

COMMUNITY SHOP CASE STUDY



Ashwater Village Shop Devon



KEY DETAILS

Primary trading activity Shop

Amount raised for business £90,000

Official opening date November 2010

Number of members 200

Number of volunteers 25

Population area served 650

Other activities on offer include

Food bank basket, fundraising events and activities, local produce, Post Office

About Ashwater Village Shop

Ashwater is a remote, self-contained community in the Torridge District of Devon, one of the most financially impoverished regions of both the county and England.

A committee of volunteers was formed to seek a mandate from the community to explore the possibility of setting up a 'not for profit' Community Shop and Post Office for the local people, following the closure of the previous shop and Post Office.

Journey

Following the backing of the Parish Council and District Councillor, advice was secured from the Rural Shops Alliance and the Plunkett Foundation. The team went to visit other community shops, researching the advantages, disadvantages and potential for establishing a similar enterprise in Ashwater.

Various grants were obtained which, along with around £40,000 raised, triggered a successful loan application enabling the purchase of a bespoke portable building. This was then equipped, fitted out and stocked ready for business just 10 months after the closure of the previous shop/Post Office.



Fundraising

The community is very important to Ashwater Village Shop and threads of connection run through every part of the village. The shop team do as much fundraising as possible, for the shop, as well as fundraising for causes close to the hearts of the community.

In 2017, the team held an event called "I'm a Local Celebrity" raising money for two young girls that had lost their lives to cancer. The shop felt that getting together and raising money in memory of the girls, was not only helping the charities but brought the community together. It was an outstanding success, and the generosity of the community seemed to know no bounds offering time, skills and manpower to help.

Impact

Ashwater Village Shop supports local people for many reasons. Firstly, it is 'the village's shop' with the management committee acting as custodians keeping village life alive and thriving, showing the next generation how to carry on that level of care. Without the shop and Post Office, daily groceries and banking needs would take locals at least 8 miles out of the village.

The shop also helps provide a social network throughout the village and surrounding areas through volunteering and their fundraising efforts. Currently, they have approximately 25 volunteers taking 2-4 hour shifts for the community shop which is a huge help to the management committee.

It is also has a positive social impact on those living in the community. One volunteer said: "I have been volunteering in the shop since 2015, the shop has been and will continue to be a big part of my life, Having M.S means my world can be pretty small compared to others my age and volunteering in the shop has given me something positive to focus on. As well as helping others, the shop has helped keep me active, give me a great sense of purpose and helps me stay part of our community. If it wasn't for volunteering, I would be mostly at home on my own during the day."



Plunkett's role

Ashwater Village Shop were crowned winners at Plunkett's 2018 Rural Community Ownership Awards for their work in investing in local people. Additionally, they were involved with a round of filming case-study style films for Plunkett Foundation.