PROJECT BRIEF FROM TIDEWATER STUDIO

Ferncliff Climbing Co-op website

For the developer and designer

Prepared by Tidewater Studio for the project team, 21 November 2026.

Tags used in this brief

- `[NEEDS: what, from whom]` Missing. This is what's needed, and who has it.
- `[HYPOTHESIS]` My reading of the situation, not something the client said. Check it before relying on it.
- `[PROVISIONAL]` A working choice to confirm.

1. The project in one line

A new website for Ferncliff Climbing Co-op, a climbing wall, that lets people book on their phones, with first-time climbers as the first audience.

2. Background

Ferncliff is a climbing wall run as a co-op, with a board. Its website dates from 2017. Members cannot book sessions on their phones, and Ferncliff says it loses bookings to a chain gym nearby `[NEEDS: the chain gym's name, from Hannah at Ferncliff]`. Its 10th birthday open day is on 14 March 2027 `[PROVISIONAL]` (no year was given; the next 14 March is assumed). The board has approved a budget for the website. Day-to-day contacts: Hannah, gym manager, and Tom, who runs the front desk and the booking system.

3. The problem to solve

Asked for: a new website to replace the 2017 one.

Underneath: booking breaks down, most of all on a phone. Hannah's sense is that a large share of new climbers find Ferncliff on Instagram and then give up at the booking page (her estimate, not measured). Members can't book on their phones. Party bookings all come in by email, which Tom finds very hard to manage.

`[HYPOTHESIS]` The age and look of the site matter less than getting someone from Instagram to a booked session on their phone. If the booking system can't do that, a new design alone won't fix it.

4. The objective

More bookings made online. Ferncliff's own working aim is about 40% of all bookings made online within a year `[PROVISIONAL]` (they offered it as "maybe"). They don't track the online share today `[NEEDS: today's share of bookings made online, and how it will be counted after launch, from Tom at Ferncliff]`.

5. The audience

In the order Ferncliff gave them:

1. **New climbers who have never been.** Named first. Now: `[HYPOTHESIS]` they find Ferncliff on Instagram, are interested, and leave when booking gets hard. After: they book a first session.
2. **Members.** Now: they know Ferncliff but can't book on their phones. After: they book sessions on their phones.

3. **Corporate groups.** How they book now: not known `[NEEDS: how corporate groups book today, from Tom]`.
4. **Kids' parties.** Now booked by email. After: `[NEEDS: whether party and corporate bookings move online in this project or stay as enquiries, from Hannah and Tom]`.

Who the site is not for: `[NEEDS: from Hannah]`.

6. The single most important thing

> **A first-time climber who finds Ferncliff on their phone can book a session without giving up.**

7. What we know that helps

- Instagram is where many new climbers first find Ferncliff (Hannah's estimate). `[HYPOTHESIS]` So most first visits come from a phone.
- A line people use about Ferncliff: friendliest wall in Yorkshire. A member said it at an AGM, and Ferncliff says everyone uses it now. It is that member's words, passed on, so use it to guide the feel of the work, but do not publish it on the site, or credit it to anyone, until it is cleared `[NEEDS: the member's permission and how they want to be credited, from Hannah]`.
- The relaunch lands on a real milestone: ten years, marked by the open day.
- Tom knows the booking system and the front desk. He is the person to ask about how bookings work today.

8. What to avoid

- What has failed: booking that doesn't work on a phone; party bookings handled by email.
- Publishing the "friendliest wall" line before it is cleared.
- Treating the 40% as a promise. It is Ferncliff's working aim, with no starting figure yet.
- What Ferncliff dislikes, what the chain gym and other walls all do, and any legal or brand limits: not covered `[NEEDS: from Hannah]`.

9. Scope and deliverables

In scope:

- A new website for Ferncliff, with session booking that works on phones.
- Booking connected to Ferncliff's booking system `[NEEDS: which system they use (Mindbody or the older one), and whether it can be built into the site or only linked to, from Tom]`.
- Pages: not yet agreed `[NEEDS: the page list, from Owen with Ferncliff]`.
- Content: `[NEEDS: what copy and photos exist, what needs writing, and who writes it, from Hannah]`.

Out of scope:

- The social media campaign for the relaunch (see "Separate briefs to come").
- New logo or brand identity: not asked for `[NEEDS: confirm the current logo and colours stay as they are, from Hannah]`.

10. Mandatories

- Booking works on phones.
- Live before the open day on 14 March 2027 `[PROVISIONAL]`.
- Ferncliff's existing logo `[NEEDS: logo files in a usable format, from Hannah]`.

- Colours: described as "green-ish" `[NEEDS: the colour values or any brand guidelines, from Hannah]`.
- Accessibility target `[NEEDS: from Owen, agreed with Ferncliff]`.
- Platform, hosting and who maintains the site after launch `[NEEDS: from Owen, agreed with Ferncliff]`.

11. Voice and taste

Little to go on yet. The "friendliest wall" line shows how at least some members see the place. `[HYPOTHESIS]` The site should feel welcoming to someone who has never climbed. Sites they like, sites they don't, and what would make them wince: `[NEEDS: from Hannah]`.

12. Timeline

- **14 March 2027** `[PROVISIONAL]`: 10th birthday open day. No year was given; 2027 is assumed. The site has to be live before it `[NEEDS: confirm the year, and how far ahead of the open day the site must be live, from Hannah]`.
- Board chair sign-off is needed (see section 14) `[NEEDS: when the board chair can review and sign off, from Hannah]`.
- Working schedule from kickoff to launch `[NEEDS: from Owen]`.

13. Budget

Owen holds the budget for this project. Take any question about cost, licences or paid tools to Owen.

14. Decisions and approvals

- Ferncliff's board chair signs off anything over £5k, so the website needs the board chair's sign-off `[NEEDS: the board chair's name, and whether they sign off the design, the finished site or both, from Hannah]`.
- Day-to-day approver at Ferncliff `[NEEDS: from Hannah]`.
- Number of review rounds `[NEEDS: from Owen]`.
- At Tidewater Studio: Owen.

15. How we'll judge it

Success, in Ferncliff's terms:

- More bookings made online, with a working aim of about 40% of all bookings within a year `[PROVISIONAL]`, counted against a starting figure still to come.
- Members can book sessions on their phones.
- New climbers coming from Instagram stop giving up at the booking page `[NEEDS: how drop-off at booking will be measured, from Tom]`.
- Live in time for the open day.

Failure, in Ferncliff's terms: `[NEEDS: what would count as this not working, from Hannah]`.

16. Open questions

What's needed	From whom	By when
Which booking system they use, and whether it can be built into the site or only linked	Tom	Before design starts
Whether party and corporate bookings move online in this project	Hannah and Tom	Before design starts

What's needed	From whom	By when
How corporate groups book today	Tom	Before design starts
Today's share of bookings made online, and how it will be counted	Tom	Before launch
How drop-off at booking will be measured	Tom	Before launch
Confirm the year of the open day, and how far ahead the site must be live	Hannah	At kickoff
Board chair's name, what they sign off, and when they can review	Hannah	At kickoff
Day-to-day approver at Ferncliff	Hannah	At kickoff
Number of review rounds	Owen	At kickoff
Working schedule from kickoff to launch	Owen	At kickoff
Page list	Owen with Ferncliff	Before design starts
What copy and photos exist, what needs writing, who writes it	Hannah	Before design starts
Logo files	Hannah	Before design starts
Colour values or brand guidelines	Hannah	Before design starts
Confirm the logo and colours stay as they are	Hannah	Before design starts
Accessibility target	Owen with Ferncliff	Before design starts
Platform, hosting and who maintains the site	Owen with Ferncliff	Before build starts
The chain gym's name	Hannah	Before design starts
Who the site is not for	Hannah	Before design starts
What Ferncliff dislikes, what rivals all do, legal or brand limits	Hannah	Before design starts
Sites they like and don't, and what would make them wince	Hannah	Before design starts
The member's permission to use the "friendliest wall" line, and the credit	Hannah	Before the line is published
What would count as this not working	Hannah	At kickoff

Not covered by the answers or the call (to raise at kickoff, not in a second form):

- The current site's analytics: visits, where they come from, where people leave.
- How the business makes its money across sessions, memberships, groups and parties, and which matters most.
- What makes Ferncliff different from the chain gym, in facts.
- What already works: how recent new climbers and members actually found Ferncliff, beyond Instagram.
- Ferncliff's story and what it stands for as a co-op.
- What has been tried before on the website or bookings, and what came of it.
- Payments: whether bookings are paid online, and through what.

Separate briefs to come

- **Social media campaign for the relaunch.** Ferncliff would like one "if there's budget". It is not part of this brief and needs its own once Owen and Ferncliff agree whether it is funded `[NEEDS: whether there is budget for it, and whether it comes out of the website budget, from Hannah]`.

Sources

- Ferncliff's Pre-Brief answers, shared by Owen on 21 November 2026: the 2017 site, phone booking, the chain gym, the four audiences and their order, the 40% working aim, the "friendliest wall" line and where it came from, the website budget, the campaign, the open day date, the booking system question, the logo and colours.
- Owen's notes from the call with Hannah and Tom: their roles, Instagram and drop-off at the booking page, party bookings by email, the board chair's sign-off above £5k.
- Owen, 21 November 2026: the brief goes to the developer and designer only; Owen holds the budget.