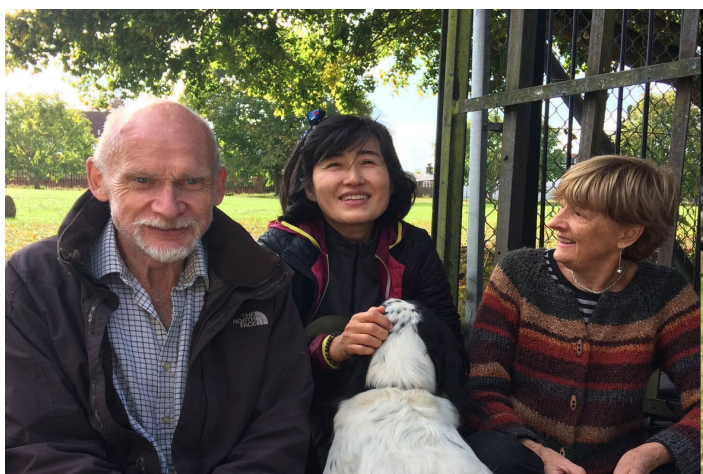


COMMUNITY SHOP

CASE STUDY

Talking Shop Oxfordshire



KEY DETAILS

Primary trading activity Shop

Amount raised for business £20,000

Official opening date November 2016

Number of members 120

Number of volunteers Over 100

Population area served 1,200

Other activities on offer include

Café, 'pay what you can' lunch, Saturday market, good neighbour scheme, bike mechanic team, gardening team

About Talking Shop

Sandford Talking Shop is a community business through and through, showing what can be achieved when local people work together, shaping and running something for their own neighbourhood, to meet local needs.

Journey

Talking Shop was established in 2011 as a weekly market, run by local volunteers, to build the experience and raise the funds for a community shop. In a village that had lost its school, local pub and post office, this was needed as much for the social hub as for the shopping.

Through the market, Talking Shop created a vital focal point around which the local community came together. The original volunteer pool of 20 grew fivefold to over 100; those volunteers, through the market, generated £20,000; that money acted as seed funding to enable the redevelopment and extension of the village hall; creating in 2015 a space with the potential to be a community shop & café.

Services

Talking Shop offers a range of activities, which aim to address many issues facing the isolated, rural population. For example, every Monday they provide a free knit & stitch drop-in session offering a sociable, skills-sharing space. Additionally, they provide resources for people to come and join a gardening and bike team where they can learn new skills and interact with a wider array of local people.



A huge part of Talking Shop is the fantastic mix in their volunteer teams and across customers. In total, the shop has 120 volunteers bringing together a mix of people, including retirees from all walks of life, some young and older people rebuilding their lives after acute/ chronic mental ill health and newcomers to the village.

Impact

Talking Shop believe in providing a wide-array of facilities and services for the community, aiming to reduce social isolation and loneliness. Sandford has high economic inactivity, 10% pensioner poverty, 13% child poverty and above-average levels of adults in supported housing for mental ill-health. The weekly market was instantly a success; the community clearly needed a hub where people could come together, find out what was going on locally and just have some friendly company.

Over the past few years, Talking Shop has been working hard to break down barriers through mental health awareness training and mental health first aid training as well as shaping support for its volunteers.

A mental health professional, who refers people to Talking Shop, said: “(Talking Shop) provides a friendly, welcoming environment for volunteers. They enable volunteers to develop in a range of vocational skills...they are flexible in working with each person as an individual, helping to meet their needs and strengths.”

Plunkett's role

Talking Shop were crowned winners at Plunkett's 2018 Rural Community Ownership Awards for their work in tackling loneliness and isolation. Additionally, Talking Shop has been involved with a number of key Plunkett Foundation events and activities since opening up as a community shop and multi-purpose hub.

