

COMMUNITY SHOP CASE STUDY



Hampstead Norreys Oxfordshire



KEY DETAILS

Primary trading activity Shop

Official opening date March 2011

Number of members 550

Number of volunteers 50

Population area served 832 (2011 data)

Other activities on offer include

Café, eco-bricking scheme, local produce, parcel collection, prescription drop & delivery, recycling point

About Hampstead Norreys Community Shop

The Community Shop is at the heart of the village: it is a vital part of village life and is financially successful. The main issue solved by having the shop is community cohesion, but the shop also addresses most of the problems listed.

Before the shop opened, most people travelled six miles or more to buy goods and the village lacked a social and focal point. Now the broad range of products and services caters for a wide-ranging customer base from the immediate community and beyond.

Journey

When villagers lost both their shop and post office, residents were deprived of an important local service and community space. Deciding to take action, the villagers came together to set up a community shop and social hub – Hampstead Norreys Community Shop.

They found a new site, raised funds through donations, grants and a community share offer, and in 2011 opened the new facility. Run with the support of over 50 volunteers, the business provides a place for residents to meet, sells locally sourced products and offers a wide range of services. A majority of the village's 800 residents own shares in the community shop and get to input into the shop's direction.

Diversification

Many local people were becoming increasingly concerned about impact on the environment. As individuals, it is easy to feel disempowered and frustrated – despite our best intentions it is extremely difficult to reduce the amount of plastic obtained when shopping. Recycling of plastic in the area of West Berkshire is limited to bottles only, so almost all plastic used goes to landfill.



To date, Hampstead Norreys Community Shop has:

- Sourced and introduced a range of eco-friendly products including shampoo bars and beeswax wraps (to replace clingfilm)
- Reviewed practices, introduced recycling where possible and reduce single-use plastic
- Produced educational material to inform customers of different types of plastic, and the cost implications of changing current practice
- Created an external sign (the 'Watering hole') to show cyclists they refill water bottles for free
- Introduced 'eco-bricking' - this is a way of removing single-use plastic from the environment

Impact

The team have been amazed and gratified at the positive, local response to their initiatives - keen to see the shop promoting eco-friendly products and support for the originality of the eco-bricking scheme. Although not all suggestions are viable, the team remain pleased by the level of interest. Many customers have expressed (pleasant) surprise that, despite being a small shop, they actively promote sustainability and a few visitors from far-flung areas have sought advice as to how they could instigate projects of their own.

The team see themselves at the beginning of a journey to ensuring the local community are actively thinking and supporting eco-friendly.

Plunkett's role

Hampstead Norreys were crowned winners at Plunkett's 2018 Rural Community Ownership Awards for their work in diversifying to make a difference. Additionally, they have been involved with a number of key Plunkett events and activities since opening up.

