



Social enterprise case study:

Sunnyside Rural Trust

NAME: Sunnyside Rural Trust / SRT Trading Ltd

DATE ESTABLISHED: 1990

Short description of trading activity:

Working with people with learning disabilities, we offer gardening improvement & maintenance services; bedding plant and hanging basket contracts; PAT testing services; sales to public and direct to businesses of fresh fruit and vegetables, plants, natural crafts, jams, chutneys, eggs etc

Social aim/purpose:

Day service aimed at helping people with learning disabilities reach their potential and develop skills towards employment, through range of practical activities and training in horticulture, food growing, PAT testing, gardening, woodwork, natural crafts (willow work, wood crafts etc), cooking, sales (on site shop and markets).

Also, environmental sustainability and community development through local food provision, working to organic principles, volunteering and work experience placements, new Community Training Programme (food growing, horticulture, sustainable living etc)

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Why and how was the social enterprise set up?

Sunnyside Rural Trust (charity) has been carrying out social enterprise activity in terms of sales and services since 1990 alongside its charitable activity in order to maximise the training and skills development potential available to our service users (people with learning disabilities). The enterprise activity also enables the Trust to maximise sales of produce and involvement/links to the local community in terms of investing surplus back into our charitable aims.

To further this process, SRT Trading Ltd was set up in November 2011 through which all social enterprise activity is now delivered. SRT Trading Ltd is financially and moral linked to the charity enabling any surplus from its enterprise activity to be reinvested back into the charitable aim of Sunnyside Rural Trust.

What does the enterprise do and how does it do it?

All our services are delivered by our staff working with our service users with learning disabilities. This forms part of their development of skills and experience, enabling them to work towards reaching their individual potential and employability.

We deliver gardening improvement & maintenance services; bedding plant and hanging basket contracts; PAT testing services; sales to public and direct to businesses of fresh fruit and vegetables, plants, natural crafts, jams, chutneys, eggs etc.

Production of plants, fresh produce and cooked produce is carried out at three sites in Northchurch, Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead.

Sales of produce and products are made through our on-site shop, at regular markets/events, and by direct sales to restaurants and other outlets.

We deliver a large scale bedding plant contract for DBC along with a number of regular plants/hanging baskets contracts with local pubs, restaurants and housing schemes.

We deliver a PAT testing service to individual commercial and private clients.

We deliver garden improvement and maintenance contracts for a number of commercial, private and local council clients.

How does the social enterprise structure contribute to success?

The direct link between our enterprise activities and the benefits derived for our individual service users and also the environment and local community cohesion is a large contributor to our success.

Clients (public and private) are keen to support our charitable aims and purchasing our services and products is an accessible and productive way for them to do this.

We bring added value to those purchasing and commissioning our products and services.

What are the plans for developing your organisation?

We are working towards becoming an accredited training centre to enable our service users to gain qualifications through the training and skills development we offer.

We would like to be able to develop our offer to formal work experience and apprenticeship placements to maximise the benefits of our experience and services across the wider community.

We would like to develop our services, particularly in terms of our sales and opportunities to support other local food producers/suppliers to reach the local

community market place e.g. through box schemes, on-site sales, on-line sales.
This would bring further extend opportunities for training, employment and qualifications for our service users and wider community.