



Pic-Nic Village: A Playground for Creativity, Ideas and Innovation

About Pic-Nic Village

Pic-Nic Village is an evolutionary social community that aims to connect like-minded creative thinkers through a collaborative online networking space, which later intends to diversify into offline events and gatherings. It is designed to be a catalyst for new ideas and innovation, providing a platform for its members to share and benefit from each other's talents, thoughts and passions, whether of a personal, business or social nature.

Setting out to avoid the advertising funded model favoured by other social networks, Pic-Nic Village is pursuing a radical approach to raising business finance called 'crowdfunding'. By offering potential members the opportunity to buy shares and membership, Pic-Nic Village aims to establish itself as a modern-day co-operative that is owned and shaped by its members.

Pic-Nic Village believes its crowdfunding initiative could raise investment of £750,000 or more. The community will be setting its subscriptions in the region of £10 per month. The monies raised through crowdfunding are expected to finance the development of the social media platform for launch in 2011 and operate the business until it becomes self-funding.

People can become part-owners of the Pic-Nic Village community with influence over its decision making by investing in one of the Founder Member schemes:

- Two-year membership package: £100 buys one share in the company and two years of full membership of the Pic-Nic Village web community [following its launch in 2011].
- Lifetime membership package: £300 buys lifetime membership of Pic-Nic Village plus three shares in the company.

The business will be underpinned by a progressive constitution which aims to empower its members, and prevent any big business interests ever gaining a foothold in the company.

Pic-Nic Village: a Pete Lawrence concept

Pic-Nic Village is the latest concept of Pete Lawrence, a tastemaker and catalyst for progressive creative ventures. Pete is most famous as the co-founder of The Big Chill, one of the first multi-media arts festivals which also spawned London venues and a buzzing online community.

The early Big Chill forum at www.bigchill.net was arguably a good example of first generation social media and one which inspired Pete to set up Pic-Nic Village. He was later struck by the overreliance on advertising to fund the development and operation of many social media networks, which had the effect of tainting any notion of community ethos which might have fostered ongoing creativity and innovation.

Lawrence also noted the radically changing relationships between businesses and their customers. People were becoming producers rather than consumers. There is a growing belief that we no longer need companies, institutions or governments to organise us. Brands are now listening and communicating in more direct and immediate ways. Pete Lawrence knew that the membership had to be the driving force of Pic-Nic Village, and put in place a constitution and 'social market' economic policy with a progressive and far reaching philosophy which would be ethically focused on wealth creation for all members rather than profit maximisation for the few.

Lawrence saw the potential of bringing like-minded people together in a new environment back in 2008 after he'd left the Big Chill and spent the next two years planning his next project. The Pic-Nic Village name was arrived at after much consultation with friends around the proverbial pub table. At Pic-Nic Village everyone has something to bring to the table in the same way that people bring along their own tasty delights to a picnic. The community will create its own heady mix of conversation, sharing of ideas, talents and passions – of a personal, business or social nature - in an informal setting.

Pic-Nic Village: an evolution in social networking

Unencumbered by borders (geographical, institutional, or demographic), Pic- Nic Village will exist first as an online social networking forum and also have a strong presence offline with face to face networking events, conferences and gatherings.

Pic-Nic Village's collaborative social networking platform plans to provide members with a personal 'media centre' where they can build their own portfolios, store pictures, movies and music. They can post content as ephemeral and fast moving as status updates, link to events, news and other external content of interest, post blogs, share information about projects they are working on or about to launch and chat with other members.

The community also aims to focus around specific interest guilds – art, architecture, design, film making, fashion, gardening, music and walking, for example – enabling discussion both within, and outside of, niche communities to be a catalyst for new ideas, initiatives and collaborations. Members will be able to shape the direction of the community by putting forward ideas for additional features and functionality.

Encouraging collaboration, some of the outputs from Pic-Nic Village might include:

- **Ideas generation** –whether that be creating ideas for a new product, a project, a company; a solution to a problem; taking creative ideas to new levels.
- **Showcasing projects, talents and ideas** – helping members get ideas off the ground, make money and friends. Members can demo a new project first via Pic-Nic Village – for instance a new musical collaboration, or a book idea, which they can litmus test via the community before going to the logistical expense of taking it out on the road or publishing. In this way, there's a good chance that they will already have a following, built up in super fast time. They could then link to this 'project' from the books forum, targeting members who are actively interested in the project, who would be able to favourite it, follow it, forward it and save it to a folder of their own for future reference.
- **Shaping the news agenda** – Pic-Nic Village plans to have its own editorial team, harvesting the most interesting, ground breaking and controversial content on the site to create its news pages. Everyone on the site will be offered opportunity for their own editorial and moderating input. Through a system of endorsement icons, the user is empowered as an arbiter and tastemaker but can also be the critic, the chooser, the endorser and the link builder. As well as recommending the stories, Pic-Nic Villagers will actually be writing them.

The Pic-Nic Village Foundation: Nurturing and funding creative start ups

Targeting a dynamic member community of creative artists and thinkers, Pic-Nic Village aims to nurture and empower ideas, discussion and debate about personal, social or business issues and in doing so support personal innovation, artistic talent and creativity in business and the arts. It also aims to break down the boundaries between work and play.

A percentage of profits from the Pic-Nic Village community is earmarked for potential investment in the creation of The Pic-Nic Village Foundation to support and fund the creative arts and creative ideas and start-up ventures among members.

Creativity and innovation is vital to the success of thousands of British businesses and the economy. Standard Chartered's economic guru Dr Gerard Lyons recently suggested that creativity is the only thing that can save the UK: "the countries that succeed will be those with the financial or natural resources, or those able to compete by adapting and changing." Yet today there is no community that works for the benefit of creative arts and creative thinkers.

The creative arts industry has never been more vibrant - analysis from NESTA suggests that between 2009 and 2013, the UK creative industries will grow by 4 percent – more than double the rate of the rest of the economy. By 2013, the sector is expected to include as many as 180,000 creative businesses, contributing as much as £85 billion to the economy. So while investment continues to be funnelled into science parks, media hubs and training (for science, technology, and creative and cultural skills such as film production), there is currently no hub or community to connects creative minds and empowers others.

Pic-Nic Village: Community is at its heart and soul

Because online social networks are supercharging our ability to communicate and collaborate, it is easy to forget that at the heart of the social media phenomenon is a very simple human need: to be part of a community. This need for a sense of belonging has not changed in thousands of years.

As social media networks like Facebook continue to attract large numbers of people, the real power of social media communities lies, according to Nielson Online, in the pursuit of niche networks with a particular lifestyle or interest such as travel, music, wealth, business or as in the case of Pic-Nic Village, creativity and innovation.

Pic-Nic Village: what others are saying

"Social media is currently lacking the love factor. I love the idea of a community where there is a form of ownership and pride in belonging to a group that is meeting other stimulating minds virtually and maybe a few times a year in the flesh."

Mark Offord, managing director of a design and brand consultancy in Suffolk

"Pic-Nic Village looks like a welcome breath of fresh air to social networking and I'm particularly excited at the possibility of having a degree of ownership over the growth and future direction of this new community. And it's really reassuring that they'll be keeping my member data safe. Working as a web designer/developer has perhaps made me a little more paranoid about how my data is stored and used online, particularly on so-called free sites. It seems too easy for our most personal information to be passed on, by way of a subtle change and re-issue of the T's & C's, to an organisation that's simply looking to exploit its membership. This is the hidden cost of free. I'm inspired by the open-ness of Pic-Nic Village and am looking forward to joining and encouraging others to

join a social media platform that has been built for the people, by the people with the aim of benefiting our personal and business lives.”

“There’s a lot of functionality that I can’t wait to play with. The attention to security and absence of corporate control and advertising is worth paying what is only a bit more than the cost of a monthly special interest magazine. It’s exciting to feel that I could be part of a social media success story that, when it catches on, can’t be sold off to the highest bidder because it’s owned by me and other people in the community. Hopefully this is one site that won’t end up in the hands of Google, Vodafone or any other dominant digital player on the field today.”

Ed Richardson, Freelance Creative New Media Designer and Producer

“In the 21st century greater mobility, modern buildings, work practices and technology mean that communities have been slowly breaking down over the last fifty years, causing unprecedented levels of stress, anxiety and depression among individuals. Even the loosest communities in the 1970s as being far tighter knit than any communities today. That’s why it’s so important for people to have a virtual community like Pic-Nic Village where they can share their thoughts, ideas, fears and dreams with like minded people.”

Dr Rick Norris, Chartered Psychologist with a deep interest in communities and relationships

“I have always admired Pete’s ventures over the years. He always has his finger on the pulse and I believe this is where creative people will gather in the future. The opportunity to spin off-line events and businesses out of the community is also really exciting. I am thrilled to be working as part of the team.”

Bill Wallgrove, Head of Ideas at Brand Voice

“In life, we meet perhaps a handful of people where ideas just flow and there is a real sparkle to the conversation. Pic-Nic Village provides me with the possibility of meeting hundreds, perhaps thousands of like-minded people with whom I can bounce ideas off or share thoughts or discoveries. And if we want to hone in on a particular topic we simply deep dive into one of the guilds such as hot air ballooning, dairy farming or art. It’s exciting that so many individual discussions and collaborations could combine to create something much bigger than the sum of its parts. I can’t wait to see the magic that’s going to be created in this playground of possibilities.”

Rosie Riley, Marketing Consultant to some of the world’s largest brands

“It would be great to have access to a pool of creatives with diverse skills and experience from which to receive feedback and advice or to develop creative/commercial relationships.”

Vas Stylianios, Promotions Co-Ordinator at Warwick University

“This is a wonderful idea! I feel like there’s a real potential for this to grow in a unique and original way, without the pressure to fit into some existing model of how online communities work. Let’s find out. Where do I sign up?”

Richard Emerson, Senior Software Engineer at Zuhlke Engineering Ltd

“I would use it for fun, support, good stuff, face to face things, creative, interesting, forward thinking, ethical, green, doing good for people who need a hand with projects, linking for mutual benefit.”

Dr Lizzie Jackson Deputy Head of the Faculty of Media and Communications at [Ravensbourne College of Design and Communication](#)

“The collaborative aspect with like minds is very appealing, and ability to focus on what you do as opposed to what you’ve done.”

John Reid, Interior Set Designer and Lounge DJ

“I think it’s a really great idea. What I like about it is that it’s about bringing people together that have a genuine love for the arts. If that ethos is reflected really well in the policies and running of the initiative and people feel that, I think you will get a really great result!”

Julene Siddique , Artistic Director of the Human Culture Collective

About Pete Lawrence

Pic-Nic Village is the latest concept of Pete Lawrence who has been a catalyst for progressive creative ventures since the 1980’s. Pete is famously known for being the founder of the first ‘boutique’ music festival, The Big Chill, that grew from a spontaneous gathering of 600 people in 1995 to more than 30,000 by 2006 and went on to spawn London venues, a buzzing online community (the first generation of social media) and paved the way for the chill out boom at the turn of the Millennium.

He was first labelled a tastemaker when he spontaneously recorded hithero unknown US folk singer Michelle Shocked on a walkman around a Texas campfire for his fledgling Cooking Vinyl label, the resulting album “The Texas Campfire Tapes” with its £1 field recording budget, went on to top the Independent album charts in 1987 and sell half a million copies.

Since then he has been a DJ, writer, broadcaster (of Radio2’s Chill Out shows) and music programmer (as a DJ and recording under the name of Chilled by Nature he has produced many acclaimed mixes on Big Chill Recordings). He has worked with over 3000 artists and given early exposure to names such as Lilly Allen, Goldfrapp, Amy Winehouse, Seaskick Steve and Zero 7. Pete was voted into Time Out’s Top100 ‘movers and shakers’ in 2006 alongside the likes of Ricky Gervais, Gordon Ramsay, Madonna, Philip Green, Brian Paddick, Ken Livingstone and Tony Blair. More background on Pete here: <http://www.petelawrence.net/biography.html>

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