



Hampstead Norreys Community Shop

Annual Report, 2016

Hampstead Norreys Community Shop is run by the community for the community. It offers local produce and a range of convenience and luxury products, and its products and services cater for a wide-ranging customer base from within the immediate community and beyond.

The Shop opened for business in March 2011, so 2015 was our fourth full year of trading. Over that time it has become a vital part of the fabric of village life, and a strong and vibrant community feel has developed. The network of around 50 volunteers that the Shop relies on to function has resulted in a great sense of active involvement and ownership in the shop by the local community. And with increasing participation from the younger generation in the village, volunteering has become a truly cross-generational activity.

We have benefitted from an enthusiastic and hardworking shop staff - led by Danielle Sivyer, who took over the role of shop manager in June 2015 - and a stable management committee. The Shop has come to be seen as a successful and inspirational business. The Plunkett Foundation uses our knowledge and expertise to support other ventures - they regularly ask us to host visits from communities looking to start or expand their own shops, and it has been gratifying to provide some support for new community shops in a way that others have generously supported us.

We have also noticed that, since the opening of our Shop, surrounding shops in the area have 'upped their game' and improved their offerings. We see this as a benefit to the area generally, with more places improving and giving people better quality choices. However, with the increased competition, the need to further develop and improve our own services and facilities became a serious consideration. In 2015 we saw a revenue decrease compared to the previous year, and that in turn affected our profitability. The notion of a shop extension was first discussed by the Committee in September 2014, as part of a debate on how we might offer improved cafeteria facilities and ensure the long-term sustainability of the business. Early consultation with the village revealed a very high level of support for the proposals.

During 2015 a huge amount of work was carried out to realize the vision. By May, a comprehensive business plan was in place, which helped us to secure a series of grants, including the national Power to Change lottery fund. In all

we secured over £220,000 in grants towards the total project cost. The rest was funded through community donations, boosted by match funding from West Berkshire's Greenham Common Trust, the sale of additional shares, loans from individuals within the community, and fund-raising events. After several submissions planning permission was granted and work commenced towards the end of the year.

We would like to thank everyone involved for all their hard work and dedication that has seen the project through to a successful conclusion. We are confident that our business plan for the shop extension and café is as sound as it can be, and will drive additional revenue for the business due to increased margins, more choice, and the opportunities for cross-selling. However, the continued support of shareholders and villagers is absolutely vital to support our enterprise, and to ensure the Hampstead Norreys Community Shop remains of service to the community for many years to come.

Following the AGM in June 2015, the shop Committee roles and responsibilities were as follows:

- John Abbott (chair, IT liaison)
- William Betts (secretary, admin, building, grants)
- Jane Dipple (products, marketing)
- Corinna Grace (human resources)
- Claire Hubbard (retail advisor)
- Mark Leaver (treasurer, finance)
- Lesley Ravenscroft (human resources/personnel)

An additional committee member, Caroline Mills, was co-opted onto the committee in February 2016, advising on retail management and helping to set up the café.

As always, we are very keen to encourage further community involvement in the running of the shop. If you would like to stand as a committee member, or serve as a shop volunteer, please let me know. Voting in of committee members for 2016-17 will take place during the annual general meeting, to be held on Thursday, June 30 in the shop.

Many thanks for your continued support.

John Abbott

Chairman, Shop Committee