



BRETFORTON COMMUNITY SHOP

Bretforton Community Shop named regional finalist in top awards

Bretforton Community Shop has made it to the finals of the Community Ownership Awards 2016, the only national awards programme recognising community co-operation around the UK.

Opened in December 2014, the Shop, which also has a small café, has rapidly become a hub for the whole community including local commuters as it has plenty of parking and is on the main road through Bretforton. Open 7 days a week, the shop relies on a team of over 50 volunteers, working alongside three part-time assistant managers. More than 250 local residents supported a community share offer to raise the money to build a new shop following the closure of the old village shop in 2013 and all have an equal say in ensuring the shop is run to support and benefit Bretforton.

The Community Ownership Awards are run by Plunkett Foundation, the national charity supporting people to set up and run community co-operatives – businesses that are owned and run democratically by large numbers of people from within their local area – to help overcome issues ranging from isolation and loneliness to poverty.

Chris Buckham, Chair of the Shop's Management Committee said: "Making it to the finals of these prestigious awards is a real tribute to the hard work and efforts of our staff and our volunteers who are constantly striving to make sure we deliver the kind of shop and hub that the village wants."

Bretforton Community Shop will now compete with other finalists to be crowned the best community owned co-operative in the Midlands Region by an expert judging panel. The winners will be announced at a special ceremony in London on Monday 28 November.

Peter Couchman, Chief Executive of Plunkett Foundation, said: "All over the UK and Ireland, people living in rural areas are taking matters into their own hands to address some of the challenges associated with rural life. Whilst living in the countryside can be wonderful, it can also be a struggle for many; for example, young families struggling to find work nearby or to afford to live locally; older people without families close by, or those who've recently retired and are looking for a new direction. Many rural people are experiencing loneliness, isolation or poverty because it's difficult to access a lot of the things that are needed to participate fully in society and modern life – things like a regular bus service, being able to buy affordable food at a local shop, having reliable access to the internet, or somewhere to socialise and meet people.

"At Plunkett, we've seen first-hand the transformative power of co-operation, which is why we help people to set up businesses that are owned and run by the community and that address some of the real challenges facing our rural communities today. The Community Ownership Awards are designed to help communities celebrate their own success and learn from each other, and to raise awareness about the co-operative model and community ownership to a wider audience."

-ENDS-

Bretforton Community Shop Ltd

Registered in England No. 32135R. 39 New St, Bretforton, Evesham, WR11 7JE

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About the Community Ownership Awards 2016:

The Community Ownership Awards are about celebrating the most inspiring examples of people in rural areas working together to improve their communities. They are designed to help communities celebrate their own success and learn from each other, and to raise awareness about the co-operative model and community ownership to a wider audience. For more information, visit the Awards website at:

www.communityownershipawards.com

About the Award Sponsors

Hastoe Housing Association is welcomed back as both overall sponsor and sponsor of the People's Choice Award. The Awards are also generously supported by: Co-operative and Community Finance; The Co-operative College; The National Federation of Retail Newsagents (NFRN); NFRN Mutual; The Phone Co-op; SUMA; Triodos Bank and WBC.

About Plunkett Foundation:

Plunkett Foundation (www.plunkett.co.uk) helps communities to take control of their challenges and overcome them together. They support people, predominantly in rural areas, to set up and run life-changing community co-operatives; enterprises that are owned and run democratically by large numbers of people in their community. They help people to tackle a range of issues, from isolation and loneliness to poverty, and come in many forms including shops, cafes, pubs and land-based initiatives, and everything in between.

About community co-operatives:

Community co-operatives can come in many forms: shops, pubs, bakeries, farms, community hubs, farmers' markets, woodlands, broadband projects – the list is endless. They are businesses, but they trade primarily for the benefit of their community. They are controlled by the community, and they have open and voluntary membership, actively encouraging people to get involved by becoming members. They do this by offering shares in the co-operative, the cost of which are set at a level that the majority of people will be able to afford. Click here for more information - <https://www.plunkett.co.uk/what-are-community-co-operatives>.

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