REALISE FUTURES

Developing your potential





INTRODUCTION

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD AND THE MANAGING DIRECTOR







SALLY BUTCHER
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Welcome to our annual report for 2017/18, the year in which we celebrated our 5th anniversary of trading by preparing for the introduction of GDPR, introducing a new HR and Payroll system, moving some of our business operations to new (and better) sites and streamlining our management team.

All of these changes, many of which could be seen as highly stressful, were achieved with minimum interruption to day-to-day business and we continue to operate at a small profit in keeping with our community interest company ethos.

We relish the challenge of combining commercial trading, through our six social businesses, with public services delivered by our adult learning, employment and wellbeing teams.

Our social mission is simple: we help people who are disabled and/or disadvantaged with work, learning and life. Maintaining a positive, viable and sustainable presence in a demanding economic and political landscape means we have to make some difficult business decisions about what and how we provide and deliver our services and products.

These decisions enable us not only to survive but to build stronger foundations to sustain and develop our business.

Our adult learners achieved great outcomes making us the highest performing adult learning service in the region, a fact Ofsted recognised when the provision was awarded a further Grade 2 Good at the February inspection. We were thrilled to be selected by our prime contractor as the only provider of the new Work and Health Programme in Suffolk. The holistic approach to supporting adults in finding and maintaining a job whilst providing access to organisations specialising in health and wellbeing, money management, housing and other social barriers matches our company ethos. In addition we secured four new employment support contracts across Suffolk and Essex.

Our wellbeing offer continues to thrive with new activities introduced at each of our social businesses. Our wholefood shop, Poppy's Pantry, was recognised for maintaining a profitable commercial business, while benefiting the community through employment and progression opportunities, when it won the People Development award at the annual Suffolk Coastal Business and Community event.

We have much to be proud of during a year that has seen a focus on continuous quality improvement despite a slight dip in income. As a people focussed organisation we hope you enjoy reading this report as much as we have enjoyed having a hand in making positive impacts on people's lives whilst contributing to the local economy.

THE FUTURE

We will always need to combine consolidation of our existing commercial and service provision whilst horizon scanning for new opportunities that enable disabled and disadvantaged people to succeed and achieve their ambitions and aspirations.

There is greater recognition of issues like mental health, wellbeing and disability employment in the UK; we obviously have an important role to play in promoting and demonstrating best practice and our aims for the future focus on those themes building on existing expertise and success.

Having secured a new threeyear contract we will embed and promote new models of Peer Support for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

We will continue to work with other national bodies to secure ongoing Supported Business packages for existing employees and further develop our offer as a result of the recent changes announced by the Department of Work and Pensions.

Having established an excellent reputation in Suffolk & Norfolk prisons for our social development offer, we aim to increase opportunities for prisons to purchase directly through their new Prison Education Dynamic Purchasing System.

We will continue our development work at St Lawrence Café and the Furniture department to secure the commercial viability of each social business and add to the existing profits of our other departments within RF Works.

We will explore the feasibility of replicating the successes achieved at Poppy's Pantry elsewhere in the eastern region alongside further developing our employment support offer to include entry in the transitions market.

Whether it's adult learning, careers advice, wellbeing support, employment or work experience and progression opportunities in our social business – we are all about people.





THANK YOU'S

We thank all our staff, their attitude and performance, resilience and professionalism as the company continues to evolve and meet the needs of the changing environment around us.

Our relationships with our customers, suppliers, professional bodies and community organisations are pivotal to our continued trading. Special thanks go to:

POPPIES CARE FARM / SUMA / SUFFOLK COASTAL DISTRICT COUNCIL / PHEONIX RISING / DPS TECHNOLOGY MACINTRYRE HUDSON / WISE COMMUNICATIONS / ADNAMS SOUTHWOLD / MUSEUM OF EAST ANGLIAN LIFE ALISON FINDLAY – RHS COMMUNITY OUTREACH / CREATIVE COSMETICS / THE FINISHING POST

BUSINESS LANDEVELOPMENT

2017/18 has seen us secure extensions on current contracts and successfully win new contracts.

We are the ONLY provider in Suffolk who are sub-contracted to deliver the Work and Health Programme.

We PASSED the due
diligence assessment
in order to tender for a place
on Suffolk County Council's
Framework for Daytime, Evening
and Weekend opportunities.

A 2-YEAR extension
for the Provision of
Supported Employment
Services for Adults with
Disabilities and Adults with
Mental Health Needs across Essex.

A 1-YEAR
extension
for the provision
of adult learning
across Suffolk.

4 x Building

Better Opportunities

supply chain contracts in

Suffolk and Essex.

Additional supply chain contract with Shaw Trust to deliver life-skills provision in the prison community.

STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018

	2018 £	2017* £
Turnover	6,619,802	7,495,707
Cost of sales	(3,911,873)	(4,165,953)
Gross profit	2,707,929	3,329,754
Administrative expenses	(2,658,584)	(3,198,015)
Operating profit	49,345	131,739
Interest receivable and similar inco	me -	17
Profit before tax	49,345	131,739
Profit for the financial year	49,345	131,739
	_	

There was no other comprehensive income for 2018 (2017:£NIL) *As restated





BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2018

	2018	2017
Pinal manta	£	£
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	68,814	69,254
Current assets		
Stocks	54,799	76,497
Debtors	575,363	418,211
Cash in bank and in hand	36,234	387,771
	666,396	881,479
Creditors: amounts falling due		
	(639,478)	(904,346)
within one year	• •	
Net current assets	26,918	(22,867)
	<u> </u>	(22,867) 46,387
Net current assets	<u> </u>	<u> </u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf by: **S Butcher** Director

LEARNING & LOEVELOPMENT

The Learning and Development division is a personal and professional learning service that provides government funded, first rung learning opportunities to adults facing economic, educational and social disadvantage.

REALIS = FUTUR = S

Learning and Development

We believe learning is for life, we are not a college or a school, we do things differently, providing a learning service in the community, with the community, for the community.

The primary purpose of the service is to raise aspirations and educational achievement levels to support the economic and social well-being of the community. Active engagement with local voluntary and community organisations, in addition to effective professional relationships with key referring agencies, other FE providers and statutory services, is essential to achieving this.

We deliver the majority of the adult and community learning contract funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, through Suffolk County Council. In 2017/18 the terms of the contract with Suffolk County Council changed whereby management of other subcontractors was transferred from us back to the local authority. Despite the reduction in income, achievements remained the highest performing outcomes for learners in the eastern region.

"A lot more laid back than college"

"My tutor is really patient"

"My tutor has made a real difference to my attitude for learning, I'm learning more and enjoying it which is even better!"

"I am enjoying the course which is helping me to get into University hopefully"

IMPACT STORY:

Kate MacDonald: I was encouraged to look into the classes by a job club I was attending in Bury St Edmunds. I had been off work due to mental health issues and I was feeling very nervous of starting anything new!

The group was friendly and small enough so that we could work at our own pace and get the necessary help when needed. I can honestly say that I always looked forward to my classes, learning something new and having a rhythm to my week was incredibly important to my mental well-being.

I passed the IT class and felt confident to try another so I gave the maths a go. I am dyslexic and have always felt stupid with maths. Having a friendly, kind tutor makes all the difference. I am grateful to each and everyone of them for all the ways they have encouraged and supported my learning. My confidence and self-esteem has been built up and the negative labels I had carried around since school have been replaced by positive ones. I can honestly say that its because of my classes at Realise Futures that I had the courage to sign up to a Foundation course in Counselling at a local FE college.



"I was totally surprised how much I enjoyed learning any nerves soon disappeared"

Secured 91% of SCC Education and Skills Funding contract for adult learning

Retained Grade 2 Ofsted rating and Matrix accreditation









Moved to a new Adult Learning Centre in Stowmarket

EMPLOYMENT WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

We deliver a variety of employment programmes across Suffolk and Essex. The dedicated team of Employment Advisors help people learn new skills and find the right job for them, via a range of support activities.



We offer a personalised service that supports people to learn new skills and find the right job for them, delivering a range of employment support activities. We provide an 'in-work' service, so that people have the on-going support they need to stay in work and progress in their chosen career.

2017/18 has seen growth in our Employment division with the securing of sub-contracts for 4 Building Better Opportunities projects working with organisations across Suffolk and Essex.

We are the only sub-contracted provider in Suffolk to deliver the Work and Health Programme.

"The programme has given me confidence. To me personally the project has made me a lot less self-conscious and helped me discover skills I didn't think I had."

ESSEX SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE:

343

people supported into Employment in Essex (82% of the contractual target after year 3)

WORK CHOICE:

Achievements against our contractual target:

- ✓ 100% job starts
- 84% stayed in employment for 13 weeks or more
- 96% have sustained employment

BUILDING BETTER
OPPORTUNITIES
PROJECTS:

197

Total number of people enrolling onto the programme across Suffolk and Essex (89.95% of contractual targets so far)

IMPACT STORY:

Jessica signed up to the Realise Futures Essex Supported Employment programme, she has a severe sight impairment which means that she can see but the clarity and field of vision is very poor.

Jessica uses a white stick whilst out and is very confident with people and is an independent traveller. She was employed as a shop assistant at Marks & Spencer, 8 hours a week and held this position for 2 years. She was supported within the role by her employer and Lee, In-work Support Advisor at Realise Futures.

Jessica had always wanted more hours and the opportunity to work in a different shop and learn new skills, but had found online application forms difficult without support. Lee and Jessica worked together to look for and apply for suitable retail jobs within the local area. Lee supported Jessica in completing application forms both written and online and attend interviews she had.

Jessica was successful as a Sales Assistant for Debenhams and started in January 2018, 8 hours a week on a Saturday. The employer is supportive and accommodating and her confidence has grown. Her journey with the employer has been closely monitored and supported by Lee with regular contact with them both. Jessica had always said the one thing she wanted to do but couldn't, was to use the tills in store as the LCD screens are small and Jessica is unable to see the words.

Lee was able to source and buy a suitable magnifying screen to put over the LCD till screen and keyboard to allow Jessica to work. This has allowed Jessica to be till trained by the employer and further her skills within the retail industry.

Jessica has recently had her contracted hours in both of her jobs increased to 18 hours a week.



RF VVORKS WORKING FOR EVERYONE

RF WORKS exist to provide products and wellbeing services alongside work placements, employment and training opportunities for those who are disadvantaged or disabled.

Income is generated through the sale of products and services that include business to business and private customer sales of products, as well as local government and individual customer purchase of the services available at each site.

The primary aim of this division is to enhance the commercial success of each business, to enable us to increase our provision of work and wellbeing opportunities for people who frequently face barriers to meaningful employment and social engagement.

Our social businesses are situated in Suffolk and cover a number of vocational sectors i.e. Horticulture, Catering, Fulfilment, Manufacturing, Retail.

RFWORKS
WORKING FOR EVERYONE





ECO FURNITURE

Our Eco Furniture business designs and manufactures 100% recycled plastic furniture and play equipment.

Our team works with the customer to discuss requirements from concept right through to design, manufacture and installation.

During the 17/18 financial year, we made the decision to relocate the furniture team to our HQ at the Whitehouse factory site which is proving a success as business improves.

Our focus has been on B2B relationships and consolidating suppliers, revising pricing and digital investment made to the online ecommerce shop.



ST LAWRENCE CAFÉ

If it's coffee and a cake - and a welcome break from shopping – that you'd prefer, you can find a very warm and friendly welcome in our cafe run by Realise Futures in Ipswich.

Our cafe is in a truly unique venue. The historic St Lawrence Café has incredible acoustics and the country's oldest working church bells this venue can cater for every need.



POPPY'S PANTRY

Poppy's Pantry operates in the heart of the community in Melton, Woodbridge. Its social mission is to give people who are disabled and/or disadvantaged opportunities to develop their skills and confidence and to progress in learning, work and life.



Part of Realise Futures

Poppy's is a bright and airy wholefoods retail unit, which has a farm shop-look. Specialising in ethically sourced products, such as Fairtrade, the shop has a devoted customer following, due to its extensive range of vegetarian and vegan products, gluten-free, dairy-free food, and many other special dietary products which are hard to find elsewhere.

Also popular are its refills of eco-friendly household products which, again, are hard to find in the local area.

Every Tuesday, we run a pop-up community cafe in St Mary's Church Centre, Woodbridge. Selling hot and cold drinks, delicious homemade cakes and light lunches, the cafe is the ideal place to get together and meet other people in the community.



wellbeing placements attend the wholefood shop site and cafe

IMPACT STORY:

Heather had an RTA, which damaged her lower leg, she then got a viral infection in her brain, which has left her with speech difficulties and mobility issues. She moved in with her mum in an isolated and rural part of Suffolk which made it difficult for Heather to engage with other people in the community and participate in work based projects.

The house Heather was living in was impractical for her level of mobility so we worked with her to contact the appropriate people to move somewhere more suited for her needs.

Heather successfully moved out into her own house in central Ipswich. This has massively built up **her independence** as she travels independently to work using buses and trains; she also cooks and cleans around her home.

Heather comes to Poppy's Pantry 4 days a week and works in the shop serving customers on the till, she does a wide range of other jobs in the shop such as re-stocking the shelves, adding stock to our till system, customer service, stock rotation, pricing and refills of Ecover and Ecoleaf products.

Since joining Poppy's Pantry Heather's confidence has vastly improved, she interacts with customers on a daily basis and has built up an excellent rapport with our regulars. She also has formed close friendships with other people attending Poppy's and gets on well with everyone.

We are currently supporting Heather to assist her to access the appropriate financial support from Heather has an independent trip to Japan, on her return, we will support her creating a CV and enrol in the Work Choice Placement scheme with Realise Futures to progress her into paid employment with a dedicated employment advisor.



FULFILMENT & WELLBEING

We get it packed, wrapped and dispatched! Our packing team offer people a variety of jobs to suit their abilities, including folding, counting, assembling cartons and labelling, with easy to follow guidelines.

Fulfilment has a number of long-standing and repeat contracts. In 2017/18 we attracted new customers, one of which was the Suffolk based brewers, Adnams Southwold. We have also seen a significant increase in the number of wellbeing placements at our Whitehouse Site.

62

wellbeing
placements
attend the
Whitehouse site



New contract secured with Adnams Southwold brewery

"It's a pleasure to work with local organisations which have a similar ethos to Adnams regarding social responsibility and supporting local communities"

"We started working with Realise Futures when we had a significant re-pack job come in, it required a quick turnaround which we were unable to fulfil internally. Realise Futures were able to facilitate this for us at short notice and worked to our exact specification. Since then we have worked together on several gift pack projects. Lee and the team have always been extremely accommodating, helpful and professional." **Operations Manager, Adnams**

IMPAC STORY:

Email received from the main carer of placement Richard Owens, 30th January 2018:

Hope all is well with you. Just thought that I'd give you a bit of feedback re Richard:

I just wanted to let you know that Richard bounded out of the taxi yesterday afternoon with a big beam across his face and a spring in his step. When I asked how his day had been – he responded 'it was brilliant! – just the best!'.

Since being at RF – he has grown each day – he is now confident, willing to share news about himself and actually is beginning to listen to others. He is talking about having friends for the first time in his life! (That's pretty stunning seeing he is 55!) He is taking pride in his appearance, he looks forward to his Mondays and Wednesdays more than anything else in the world and he really feels as if he is making a contribution by being part of a team that he not only respects and likes but also feels as if there is a point to his life!

I can't ever express how RF – and specifically you (as you have personally taken so much time and effort to help Richard – way beyond what could ever be expected anywhere – let alone in a work place) – have made such a difference – not only to Richard but also to my own and my husband's lives.

It has been challenging in the past few years as it was never really part of my life plan to have my brother living with me full-time and there is a lot of history.

However, the changes in Richard have made such a difference that I honestly could say to Richard this Christmas Day that I am actually proud to have him as a brother and a friend in my life – which I honestly never thought would be the case.

You truly are amazing – the difference in Richard is so stunning and I honestly do believe that this is so much down to you. Please keep up your fantastic work – I totally appreciate that you must have really difficult days and constant challenges – but your results are truly beyond belief. Your gentle approach and experience is truly stunning and an inspiration.

Thanks Roy – can't think where we'd be if we hadn't met you and your wonderful team.

HORTICULTURE

NOWTON PARK NURSERY:



Take a stroll through Nowton Park in Bury St Edmunds where you will find Nowton Park Nursery within a Victorian walled garden.

There you will find a colourful array of plants to buy or order, including seasonal hanging baskets and plants for your pots and containers.

We provide plants and displays to businesses on a commercial basis as well as commercial gardening services. We continue to attend community events across the region.



GROWING PLACES:



We offer fresh, seasonal vegetable deliveries to our local communities through our popular vegetable box delivery scheme.

On our two-acre site in Claydon, we grow produce all year round and create garden ornaments from local willow, bug and bird boxes from locally sourced wood.

We take great pride in providing a friendly, reliable and quality service that contributes to the health of our local community, local environment and local economy. When you buy from Growing Places, you are also supporting other local growers and suppliers too.





IMPACT STORIES:

Stephen Fuller: Stephen has been attending Growing Places since 1999. He works very hard at the jobs he enjoys including tidying outside areas, cleaning inside, watering and seed sowing.

At a previous review Stephen expressed that he would like to join the Endeavour House team once a week to help man the Growing Places market stall. Stephen has now been helping at Endeavour for over a year and has developed new skills in loading and unloading the van, setting up the stall, using the till, greeting customers and packing bags.

This new opportunity has helped Stephen in many ways. He has become a good team player and improved his communication. He has improved his understanding and concentration skills. He takes pride in his work and enjoys the social aspect too.



Even though there has been a decline in Stephens mental and physical ability due to dementia, he has not only retained skills at Growing Places but also with the support of staff on a one-to-one basis he has developed new skills.

"Matt was able to demonstrate the sowing technique to less able workers and encouraged them to remain focused when they found the going a bit tough"



Matthew Chittenden: Matthew, aged 19, has been at Growing Places once a week for a year, whilst also attending a college course.

Matthew sometimes finds social situations and interacting with others difficult. Growing Places was a challenging environment for Matthew at times, a site busy with activity with a strong emphasis on teamwork. However, he has quickly grown in confidence around others, often using his sense of humour and quick wit to put himself and colleagues at ease.

With the support of Coaches, he is more vocal about what he is thinking and how he is feeling. This in turn has led to Matthew having the confidence to use his initiative and share ideas.

Matt is now able to work almost entirely independently or even lead small groups and started searching for jobs with a practical outdoor focus.

Growing Places has supported Matt to become a more confident and capable worker, along with job searching and interview techniques.

NOWTON PARK NURSERY GARDENING
TEAM MAKE A BIG IMPRESSION
IN THE GROUNDS OF
ARCHBISHOP SANCROFT
HIGH SCHOOL,
HARLESTON

"The team is doing an amazing job. Once the weeds are cleared some of the children will be helping to plant some lovely summer flowers."



Feb 2018: The gardening team from Nowton Park Nursery in Bury St Edmunds has been doing a first-class job in the grounds of Harleston's Archbishop Sancroft High School.

That's the verdict of the secondary school which welcomed the six-strong gardening team from Nowton Park Nursery recently to get a replanting scheme underway, in conjunction with Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) community outreach adviser Alison Findlay.

The gardening team has been working hard digging up old shrubs and weeds in overgrown flower beds around the school, getting them ready for schoolchildren to get dug in and to start planting out a colourful show of summer plants.

Phil Ewing from Nowton Park Nursery said: "Our gardening team get a real sense of satisfaction from clearing up and creating something new. We volunteer for these projects because we are communityminded and proud of what we stand for." Alison Findlay, RHS community outreach advisor, said: "Phil from Realise Futures was the horticultural mentor for a team of students from Archbishop Sancroft High School who took part in a RHS school design challenge called The Green Plan It Challenge.

"This project aims to show young people the importance of plants to people and places and to highlight that horticulture is a worthwhile career for young people today. It is great to see the design becoming a reality thanks to the hard work of Realise Futures and the students."



GROWING PLACES TEAM IS KING OF THE CASTLE FOR EYKE COMMUNITY FUN DAY

April 2017: Growing Places put the final touches to a seven-foot castle made out of wicker.

The wicker castle is taking centre stage at the Eyke Community Fun Day which took place on 30 April 2017.

It matches the wicker baby elephant created by Growing Places for the fun day in 2016, because the event is held at the Elephant and Castle Inn, in Eyke, where the community fun day takes place.

It took the team at Growing Places several weeks, and around 50 kilos of wicker, to create the fortified structure.

Janet Slattery from Growing Places said: "The Elephant and Castle Inn loved the baby elephant we made last year, which we named Esmo, so they asked us to complete the picture by making a castle too. The elephant is in the beer garden, and the castle will join it.

"The team get a lot of pleasure out of making wicker structures such as garden animals like dragon flies and butterflies"



"We sell our wicker structures to grow the business to provide work for more people. We sometimes get commissions to make some interesting garden architectural pieces, but this is the first time we've made a seven-foot castle," she added.

50 SCHOOL CHILDREN SING OLD FAVOURITES AT ST LAWRENCE

CAFÉ IN IPSWICH TO COMMEMORATE D-DAY ANNIVERSARY

"Songs that won the war
were playing all week and we
welcomed the schoolchildren
to the cafe on the actual
D-Day anniversary"

Pupils from Sidegate Primary School choir sang favourite wartime songs to customers at St Lawrence's Café on Tuesday 6th June 2017.

To commemorate the 73rd anniversary of World War Two Normandy Landings, known as D-Day, 50 Ipswich primary school children visited the cafe to sing songs from the 1940s – including those of wartime sweetheart Vera Lynn.

St Lawrence planned afternoon teas for the week which included finger sandwiches with traditional fillings from the period, such as corned beef and spam, an authentic Victory cake, a nobake chocolate cake, and scones with 'mock cream' from a wartime recipe. Realise Futures Catering manager said: "Songs that won the war were playing all week and we welcomed the schoolchildren to the cafe on the actual day of the D-Day anniversary.

Danny Howden, the performing arts leader at the Sidegate Primary School, had planned and taught the children the songs they were going to sing. His enthusiasm was amazing."





PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS WITH AGE UK SUFFOLK

Computer Clubs are often held in rural locations in Suffolk where public transport is limited for those wishing to socialise with others and learn new technology.

This year Learning and Development teamed up with Age UK Suffolk to form Computer Clubs – Age UK Tablet Courses across Suffolk. These have been a great success with courses delivered to 98 learners during the 17/18 year.

"Helps me keep in touch with my family"

"I didn't realise a place like this would cater for mature students"

"I enjoyed the socialising as much as the learning"



ADULT LEARNER AWARDS

Many Learning and Development staff and learners turned out to celebrate success and to hear inspirational stories at Suffolk's Adult Learner Awards on Thursday 22nd June 2017.

Realise Futures had many winners and runners up!



Ruth Moore

Winner, Tutor of the year



Danielle Glover

Runner up for Inspirational learner of the year



Sean Smith

Runner up for Volunteer of the year



Frances Howlett

Winner, Outstanding family learner of the year



Sue Hardy

Runner up for Outstanding family learner of the year



Kirsty Cox

Runner up for Health and well-being impact award



Minakshi Ghati

Runner up for Learning in the digital age



Andrea Rix

Runner up for Outstanding family learner of the year



Beccles Academy with RFLD Family Learning

Runner up for Learning project of the year



REALISE FUTURES

Developing your potential

"Every individual deserves
the opportunity to realise
their full potential and to
be given the choice to earn,
learn, enjoy and achieve"

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