

**Case study:**  
Enterprise Renewal  
Business Grant

**Region**  
Flintshire

**Sector**  
Tourism

**Project value**  
£9,944

## TREE TOPS AND TRAIN TRACKS

*It's camping but not as we know it. High up in the trees in a Flintshire woodland is a genuine close-to-nature experience.*

In 2018 Seb Willis and wife Hannah bought an 18-acre woodland near Nannerch, bordered by a disused railway and old sand quarry. They were looking for a different, more family-friendly lifestyle.

"It was silent and forgotten, untamed and unloved," says Seb. "But we saw a space of diverse trees, native flowers and a flurry of woodland animals that could become something unique."

Climbing a tree gave Seb the idea for what became Tree Tops and Train Tracks, a sustainably managed woodland and eco-campsite with a major twist launching in summer 2023. "Being up in the canopy of trees is something quite spectacular and special," he says. "It was an experience I wanted to share with lots of people."

He achieved his vision with the help of an Enterprise Renewal grant, acquiring a set of three Tentsile tree tents. Suspended by straps between the trunks of oaks and elms, these dramatic "portable treehouses" are a very rare sight in the UK.

The biggest three-level unit with hammock, meshed social space and sleeping area connected by a ladder rests up to 20 feet high in the canopy. A true close-to-nature experience, it towers over their six ground-level camping pitches and an outdoor kitchen, toilet and shower area built from timber felled on the land.

"The grant has been brilliant, absolutely amazing," says Seb. "Without it we'd only be able to offer the standard pitches, so we couldn't have created this unique and innovative camping site. This would hugely affect our turnover as the tree tents can be offered at premium rates."

It also paid for a consultation with the Greener Camping Club, who were impressed enough with the company's eco-credentials to certify the site. Tree Tops and Train Tracks employed a camping and glamping specialist to build their brand, design a logo and create a website with a sophisticated channel management system to handle bookings.

"This makes it user-friendly and easy to book for our guests and reduces our admin to a minimum, so we can focus our attention on building the business," says Seb. "Further down the line we'll be looking at some even more exciting stuff up in the trees."

"It was always the idea that we wanted to be different and adventurous. We're going to start applying for planning permission next year for some pretty unique dwellings."

