

Bosavern Community Farm

Autumn 22 Consultation

Introduction

With rising costs (energy, chicken feed, timber, wages), Bosavern is currently operating at a slight loss and if we continue as we are, the farm will soon be forced to face some difficult choices.

During 2023 Bosavern aims to undergo a Development Phase in order to seek investment to develop income streams and to become more inclusive, viable and resilient. The vision of Bosavern becoming a 'thriving Eco Hub' was presented to the community in order to assess the level of demand and support for a number of potential ideas. The proposals outlined were based upon common themes arising from staff, customer and volunteer feedback and internal meetings over the past 18 months. All the ideas presented are subject to in depth feasibility studies, planning permission and funding opportunities. The public event was well advertised and 65 people attended in addition to the helpers from Bosavern.

The options presented, focus on the farm's core priorities of providing access to land, local produce and to create opportunities for learning and sustainable living. In producing local food with community support, it was also deemed essential to develop the farm's financial resilience, to take proactive steps enhance and protect the planet and to create a welcoming and inclusive space conducive to volunteering, connection, health and wellbeing.

Summary

There was unanimous support for the Eco-Hub proposal; an under-cover learning space. 86% expressed support for a revenue project to run alongside providing support for learners and volunteers. As well as indoor facilities, 94% saw a need for more sheltered outdoor spaces and 92% said they would use camping facilities if we had them. There was particular enthusiasm to use camping facilities for educational skillshare and educational events such as an annual Green Fayre.

There was considerable support for a future, full programme of seasonal and educational events and activities once the aforementioned resources are in place. There were comments requesting that any large events should be noise-sensitive, and drug and alcohol-free. With 230 responses to the list of indicative activities, the majority of activities accrued viable interest, enough to warrant holding a range of classes. This demand for eco workshops and events is consistent with many other consultations held in St Just in the 12 years of Bosavern Community Farm. The two current barriers being the lack of staff and budgets to reliably organise, promote and support such activities and a suitable all-weather, welcoming space in which to host them.

The proposal for a canteen received unanimous support, almost half the respondents felt they would use it weekly and over half felt they would use it occasionally. There were many pressing suggestions that it should become a café open to the general public.

The proposal that Bosavern encompasses a Rewilding Centre (as an alternative to a conventional garden centre) sparked particular enthusiasm and contributed to many of the other proposals listed especially retail (90% of people showed interest in buying wildflower plants and saplings) and education, learning & events. 98% of

people were interested in helping to propagate wildflowers or tree saplings of which 62% were 'very interested'. 97% showed interest in attending rewilding talks and workshops of which 66% described themselves as 'very interested', there were comments in support of sharing rewilding machinery and learning with more conventional farmers and lots of comments in support of a green fayre. Comments were also in favour of a shared library of resources (farm machinery-rings, seed banks, tools, communal equipment store).

In terms of infrastructure, 98% of people supported the polytunnel rainwater harvesting proposal. 94% would support a project to upgrade the electricity supply to 3 phase. This would be a prerequisite for any vehicular electric charging points or further energy projects and would probably be a requirement for any new indoor facilities eg café/canteen or the eco-hub learning centre.

Good cycle facilities at the farm would make a big difference in reducing local car use with 49% of people saying they would be 'more likely to travel by bike' and a further 21% saying 'maybe'.

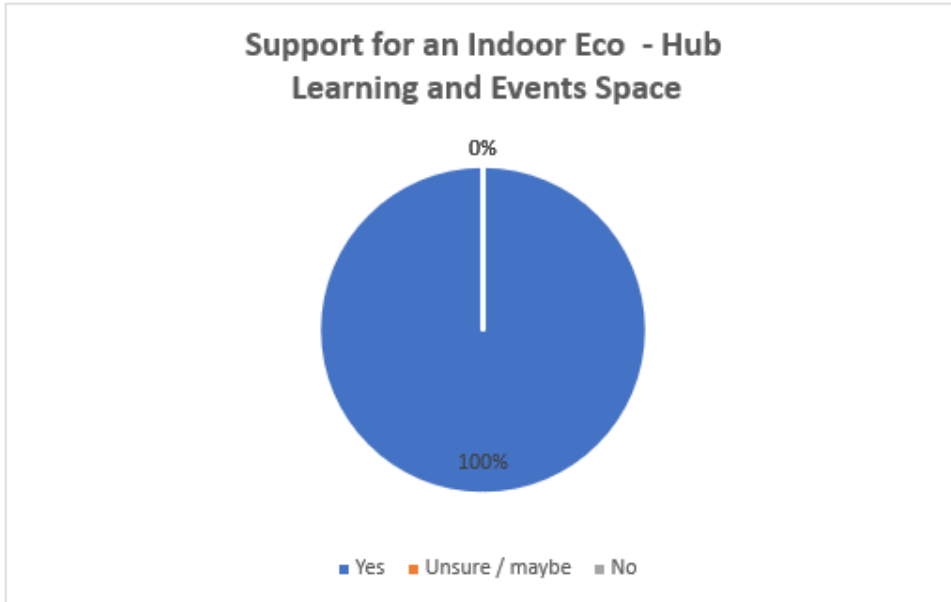
On the topic of retail, 50% of people said they would spend more at the farm if we could offer online ordering. There were comments to suggest that we should shift our range away from luxury items, 82% saying they would spend more if we offered bulk buying of basic items and 92% in the even that we could offer plastic-free refills. There were requests for publicised price lists and an indication of what might be in our veg boxes for each season, in advance. The lack of information and perceived high costs were identified as a barrier to shopping at Bosavern as well as the overall shop customer experience on the journey from initial marketing materials through to payment. 82% supported improvements to make the entrance more welcoming with an enlarged and improved car park, cycle facilities and better signage throughout the site. 15% were unsure.

The general public were in favour of more allotments and the farm currently has a waiting list of over 30 people, sufficient to warrant a second field of allotments. There were some people interested in renting small 1 acre plots for low impact enterprises on a 1 year lease and 96% of people were supportive of outbuilding refurbishment to create workspaces for relevant business but further targeted market research would be needed to assess demand in the small business sector.

On the topic of 1-3 low impact housing units, 82% of people were in favour and the remaining 12% responded with 'unsure, maybe'. All proposals would be subject to feasibility, funding and planning.

Our Vision to Create Building & Spaces to Lift the Spirit

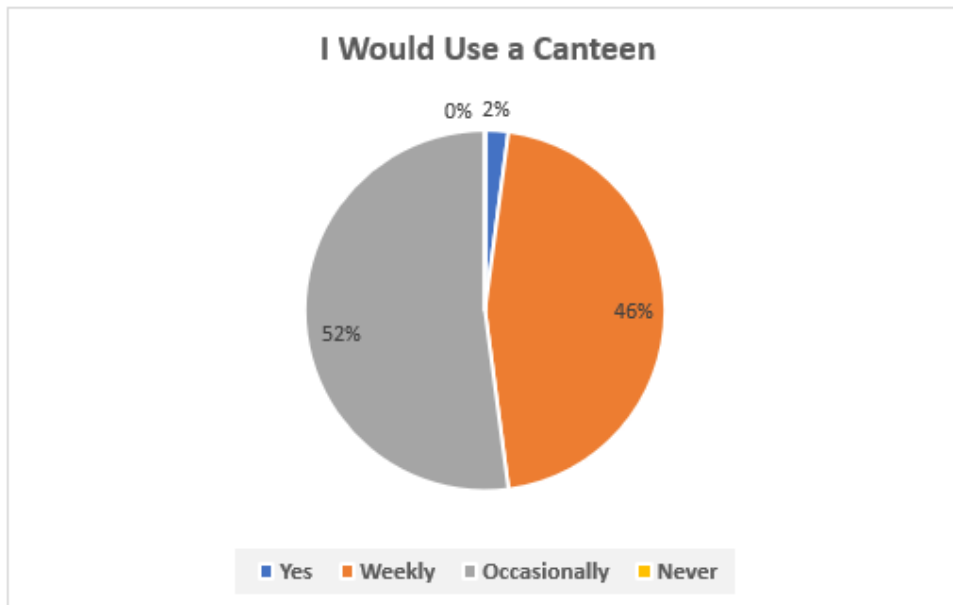
The ECO HUB: an under-cover space for talks, learning workshops, crafts, celebration, events, refreshments & feasts.



Eco-Hub Comments:

- *Become THE 'Eco Hub'/meeting space for the many eco/environmental groups throughout Penwith.*
- *Urgent need for covered space for workshops, classes*
- *Space for shared learning about regenerative agriculture – make it a space which is conducive to conventional farmers, not just hippies*
- *Venue space for hire e.g. workshops, yoga, community gatherings, artists' workshops, talks*

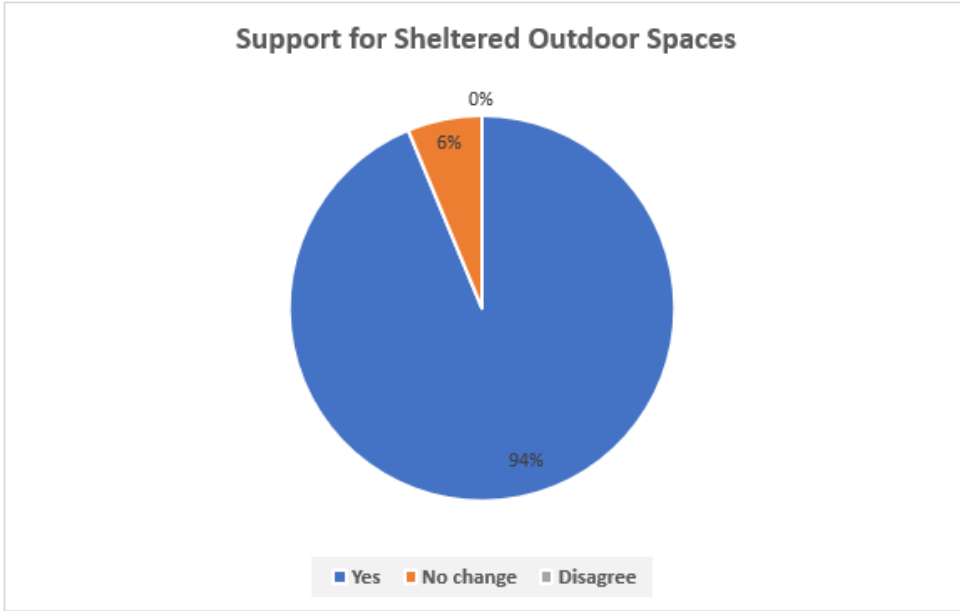
The CANTEEN: A place where all our staff, volunteers, allotmenters and others all feel welcome to share a brew or a bite to eat & meet new people. Serving food using produce from the farm & other ethical suppliers, it would be clean, affordable & run by a mix of trained staff & volunteers.



Comments:

- *Year-round coffee shop/cafe*
- *Coffee shop*
- *Café using farm/seasonal produce. Would be a great way of bringing income to feed into other community enterprises. Could also provide a hub for other activities (crafts/arts/talks)*
- *Alternative to a canteen, go whole hog, turn packing shed into café!! Enabling farm products to be used. Farm to table dining. Sustainable. This would bring more footfall to farm shop and farm. Providing paid jobs all year round. Capturing all the passing tourist trade in summer. This space could then be rented out for events/feasts/facilitate small festivals/gatherings*
- *A decent coffee machine/company offering simply coffees to the public, will draw in customers and awareness, especially if bringing electric bike charging point etc.*
- *Refurbish outbuildings for a Community Café*

SHELTERED OUTDOOR SPACES Our site is very exposed to the elements both in Winter and Summer. We would like permaculture-designed sheltered spaces created for people and for wildlife – spaces suitable for eating under shade on hot summer days; as an outdoor classroom or for relaxation.

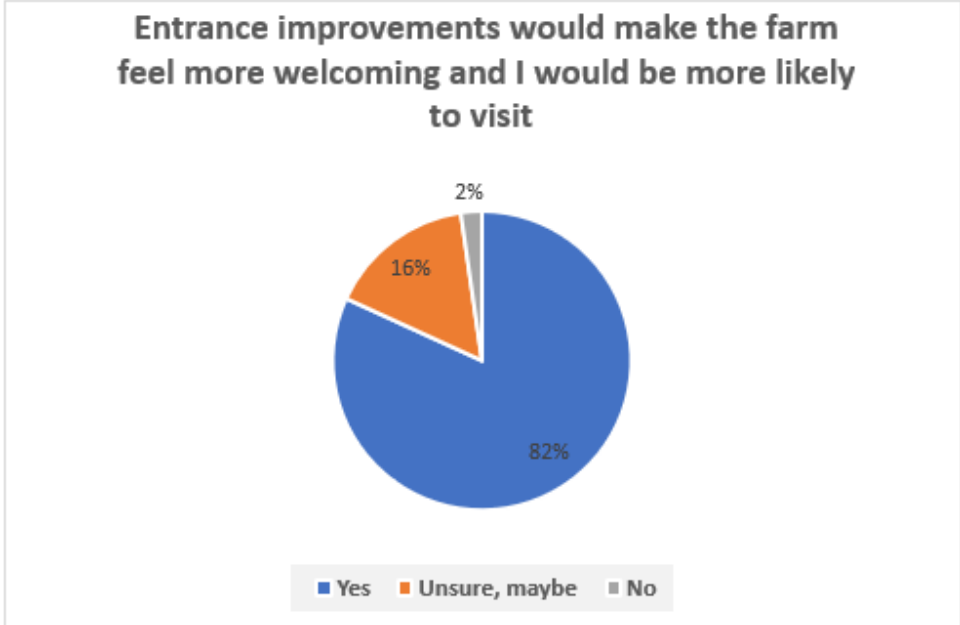


Shelter comments:

Consider using the more sheltered farmyard for your people-activities and move the more industrial activities onto Home Field.

A WELCOMING ENTRANCE

A safe, tidy, well planted entrance with clear signs & paths. The car park is bigger with a bike shelter, electric charging points, good signage throughout the farm including field names & nature trails.



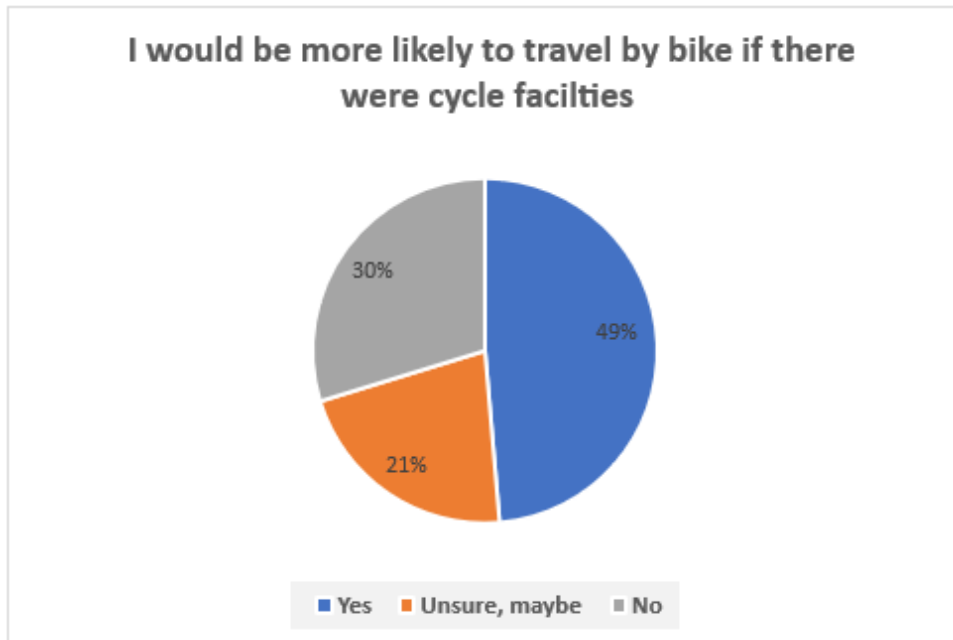
Entrance Comments:

- Some improvement to entrance for bicycles coming off the road would be good (currently very rough?large stones) to preserve tyres – thank you!*

- *The customer journey/experience could be made more customer-friendly and intuitive - from the marketing materials to hear about what's available, to arriving at the entrance and then crossing the farmyard to reach the farm shop.*

A CYCLE FRIENDLY HUB

Our vision is for Bosavern to become a place where cyclists are welcome and we have the necessary facilities such as a bike shelter, a repair kit & electric bike charging points (to use while you volunteer/shop/walk/work on your allotment/attend a workshop or enjoy a brew at the Canteen!)



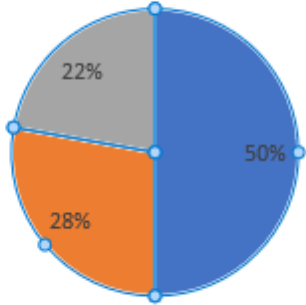
Cycle-Hub Comments

- *'Bike tours (led, off road)'*
- *'Bike repair workshop working with local providers'*
- *'Some improvement to entrance for bicycles coming off the road would be good (currently very rough?large stones) to preserve tyres – thank you!'*

FOOD SECURITY

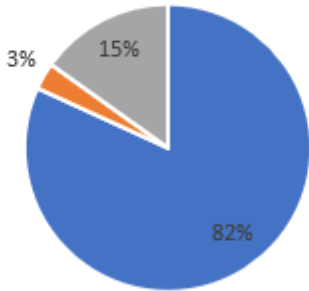
We already send local produce to St Just (Sat am) & Sennen (Tues am) Farmers Markets, we deliver veg boxes across Penwith, to wholesale restaurants & cafes & to individuals (80-100). We have donations to pay for veg boxes for those who otherwise couldn't afford them AND we have our own Farm Shop.

I would spend more if you had online ordering + weekly deliveries (optional)

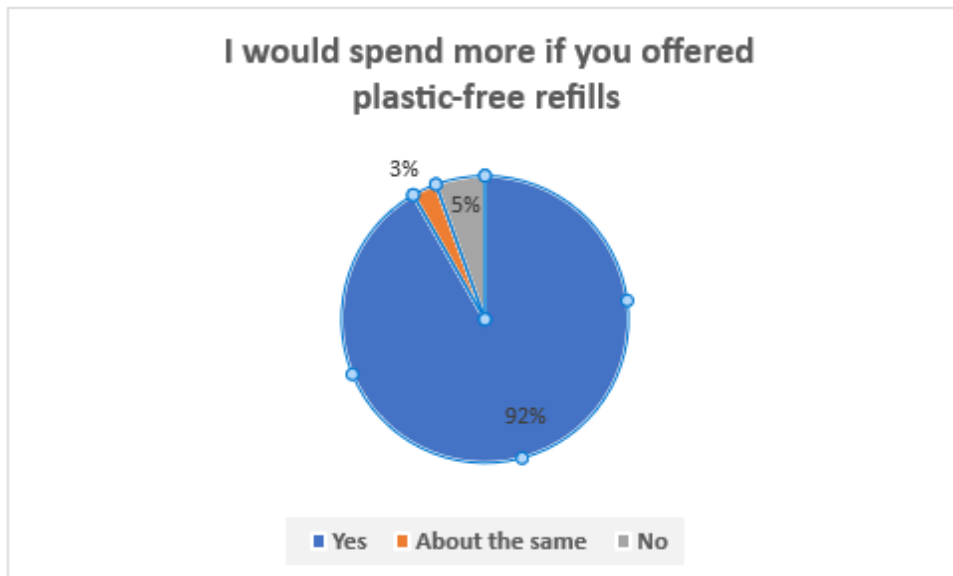


■ Yes ■ About the same ■ No

I would spend more if you offered bulk quantities of basic, ethical goods



■ Yes ■ About the same ■ No



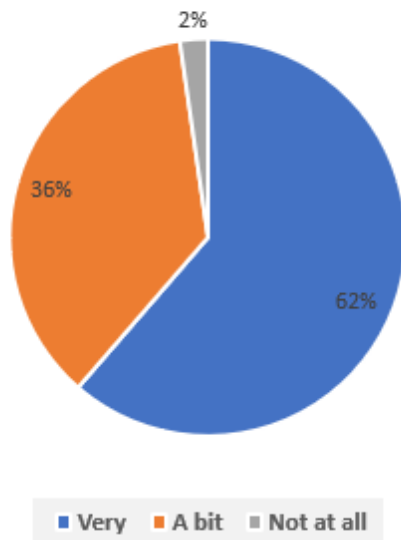
Retail Comments:

- *The customer journey/experience could be made more customer-friendly and intuitive - from the marketing materials to hear about what's available, to arriving at the entrance and then crossing the farmyard to reach the farm shop. Once inside, the people are friendly but you have to be quite determined to find it. It needs to be kept clean and fresh.*
- *Would be great if the contents of the weekly veg box were posted online/in advance – or some seasonal indication of what you might you receive.*
- *In my opinion, a lot of goods are far too expensive. Not the veg but the tins & pasta. They are predominantly luxury items.*
- *Would be fab to have bulk buy refill of all basic goods – a super(lative) market.*
- *Grow low carb Swede/Turnip - V Cornish, V fashionable (Clemo says they grow well)*
- *Products for sale made using beeswax from Bosavern (soap, candles)*
- *Best not to compete too much with other local businesses.*
- *A decent coffee machine/company offering simply coffees to the public, will draw in customers and awareness, especially if bringing electric bike charging point etc.*
- *Pots/compost/seeds: Seasonal for people to grow their own – subscription with instructions.*

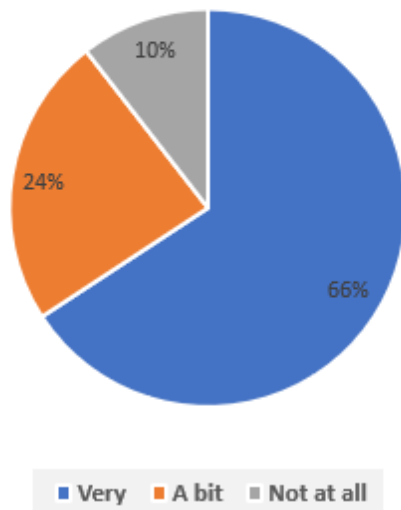
THE REWILDING GARDEN CENTRE

We have a germ of an idea to propagate wild flowers and to possibly create a tree nursery too. So that we can increase biodiversity here at the farm and help supply and teach our customers how to rewild their gardens by selling plants and holding talks and workshops.

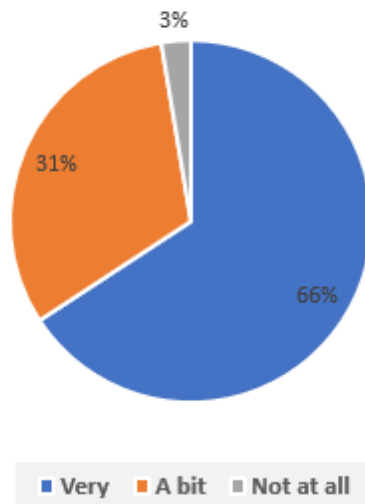
I would be interested in helping to propagate wildflowers or trees



I would be interested in buying plants for rewilding



I would be interested in attending talks/workshops on rewilding



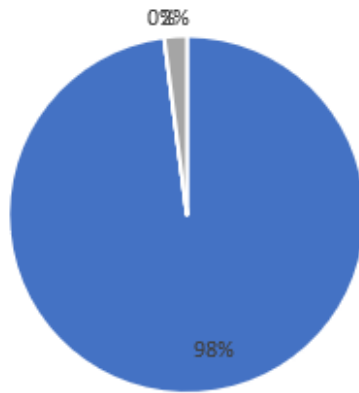
Rewilding Centre Comments:

- *A more local nursery would be great! Hear Hear! Propagate wild flowers which can bring more in pollinators such as bees. It would be great for the environment.*
- *Sell or rent out tools and machinery*
- *Sell pots/compost/seeds: Seasonal packs for people to grow their own – subscription with instructions.*
- *Seed bank: I have seeds to offer (Lyla) And I would be interested in organising/managing it. May be other ways to do it – but I'm thinking a small north facing room or shed.*
- *Seed swap events*
- *Also interested in a tool bank and a store where folk can bring useful things that can be put in organised places on shelves/in bins/boxes as part of being a sustainable community hub.*
- *Machinery-ring to support other local farms with regenerative techniques.*

UTILITIES & RESILIENCE

This Summer we were digging a trench to lay a drain to prevent our allotment field from flooding in Winter (working so far), when the digger hit the mains water pipe. The well was also dry and it was the middle of a drought. NO water for our people or our plants!!

I support the plan to harvest rainwater off the polytunnels

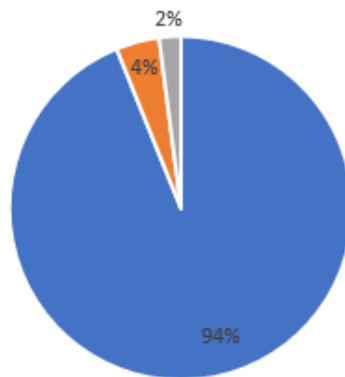


■ Fully support ■ Neither for or against ■ Do not support

Water Harvesting Comments:

- Councillor Brian Clements (Clemo's) has lots of ideas about water harvesting (c/o Ailsa).

I support the plan to upgrade to 3 phase and make sure the wiring is fit for the future

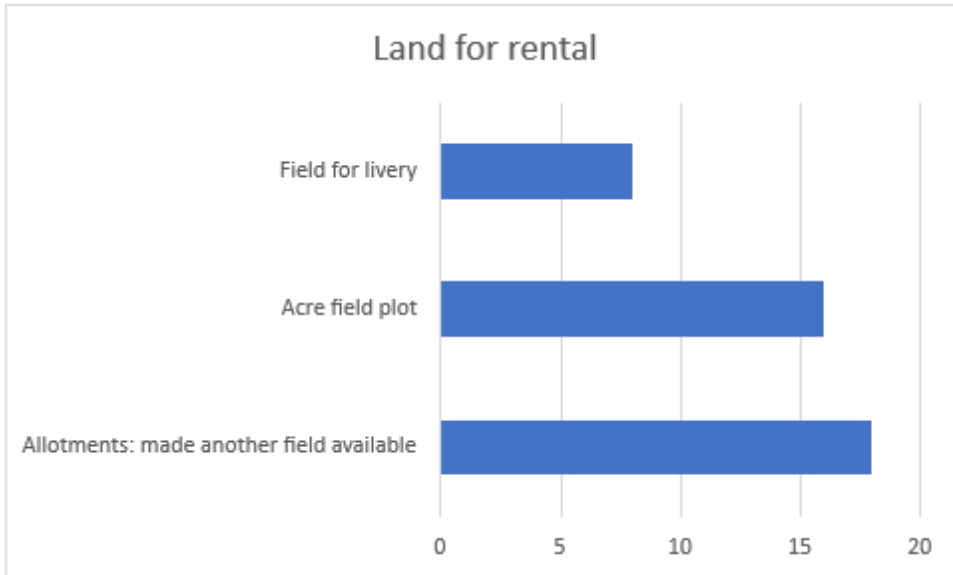


■ Fully support ■ Neither for or against ■ Do not support

PROVIDING ACCESS TO LAND

Would you, or someone you know, be interested in renting a small area of land? E.g.

- Allotments – we would like to make another field available for allotments and improve site access. Subject to planning rules we would like to allow sheds
- We are considering renting 1 acre field plots on a short one year contract for small, ethical, low impact enterprises
- We are keen to gauge interest in renting out land for livery / grazing

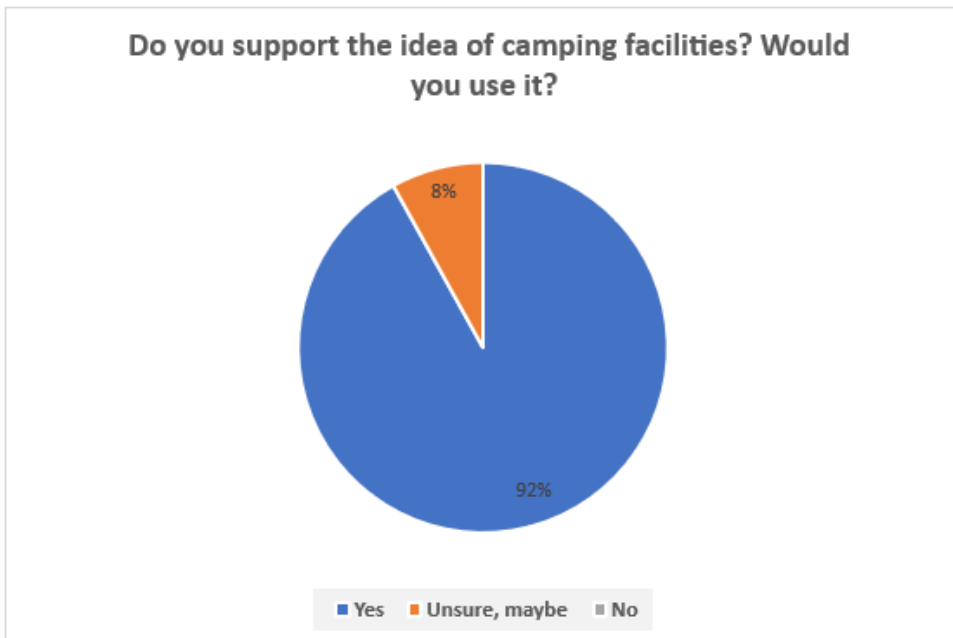


Land Rental Comments:

- *‘Livery – should we be providing space for very hungry expensive pets?’*
- *‘The farm needs money! - better beef cattle grazing amongst the trees & clearings’*

CAMPING

We would like to aim for lovely facilities for camping for individuals and groups. We could also use it for an annual Green Fayre (subject to planning and funding).



Camping Comments:

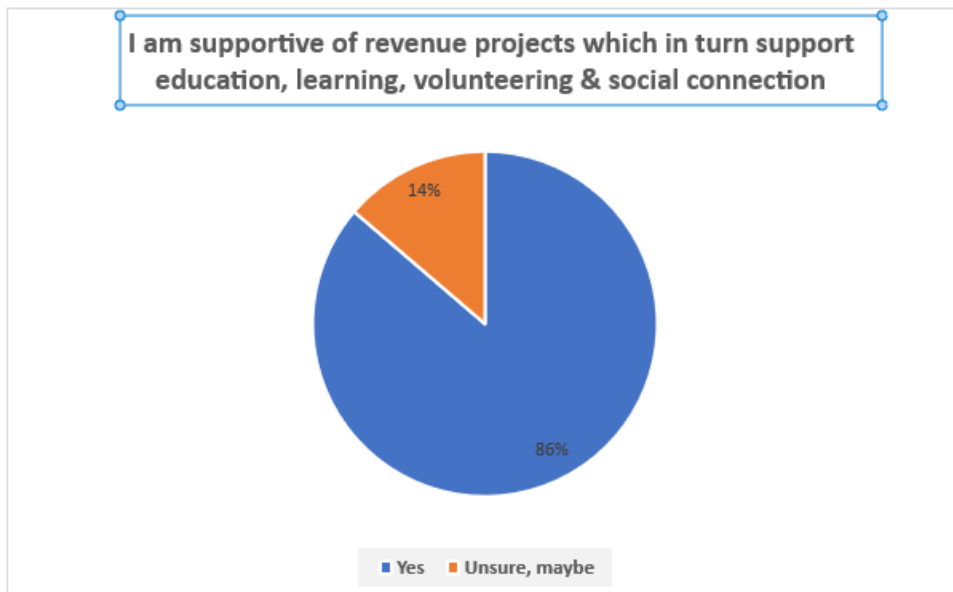
- *Green fayre/festival (drug and alcohol free) would be brill!*
- *Brilliant idea*
- *Mini big green gathering*
- *Green Fayre? Not sure what this is exactly. Would have to be sensitive regarding noise etc.*

- *Yes, get more people to enjoy the space*
- *Would be great to use as a venue to bring groups/retreat*
- *Yes to green fayre festival, big green gathering*
- *Fayre would be great community event, pot luck, bring people together*
- *Those with experience of running green fayres – Beccie Griffiths – Lafrowda & David Smart – Knight (Fran has their contacts)*
- *Camping where people can enjoy the rural area. All that living the stay in a sociable way of living. Natural and with zero impact! Designing how to create a profit for others and for the environment.*
- *Investigate responsible ‘wild’ camping*

EDUCATION, LEARNING, VOLUNTEERING & SOCIAL CONNECTION & the many health & wellbeing benefits of being outdoors with your hands in the soil!

Over the years we have seen many people benefit from being at our farm but currently we have no funding for:

- Support workers
- Schools coordinator (incl youth groups & home ed.)
- Sessional tutors for
 - Workshops/talks
 - Cookery tutor
 - Construction tutor
- Refreshments
- Travel costs
- Clothing PPE

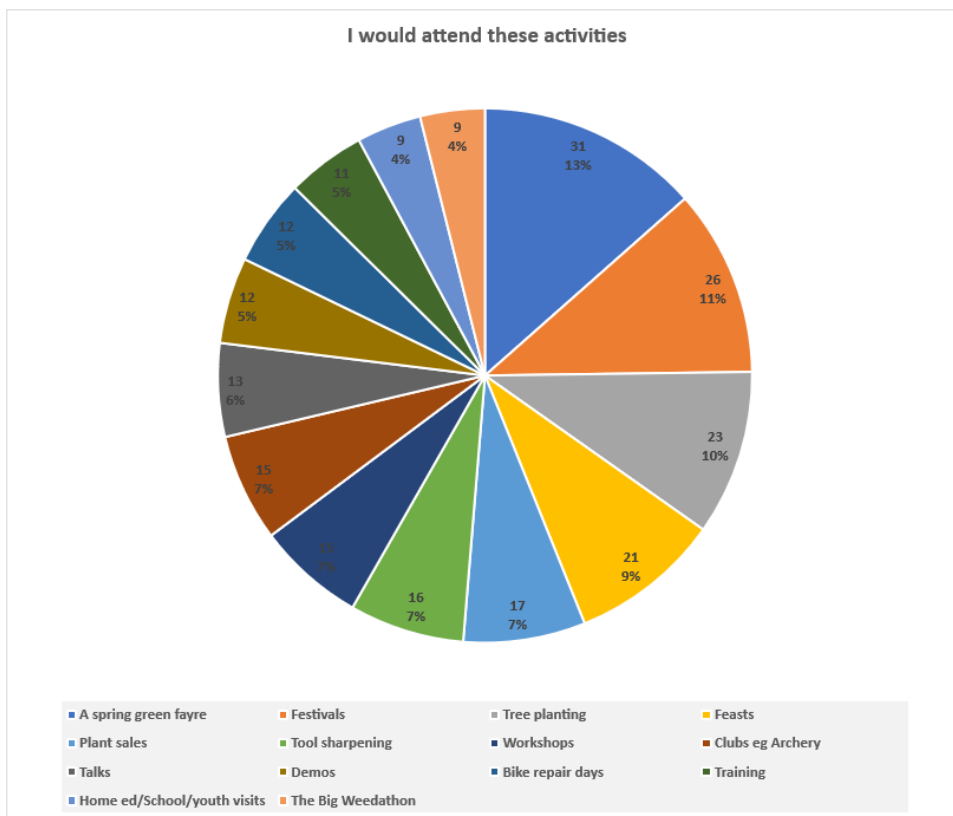


Revenue Project Comments:

- *A second full time grower/tutor is vital for the farms forward security*
- *The WWOOFER volunteer labourers need to have lots of support, encouragement & gratitude as they are vital for the farms success*
- *Explore other community group collaborations such as Scouts.*
- *Collaborate with environmental groups in other areas – joint work to inspire, train, educate & share ideas (e.g. sustainable Hayle)*
- *Training scheme for Cornish building restoration (local skilled builders eg Charlie George)*
- *Engage with local farming community (lets close that farmer/eco hippy gap)*
- *Training events for local small holders/allotment growers/gardeners*

A THRIVING PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

In 2023 we are focusing on grants & income generation. If we get facilities & staff to run events in future, what would you attend?



Event Ideas & Comments

- *SEASONAL EVENTS: 'Programme of events running through the year.' 'Easter Market' 'Bonfire, but no fireworks, on bonfire night' 'Plant more apple trees & have a huge Wassail to bring community together (big fire, music, cider)' 'Christmas market'. 'Spring - bring your own unused or broken garden tools to get sharpened/repaired/passed on to others.*

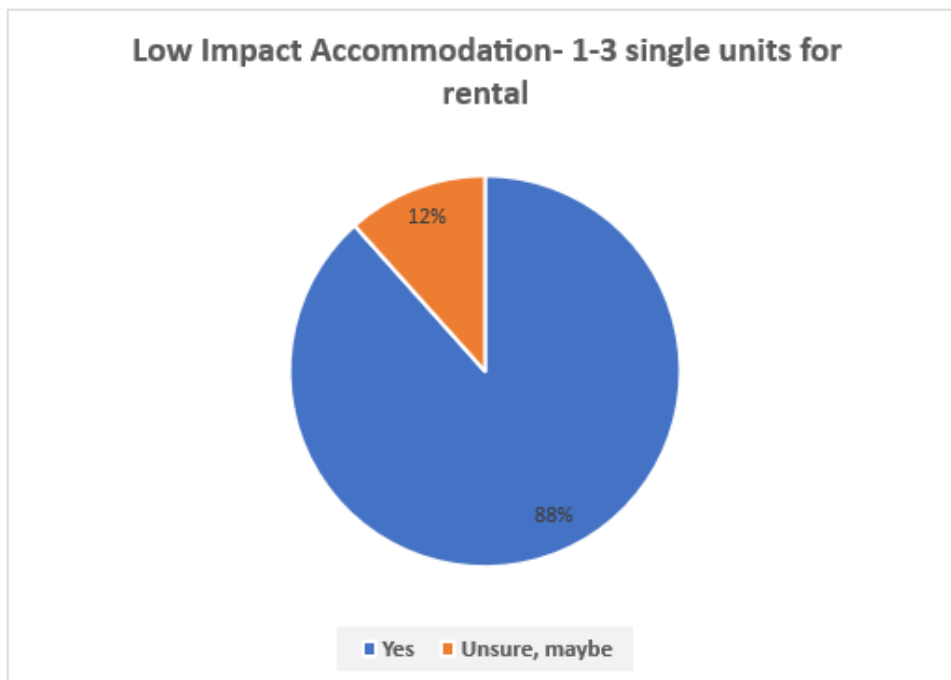
- *CYCLE HUB EVENTS: 'Bike tours (led, off road)' 'Bike repair workshop working with local providers*
- *FORAGING EVENTS 'what weed is that' and 'can I eat it? Plant identification & foraging workshops*
- *Happy to contribute to leading events! (Nick T)*
- *Creation of demonstration gardens - what grows well in windy old West Penwith*
- *Restore the weathervane (teach metalwork skills) - see Paul, Ailsa's husband for details*

LOW IMPACT ACCOMMODATION

Last year at least 4 farm workers were made homeless. We are keen to learn whether the local community would support 1-3 single units for rental (eco build) subject to planning.

E.g:

- 1 farm worker
- 1 local person in need
- 1 visitor on retreat attending our workshops



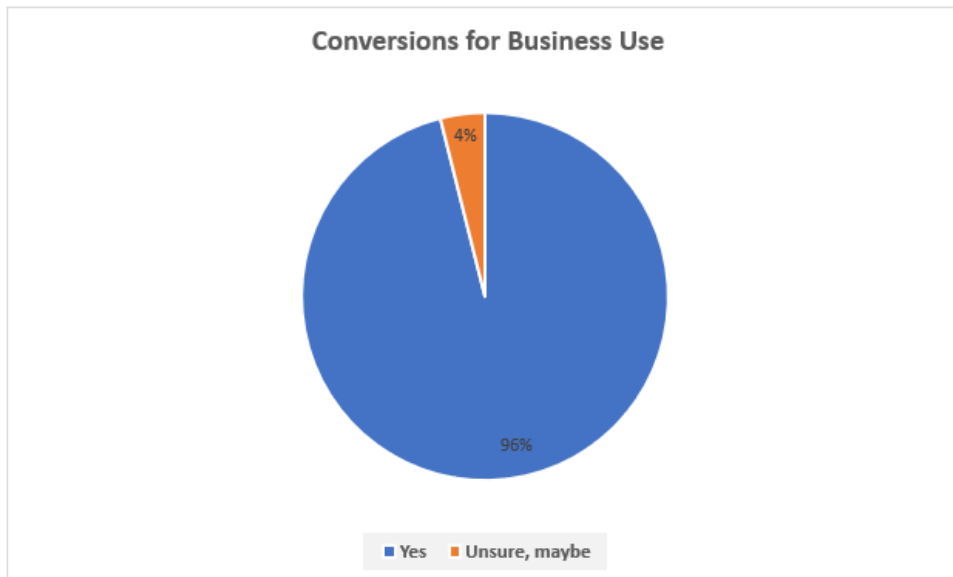
Comments:

- *Rent to locals in off season & to holiday makers in summer to make revenue for more farm projects. Great idea, visitor one be seasonal, local Oct-April*
- *Excellent idea. Provides good quality accommodation for those in need & sustainable income for the farm*
- *Would want to know exactly what 'eco build' was, e.g. size, Turf roofs, single storey, woodburner (not so ecological these days)*
- *Timber built cabins (ref St Just town – Agile Properties) Rosehill & Nancarrow*

- *Perhaps for people transitioning (e.g. from mental health wards) & searching for accommodation*
- *Consider 1Planet initiative to sell/rent small portion of land to families wanting to live off grid and learn to grow. Contracted volunteer hours.*

WORKSHOP SPACE Conversions for Business Use

If we could secure funding to refurbish our outbuildings, we might rent them out to small businesses, preferably something related to food & farming & eco lifestyle e.g. Repairs & Maintenance (general), bike repairs or a bakery.



Workspace Comments

- *Small shared workspace/makerspace for micro businesses to hot desk/share space & equipment*
- *Business hub for local entrepreneurs – rent small office space, internet, printing etc.*
- *Heritage crafts – i.e. green woodturning/basket makers*
- *Art Studios (small – redwing great example of tiny studios to rent)*
- *Craft makers, hot desking*

GENERAL COMMENTS

Priority should be/is farming/food production to local area

PRODUCE: 'Mushroom farming'. 'Apple Trees!'

FUNDING: Are carbon credits an option for tree planting & fallow fields?

ENERGY: 'Get an electric minibus – that could be used for transporting volunteers & deliveries ' 'I would like to see the farm leading the initiative for West Penwith with community energy scheme with solar & wind

generators to fund more paid staff & schemes on the farm. I think the local community would support this – energy independence.’ ‘Windmill’

GOVERNANCE: ‘Become a cooperative – no paid workers, volunteer, investment with benefits of recognising skills that volunteers bring to the table’