

What is Wild Thyme Wholefoods?

Wild Thyme is a large wholefood shop in Portsmouth, selling a wide range of vegan natural & organic food, including a vegan take away counter (& kitchen) for fresh juices & smoothies, healthy lunches, snacks & baked goods. It is important to us that our shop and workers present an attractive, welcoming environment which anyone would feel comfortable in entering - we do not want to be stuck in a narrow niche that appeals only to a small minority. We aim to create a positive impact on Portsmouth as well as contributing to the creation of a better world through an ethical business offering healthy vegan wholefoods and other products. We also aim to support our local community and local growers as much as possible by sourcing products locally and trading with other small, independent businesses.

How is Wild Thyme run?

Wild Thyme is set up as a worker co-operative, run by the workforce. Permanent workers are members and directors of the co-operative, taking equal responsibility for all the decisions that govern the business, from long-term strategy, to budgets and recruitment, to procedures that run the shop from day to day. These decisions are made at regular meetings, giving every member a real sense of ownership & involvement in the business. Wild Thyme is non-hierarchical, without a top-down management system - all members are expected to self-manage, as well as managing each other collectively.

Do the members own the business?

No - Wild Thyme Wholefoods Ltd is registered as a limited society under Industrial & Provident Society rules, with each member holding only a nominal £1 share. It is bound by the rules first laid out in the Industrial Common Ownership Act of 1976, so that the company's assets can be used only to further its objectives and cannot be divided among the members. The members have full control over any surplus income, however, which can be used to develop the business, pay bonuses etc.

What about wages?

Each worker is currently paid a flat rate of £7.83 per hour for an agreed number of contracted weekly hours (and receives a 20% staff discount) – this paid time should cover the core activities of running Wild Thyme. As the business grows, our aim is to increase this hourly rate. Currently, all workers are expected to also contribute some voluntary hours. This includes meetings, some additional admin and activities that develop the business. There is no set number of voluntary hours, and these vary from worker to worker, but on average can be about five hours per week.

How many hours will I be expected to work each week?

We are currently recruiting for a part time position of a minimum of 20 paid hours. This will usually be spread over shifts covering three to four days, and we will be looking for some flexibility in this. There may be the opportunity to increase these hours as our turnover grows. Weekend working will be required, as Saturdays and Sundays are our busiest trading days – new workers will be expected to work at least four weekend days per month.

What type of work are members be expected to do?

The work is varied and includes till work, stocking shelves, co-ordinating, packing, cleaning, ordering, admin, cooking, serving food etc. Everybody is expected to work in most areas of the business, where they are able to, and training is provided where necessary. Most jobs are rotated on a daily or weekly basis, so you may be on the till one day, and packing the next. This allows members to become experienced in all areas of the business, to gain a greater understanding of how the business operates & bring fresh ideas to how Wild Thyme runs. More technical tasks that require particular skills (eg book keeping, buying etc) are rotated with much less frequency - annually or less.