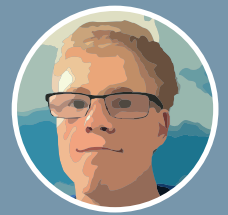


# *How a group of vibrant entrepreneurs overcame national lock-down by creatively 'bringing the outside in'*



“Since we started working together on this enterprise project we have all had a role and a specific part to play. Initially we had to develop ideas and do thorough research. One of the personal gains from the project is that it has helped me use a variety of new skills.”



**‘James’**  
Product Research Lead

## LED BY

Lighthouse Futures Trust

## SUPPORTED BY

The Harrogate Candle Company

## WITH FUNDING FROM

The Co-Op

Leeds Community Foundation

## PROJECT AIMS

- Develop employability skills
- Create a unique, premium brand
- Enable emerging talent to thrive
- Launch a high-quality product

Lighthouse Futures Trust Interns have become true entrepreneurs during lockdown with the creation of a fabulous new premium candle brand - Blossom & Light. Their first two scents are "Promenade Breeze" and "Rock Pool Treasure", with fragrances created to invigorate the senses by bringing the outside in, reminding us all of 'staycations' in beautiful British coastal areas.

The interns are young adults, aged 18-24, with a learning difficulty or autism, who take part in a 12-month internship with Lighthouse Futures Trust, in Leeds. For at least 3 days a week they are based with an employer and are supported by an expert Job Coach who helps them develop the social and employability skills that they need to secure paid employment. They also study English and Maths with a view to getting a qualification, if they don't already have one.

In November 2019 we decided to introduce a new element into the internship - an Enterprise Skills project. This involved the interns learning how to set up a business and design, create and produce a product of their own choosing. We felt that this would really help them develop a range of core skills such as planning, creativity, negotiation, finance, teamwork and communication. They could then take these newly-developed skills back into the workplace and into their future careers.



“This enterprise project has meant a lot to me, helping me understand how a business is started and how a product is developed, from start to completion. I had not realised how much was involved! It really has taught me a lot and has been a great experience that I can add to my C.V.”

**‘Dixon’**  
Finance Lead



## BLOSSOM & Light

### THEIR STORY

9 young adults;  
one team approach;  
overcoming barriers,  
showcasing talents;  
tremendous pride in achievements



### CONTACT DETAILS

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By early 2020, the interns had settled into their workplaces with the John Lewis Partnership and Johnson & Johnson (where precision hip replacements are tested and manufactured) and were making excellent progress. They were enjoying a variety of roles from Sales Assistant in Ladieswear to Lab Assistant in Tribology. Then COVID-19 struck and the entire country entered lock-down.

Fortunately, we were quickly able to set up an online curriculum using the 'Google Classrooms' platform which enabled them to continue to develop their Employability skills, receive support in Maths and English, Well-being and Safe, Remote Working skills. Additionally, they took part in social activities and challenges, such as quizzes, cooking and baking and other activities, designed to help them collaborate, stay connected and keep them engaged with learning. However, it was the Enterprise Project that really fired up their imagination and got their creative juices flowing.

Before lock-down the interns had decided that their business would make scented candles and we had begun to work with The Harrogate Candle Company. Our initial fears that this would come to a halt were unfounded and they continued to provide advice and support throughout, taking part in Zoom calls to discuss product development, packaging and sales. The interns carried on with their independent research and took part in weekly calls where, as a team, they had to decide on the fragrances, the shape and size of the container, the name and brand and the type of packaging. The Harrogate Candle Company did the melt and pour for us but the interns and their Job Coach did all the rest, each taking on a different role from Research to Design to Production.

This Enterprise Project has delivered benefits on so many levels. The interns have developed new skills which they describe in a personalised leaflet that accompanies each candle. They have a real sense of pride in their achievements, having created a product from scratch. When they return, in September 2020, they will be moving onto the "marketing and sales" module and will be devising a plan which will involve online sales and stocking their product in local stores and gift shops, as well as being in charge of the fulfilment process. The candles look amazing and smell incredible, so the customers will benefit too!

We are very fortunate that this innovative project received grants from the Co-Op and Leeds Community Foundation Wesleyan Fund which enabled us to pay for the research, ingredients and marketing materials. Profits from the sale of candles will enable us to proceed with developing more products within the Blossom & Light range and will see the start of a new enterprise programme within Lighthouse Futures Trust.

Please follow us on social media to find out how you can buy some of the candles and continue to support our budding entrepreneurs on their journey into paid employment.

“This project has shone a light on the talents of these young people and their ability to create a viable commercial business with a top-end candle, that would rival brand names in the industry. Their personal growth on this journey has been immeasurable. We are so proud of each and every intern and their immense individual contributions.”

Katie Partlett  
CEO Lighthouse  
Futures Trust

