

## Project Outline:

### *Les Moueux: A Micro Community's 'Transition' to an Eco-Lieu*

## Introduction:

Finding ways of working together more efficiently as communities may well prove to be a major contribution when adapting to dramatically reduced carbon costly life-styles, which will be enforced upon mankind by the growing global demands on depleting resources.

Encouraging localised resilience by planning for this inevitable energy descent in a positive and equitable way is the Transition Movement's mission; inspired by their model and its action research based methodology, as residents (landlords and tenants), we wish to explore and experiment with the implications for our micro-community.

Our community is situated in Les Moueux, a small hamlet in the canton of Beny Bocage in Calvados, France. The 3.1 hectare rural site currently provides 5 residencies and work spaces, there are also ongoing building projects and potential for further development on site.

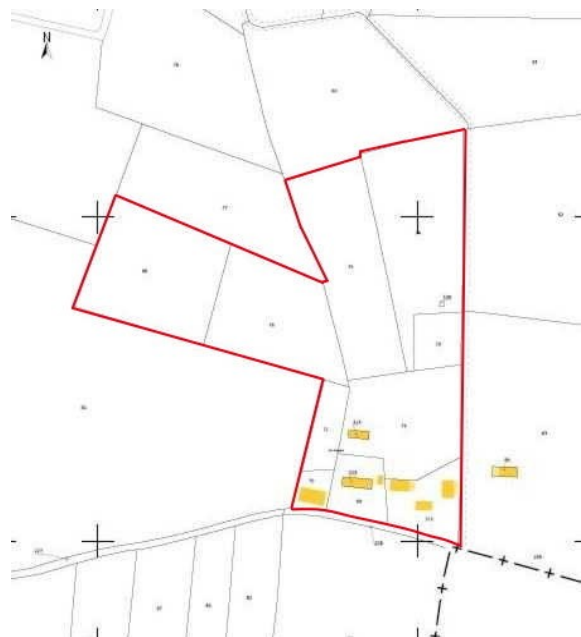
Uncertain of the effectiveness of the private landlord/tenant relationship at encouraging greater resident participation and commitment to the environmentally concerned ethos of the site, it is felt essential to research alternative housing models, such as cooperatives and co-housing projects. In addition, it will be necessary to look at on-site ways of generating work and providing for residents' and visitors' needs.

The project will raise awareness of environmental issues and influence behaviour whilst an intentional micro-community housing model is collectively created for Les Moueux.

## Location:



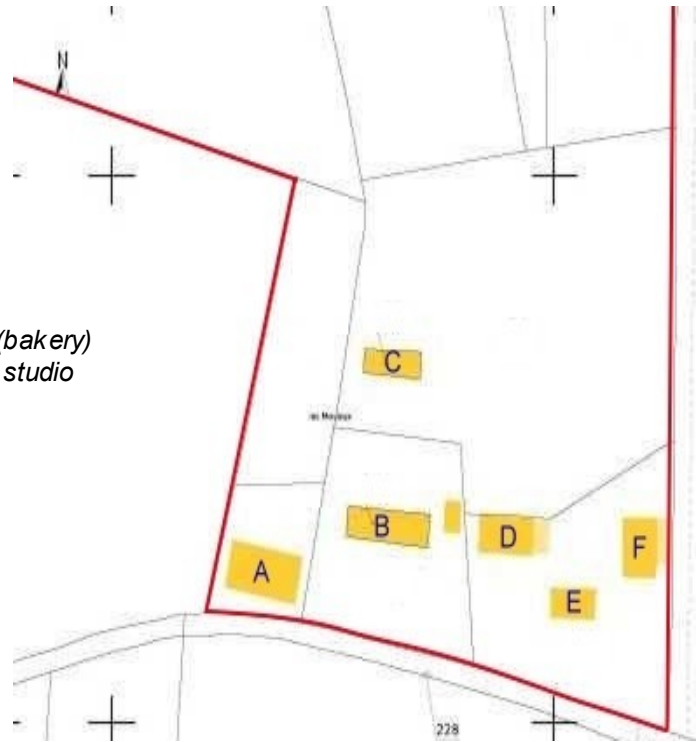
40 miles from ferry to Portsmouth



3.1 hectares = almost 8 acres

**Key to main buildings:**

- A = large multifunctional space
- B = 6 Bedroom house
- C = Undeveloped barn with original mass oven (bakery)
- D = 4 Bedroom house with adjoining residential studio
- E = 4 Bedroom house
- F = 4 Bedroom house



**Buildings on site:**



House B



Drying Shed



C = Bakehouse



House F



House E



Studio



Lost Caravan



Dry Toilet



Repairs Stores



90m<sup>2</sup> Multi- Space



Low impact development



Covered Workspace

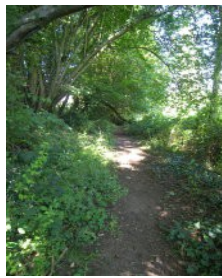


House D

## Land use:



Field 1



Wild Path 1



Field 3



New plantation



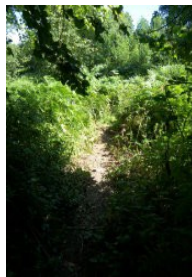
Willow Plantation



Field 4



Old Oak Space



Wild Path 2



2 of 3 Polytunnels

# Activities on site:

To date a number of events have been undertaken on-site; not for profit activities involved with local environmental and cultural associations.



Collective and educative Pallet and straw build.



Transition events.



Introduction to Permaculture and forest gardening course.



Renewable energy home heating system open day.



Tree climbing events.



Food production



Dry toilet and Grey water filter system workshops.





Building with biomass, earth and lime workshops.



Child & Donkey



Story telling and land art for children.

## Current long-term residents.

**Hayley & Douglas** (3 children, 10-20).

In our 13<sup>th</sup> year as owners, developers and residents of the site, we have realised that creating a more resilient community may be the best long term solution for the place, especially as adaptive change is clearly becoming an inevitable response to climate change, resource depletion and economic uncertainty.



Hayley is particularly interested in gardening for wildlife, composting and has undertaken a permaculture design course (PDC) a few years ago. For a number of years she has managed the tourism aspect on site.



Douglas has spent 20 years as a general builder in France, as well as, simultaneously been a festival caterer. However, after obtaining an MSc in Architecture from the Centre for Alternative Technology in 2005, he has nurtured a more environmental approach to building and has a wide range of related practical skills. For the last year he has been researching what to do at Les Moueux.

**Corrine et Reynald** (2 Children 0-8) are in their 6<sup>th</sup> year as tenants at Les Moueux and are very interested in exploring alternative community based approaches for Les Moueux.



Corrine works locally organising activities for children and also sits on the parish council. She is very active in local associations and clubs involved with: story telling, theatre and dance, sewing and making clothes.



Reynald works locally for an association that uses donkeys for: tours, help in agriculture and other activities with children. He also organizes workshops including theatre, juggling, scything, apple juicing. With Corrine he has also been involved with a number of local festivals and fêtes.

## **Potential Work and Needs Provision Opportunities.**

As seen from the 'activities' and 'buildings on site' sections above, natural next steps could include some of the ideas below:

- Expanding on-site food production and related infra-structures would be essential.
- There is an excellent potential for the site to host low impact living courses and events. Douglas is keen to develop courses in Energy Descent DIY.
- Developing an autonomous space for cultural and awareness raising events is another interesting possibility for the multi-functional space.
- The on-site traditional bakehouse could be restored to use as a domestic and commercial collective non fossil fuel kitchen and canteen. The building's loft space could also provide further accommodation.

The options are enormous, but need to be developed as social enterprises alongside the community housing model.

## **Methodology with an aim.**

The site and situation at Les Moueux will essentially be a case study employing action research methods and 'Transition Movement' philosophy to transform the small residential hamlet from a private landlord/tenant relationship to a collectively designed environmentally and socially driven housing community model with a focus on complimentary on-site work creation and residents' needs provision.

## Work Plan (WP).

*WP 1. November 2011-March 2012.*

Promote the project and recruit interested participants.  
Continue to develop the site and possible activities.  
Continue to be involved Transition style activities locally.  
Further develop relations with French cultural and environmental associations.  
Research existing housing models.  
Conduct action research amongst relevant participants.



*WP 2. April 2012- December 2012.*

Implement possible expansion of activities on site.  
Prioritize and continue to carry out site building development.  
Continue carrying out items listed in WP1.



*WP 3. January 2013-*

Begin to form new housing model for the community and start implementing change.  
Continue to develop the site and activities.  
Continue to be involved with Transition style activities locally.  
Further develop relations with French cultural and environmental associations.



## Short Term Tenants and Tourists.

Over the last 12 years, the site has been predominantly used for tourism and more recently converted to longer term lets. By chance, 3 residencies have become vacant at approximately the same time. This has given the long term residents the chance to start the process of developing the site as an intentional community.

## Looking for short and long term contributing residents.

Whether you are looking for a purposeful way to pass your holidays or reinventing your life, your participation would be considered.

People with skills complimenting those already possessed by the long term residents would be ideal. However, enthusiasm and a passion for learning may suffice.

Anyone interested in setting up a small organic market garden in a CSA format would be welcome.

Experience in organising and promoting courses would be useful. Many subjects are already covered, but an Anglo/Franco permaculture design course on-site with the right qualified tutors may prove popular.

***All ideas welcome !***

French is very useful, but not essential because the situation at Les Moueux may prove beneficial for those wishing to learn, and likewise, the French wishing to learn English; this information is also going out in French to maintain the mix.

## **Becoming a long term resident:**

Like most intentional communities, this will happen after a trial period in which all parties concerned can assess whether Les Moueux is right for them. Once sufficient new and existing residents have reached a consensus on how the community should be remodelled then the restructuring of ownership can start.

If you are still interested in the project at Les Moueux, please tell us about yourself and consider a visit to see if it might be for you.

## **Accommodation:**

The structuring of accommodation pricing has been designed so that potentially interested participants may visit for a short stay and extend if they wish. If people become permanent residents, the rents are those in the additional months column. When a new structure for the site is found, pricing will have been collectively calculated.

The Current available accommodation on site includes:

<i>Prices in € Euros</i>	<i>Week</i>	<i>Additional Weeks</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Additional Months</i>
<i>4 Bedroom House</i>	280	150	650	530
<i>1-2 Bedroom Flat</i>	180	90	430	350
<i>Self-contained Studio</i>	100	70	260	200
<i>Bedrooms</i>	50	40	150	130
<i>Camping/camper</i>	30	30	100	90
<i>Large Multi-functional space.</i>	150	100	400	300

Fees include water and standing charges, but do not include personal energy use.

Any guests are expected to contribute at least 12 hours per week on practical site activities and be prepared to engage in the participative inquiry based research required in order to develop the new housing model for Les Moueux.

Anyone wishing to use the site and facilities for events, courses or other work related activities, then potential arrangements may be discussed amongst residents.

**Thank You!**

**Further questions and observations encouraged.**