



»FAST FORWARD
YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

CASE STUDY

WORKING WITH
DEVELOPMENT IN
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Business Support

Sustainability
Consultancy
Social Value
Asset Transfer

KEY FACTS

MISSION

Through the provision of food, reach disadvantaged and vulnerable communities, help reduce disengagement and encourage individuals to make a positive contribution to their local community.

SERVICES

Regeneration and land reclamation; Support and guidance in food growing; Design and construction of outdoor classrooms; Raised garden beds; Landscaping and ground works; Voluntary opportunities and group working; Community space initiatives; Development of personal and horticulture skills.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Adopting an appropriate legal structure, business planning and financial forecasting

ESTABLISHED

2011

LEGAL STRUCTURE

Community Interest Company

www.gro-organic.co.uk

Gro-Organic CIC

Making spaces green and transforming food culture by inspiring everyone to 'Have a Gro'



When father and daughter team, Steve and Sarah Gill, began realising their dream of helping local people to live healthy and sustainable lifestyles, both were unaware that their venture was a social enterprise in the making.

"From the outset, our aim was to support people of all ages and abilities to understand where their food comes from and what healthy living is. In addition, we wanted to support our community by helping them transform under-utilised areas of land into vibrant food growing or communal gardens.

"Our food education programme – 'Wellies2Bellies' – provides dynamic food growing experiences which enhance land and provide community benefits," says Sarah. "We knew that our legal structure didn't reflect the social purpose of our business and needed advice on what we should do," she explains.

Steve and Sarah turned to Development in Social Enterprise (DISE) for help with their legal structure. »



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» "What we really valued was the time taken by our adviser to understand what we do inside out, asking challenging questions about our future ambitions and helping us to focus our ideas into three work streams – Schools, NEETs and Community Work." Steve Gill, Gro-Organic CIC

DISE recommended that Gro-Organic change its structure from a Company Ltd by Shares to a Community Interest Company, a common legal form for social enterprises. This would reflect the social purpose of the business and open up finance and funding opportunities as well as networks to make important connections with VCS organisations, corporates, schools and health bodies.

"We'd both had careers in the private sector, so we knew about business, marketing and sales, but were new to the VCS. Mentoring helped us to understand the sector locally and be

in the right place at the right time."

Steve and Sarah were advised on business planning, financial forecasts and assisted to identify the impacts and outcomes of their work – knowledge and skills that have resulted in Gro-Organic securing over £90,000 of funding for community work.

"Gro-Organic has come so far this year. We've met our financial targets, built up a bank of valuable contacts and business partners, taken on our first employee as a Landscape Gardener and School Support Officer, and have a pool of 15 fully trained and CRB checked volunteers.

"Much of our new work is through word of mouth, and we owe a great deal to the business support we've received from DISE, which has not only developed our skills and confidence, but given Gro-Organic a great springboard for the future." ■



Development in Social Enterprise CIC

provide bespoke business support and consultancy services for social enterprises, charities, voluntary organisations and start-ups.

Our mission is simple.

Do Good Business and Create Social Value

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YOUR SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

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