatory arts and community design practice



Weekly wellbeing sessions

How do they get funding?



RENTED SPACES

Front Room:

Multi-use space with a maximum 45 person capacity

Weekdays: £35 per hour

Weekends or evenings: £40 per hour

*Discounted rates for community organisations based in L8

Whole Building and Garden:

Available to hire for the full day on Mondays and Tuesdays, or all evenings throughout the week.

Rate: £75 per hour

DONATIONS

Squash have allocated donations so that people know what their money is going towards:

‘Grow it Forward’

To support the garden volunteers who grow produce to give to families in need.

‘Box it Forward’

Donation directly pays for a box of vegetables for a family in need.

‘Soup it Forward’

The donation will pay for someone in need to have a bowl of soup at the Squash cafe.

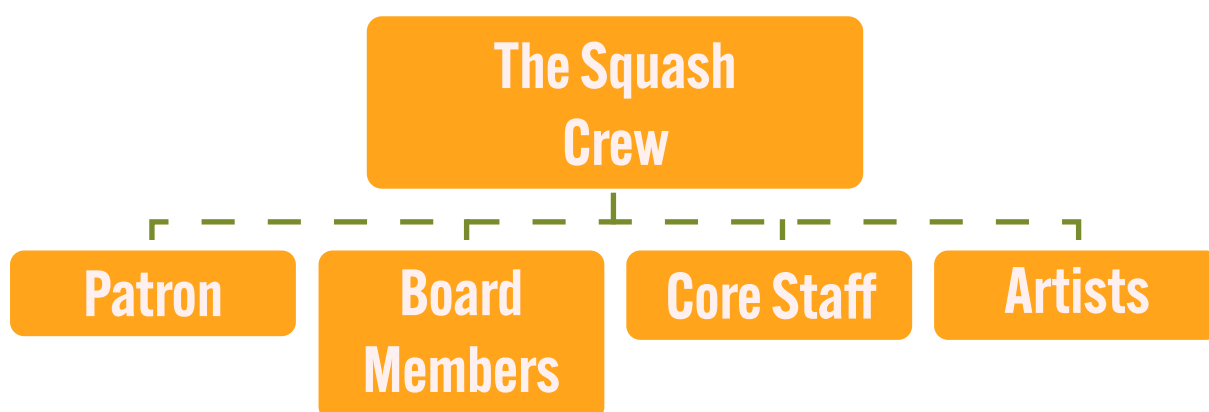
CATERING

Squash offer catering services for a variety of events.

CAFE & SHOP

Wednesday to Sunday
10AM – 4PM

Team Structure:



Key Findings

- Squash centres all of their community activities around art, food and nature.
- The CIC rent out their spaces when they are not using them to maximise what they have to offer.
- They offer targeted donations so people donating can feel proud of where their money is going.

Kitty's Launderette



Who are they?

Kitty's Launderette is a community clothes washing hub in Liverpool for locals to come together, do creative tasks, and socialise. Their heritage is in the historical prominence of wash houses in Liverpool, primarily pioneered by Kitty Wilkinson, the launderette's namesake.

"Our launderette builds on a rich social history in our city and the important role of launderettes and washhouses in our communities."

To ensure the success of their community launderette, the team spent three years researching and engaging with the local community. They also spent time building their business plan and finding funds for the scheme. Since May 2019, the launderette has been open consistently for six days a week.



How do they engage with the local community?



Live calendar of social events on their website



Arts workshops and performances



Children's story time



Anyone can walk in at anytime and use the Wi-Fi



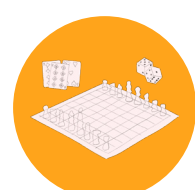
Social local history talks



Free clothes washing scheme



Weekly toast & tea mornings



Board game socials

How do they get funding?

Kitty's Launderette provide a variety of paid services including:

- Drop-off service washes and domestic ironing
- Eco dry cleaning
- Delivery of laundry
- Commercial washing and ironing
- Self-service laundry
- Alterations (partnered with local seamstress Kay Case)



Team Structure:



Key Findings

- Laundry is a necessity based on the basic human need for clothing.
- The scheme had the foundation of three years of research and community engagement to hone in on what the area really needed.
- Kitty's Launderette has a rooted history in the area due to its connection to wash houses and Kitty Wilkinson.

