

## Cover Details

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**Design start date September 2020**

**Design completed date May 2023**

**Design Title**

Earth Care, Donkey Care and Fair Shares



A presentation of the Design can be found here:

[Earth Care Donkey Care Fair Shares | Permaculture Design \(wiggintoncumbria.wixsite.com\)](http://wiggintoncumbria.wixsite.com)

### **Design aims / problem to solve**

Have better management of the donkey grazing that benefits wild flowers, birds, mammals and insects and is manageable for us to maintain.

To consider the question: "After 10 designs what stage of the development sequence.

"unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence" have I reached?"

### **Design context**

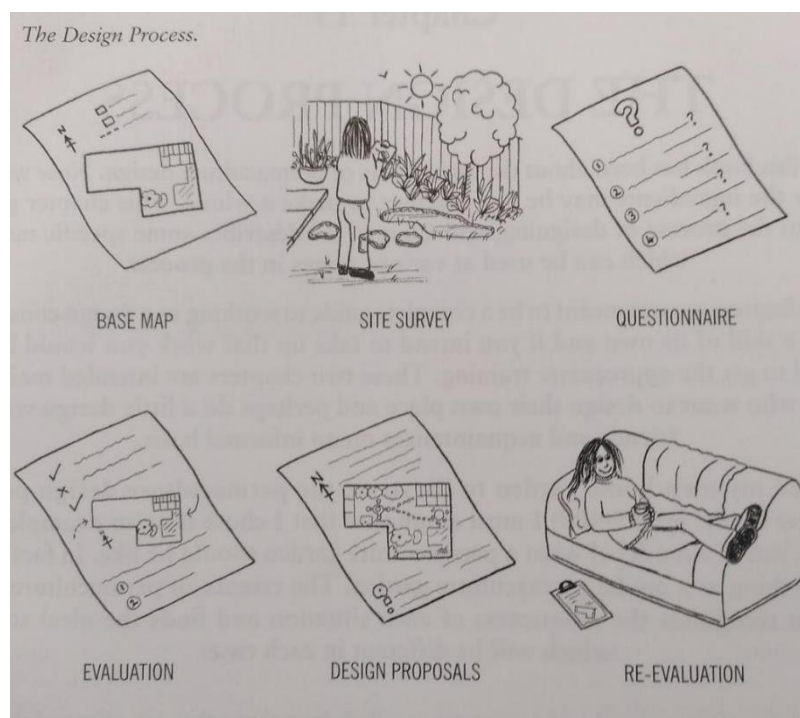
This design has two main drivers.

Part of my Design 5, Finding Time to Design, involved my creating a route around the outside of our smallholding and making small benches as sit spots. While sitting I became aware of the location of birdsong and that it was clustered around the settlement and not in the hedges around the field. Therefore, I wanted to create corridors for wildlife across the holding.

The second driver was to manage the donkey grazing and in doing so increase the wild flower content of our fields. I also saw this as an opportunity to have a grazing regime that would allow the donkeys weight to be managed in a more responsive way.

### **Framework**

Whitefield Design Process (Chapter 13 "The Design process" The Earth Care Manual, Patrick Whitefield, Permanent Publications, 2004.



## Tools

The two main tools I have used in this design are site observations and the recording of those observations and the evolution of my thoughts of how to divide the holding up on base maps with “overlays”. This was a cyclic iterative process of “observe and interact”, use those observations to produce a draft design, “observe and interact” and adjust. I did contemplate using PASTE in the observation / site survey stage, as I have yet to use this tool, but felt it did not quite fit with my aims, given that my focus was particularly on plants and structures. There are other animals to be considered, for example the ever-increasing rabbit population and how I manage the grazing regime to minimise their keeping the grazing very short, and so providing cover for mice, shrews and so on. I have seen weasels in the undergrowth and have thought about how I can provide habitat for them. I found the Whitefield design process included tools without naming them, for example “Keep, Lose, Develop” is within the Design Questionnaire Checklist and I have included this in the “Wants, Produce and Other Outputs” sections. Given the size of the project the Final Plan: Implementation section is a “Now / Soon / Later” tool, that will be under continual review, for example I did not manage to cut all my willow and find time to do all the fencing for the new hedge. The growing of trees from cuttings is a slow process and will almost certainly continue into future winters. I have used DAFOR for the first time, and although I have not used it in the conventional quadrat method, but using my judgement across the whole grazing area, I think it will provide a base line for future analysis of the wild flowers, which will be an interesting. I could have approached the whole design in a more scientific and statistical way, and therefore show in the future the impact of mob grazing on the flora. But I am happy with a qualitative approach. It is sufficient for me to enjoy the beauty and quantity of flora and fauna (even the rabbits!). I used the app Pl@ntNet for identification.

Whitefield’s Design Process, unlike many others does not have sections focussing on the Ethics or Principles consequently I have used them as an analysis tool to assess the ethical and principled nature of my design once the process itself has completed. In some ways seeing whether, after my tenth design, I have reached the unconscious competence stage of designing.

## Ethics and Principles

The Whitefield Design Process, unlike some other processes, does not include application of Ethics and Principles explicitly in the process. Therefore, I have put alongside each stage of the design the key Ethics and Principles that apply. This was an interesting process in terms of seeing how far I have come through the “unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, unconscious competence” development sequence.

The Earth Care and Fair Share ethics are visible throughout the design through the aims of improving the pasture, increasing the wild flowers and providing habitat for birds and insects. The People Care element comes in through the creation of an easy to manage grazing regime and the pleasure in creating a habitat to share with the flora and fauna.

The design as a whole is an “**Integrate rather than Segregate**” process, as I aim to have a system that integrates donkeys, flowers, birds and insects, each having beneficial connections with the others.

The **Observe and Interact** Principle is fundamental to the process, not only in terms of the route to the final plan but also in terms of ongoing tweaking. I intend to try to maximise the closed loop nature of the system, reducing inputs (for example; additional winter feeding), and so the donkeys are also fundamental as **renewable resources and services**.

The process of observing and coming up with a plan, then observing again to see the positives and negatives of the plan, I found as an effective process and very much a self-regulate in terms of not rushing in and accepting the feedback of the land.

## Design Solution

The main elements of the design solution are:

- A division of the fields to allow mob grazing of the donkeys and restriction of grazing when necessary.
- A grazing regime to maximise flower growth, insect, bird and mammal numbers.
- Fencing and gates of the fields that makes the changing of grazing simple.
- Provision of shade through additional planting.
- Creation of additional hedge to provide wildlife corridor to east of the holding, using home grown trees.

## Evaluation

Date May 2023

Functions	Systems	Elements	Comment
Improve the pasture and manage the donkey's grazing and health.	Mob Grazing the donkeys. Shade areas.	Division of the grazing into smaller areas.  Movement plan, electric fencing and moveable gates.  Shade trees.	Achieved. Need to sort out a path across the permanent grazing area.  Working on 1 week for smaller fields and 2 to 3 weeks for furthest fields (when tups away). Electric fencing and moveable gates make the 1-week turnaround manageable.  Shade area struggled because of rabbit attack. Needs to replant with tree guards.
Increase the wild flowers	Mob Grazing the donkeys.	Division of the grazing into smaller areas.  Movement plan.	To be seen this summer. So far have had Buttercups, Marsh Marigolds, Speedwell, Daisy, Plantain, Lady's Smock, Lady's Bedstraw, Dock, Eyebright, Thistle, Red Clover, Silverweed, Stinging Nettle, Red Campion, Pignut, Knapweed, Vetch. Some new, probably relating to the time of year I have observed.
Increase distribution of birds away from the village.	Provide corridors for birds and wildlife between the hedges.	Fencing and hedging.	Fencing half done, allowing grazing the keep the grass down before planting in the winter.  Trees are ready to plant out, hazel did not take, but willow

		Homegrown trees.	and elder are strong. Will need tree guards
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## Reflection

Date May 2023

Would I use the Whitefield Design process again? It works well for a land-based design but I think I would probably amalgamate it with other systems, possibly SADIMET and CEAP. I do like the way it has "Evaluation" and "Re-evaluation" creating a circular process.

The combination of the tools of observation and base maps worked well, allowing me to work at two scales, as it is not possible to see the whole holding at once.

Using Pl@ntNet has improved my identification skills, I am now reasonably confident I can identify the common plants on the holding and know if there is anything new.

Have I reached unconscious competence? I certainly feel I am moving in that direction and the ethics and principles are evident throughout the design, some more than others (See below), but that would be due to the aims of the design. Compared to early in my diploma path I am certainly "observing and interacting" for longer before making any decisions. On further reflection would a good designer be at the unconscious competence level where they do everything without consideration and miss out on that analysis / evaluation process to ensure nothing is missed.

### Use of Ethics through the Design:

Site Survey	<p>Earth Care: I looked at the distribution of other than human residents.</p> <p>People Care: I considered the impact on neighbour's views and the farmer who rents part of the fields. Also, where the donkeys like to be in different weather.</p> <p>Fair Shares: I have thought about the interactions between humans and others in the lands, for example the barn owl and the grass length, the donkeys grazing and the flowers, for example the correlation between less grazing and the orchids.</p>
Design Questionnaire	<p>Earth Care: The vision has a focus on caring for the other than human residents. The Present Outputs are related to what we want for the land.</p> <p>People Care: The vision's other focus is on caring for the donkeys through improved grazing regimes.</p> <p>Fair Shares: In the powerpoint I have identified the vision as being Earth Care and People/Donkey Care focused, although the overlap of these is in fact Fair Shares, as described in the Tenure section. The land should have more to share in terms of produce, between human foraging and plant and animal needs.</p>
Evaluation	<p>Earth Care: The aims mirror the design questionnaire in terms of focus on other than human residents looking at the birds and flowers.</p> <p>People Care: The aims look at the care of the donkeys. The different mappings of ideas are driven partially by the impacts on neighbours.</p>

	Fair Shares: It is the interaction of Earth Care and People / Donkey Care that is the Fair Share element to the design.
Design Proposal	The Design Proposal is a consolidation of the Ethics decisions in the sections above, with the added People Care element of ease of management of changing to grazing areas.
Re-evaluation	In summary, all three ethics are intertwined within this design; the aim being to create a more interconnected system that takes into account and supports the other than human residents, the donkeys and our neighbours (Fair Shares) through better donkey care (People Care) and creating a more biodiverse ecosystem (Earth Care).

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