

BRENT KNOLL COMMUNITY SHOP *Limited*



OUR STORY SO FAR

Like so many villages, Brent Knoll has lost both its Post Office and its village shop. We lost our Post Office at the end of 2019, when the Post Master retired, and we lost our village shop on 1st March 2020 when the owner decided that the shop was no longer commercially viable.

While that was going on, we conducted a community consultation survey which revealed an overwhelming support for the idea of a Community Shop, with more than 40 people saying that they would volunteer their time and more than 90 people saying that they would invest in becoming share-holding members. That enabled us to secure the support of the Plunkett Foundation, which has helped more than 300 village shops to become successful community shops.

Then we were all hit by Covid-19!

Within ten days, we garnered the backing of enough volunteers – and the support of the shop-owner – to re-open the village shop as an ‘Emergency Shop’, to ensure that Brent Knoll residents retained access to vital supplies. Brent Knoll, which had no bus service, has a high number of elderly residents, many of whom had to self-isolate and had no access to cars for driving to supermarkets.

We then had to vacate the old village shop and moved to a Portakabin in the village green car park.

Our volunteer-led shop has gone from strength to strength and we plan to be sticking around for a lot longer.

Right now, our Parish Council is demolishing the public toilets and building new accessible toilets and a shell building for the Community Shop to rent. We have already lodged £26,000 to pay for the core elements, including solar panels, and have raised £thousand more through profitable trading, grants, and share sales to fully equip that shell.

Since launching the Emergency Shop as a team of volunteers, we have – with help from the Plunkett Foundation – become a registered Community Benefit Society (Brent Knoll Community Shop Limited): registered number 8416. This means that we are now established as a Community Benefit Society, controlled by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). That enabled us to open our own bank account, and to apply for grants.

As a Community Benefit Society, under the aegis of the Plunkett Foundation, we have now conducted a Membership Share-Sale, secured more than 160 shareholding members, and held our first three Annual Members' Meetings.

Those Annual Members' Meetings - plus subsequent co-options - elected the eight members of our Management Committee:

- David Yates (Chairman)
- Bob Smith, (Treasurer)
- Caroline Sturgess (Book-keeper)
- David Sturgess (Secretary)
- Kate Tucker (head of procedures)
- Kim Willcox (head of grant applications)
- Lucy White (head of purchasing)
- Michelle Cole (Vice Chair)

Since then, we have gone from strength to strength.

- **We continue to trade profitably;**
- **We are working with the Parish Council's redevelopment of the public toilets that includes a shell building for us to rent;**
- **The plan is that we receive the keys on 22nd November, ready for our shop-fitters to install everything from flooring to shelving;**
- **Our aim is to start trading from the new shop ahead of Christmas;**

- Meanwhile we're seeking people to join our wonderful team of more than 30 volunteers to enable us to extend our opening hours in the new shop - and we're planning an official opening event.

Village Green Car-Park, Brent Street, Brent Knoll, Somerset TA9 4EH

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Hours	Mon 08:30 – 12:00
Tue	08:30 – 12:00
Wed	08:30 – 17:00
Thu	08:30 – 17:00
Fri	08:30 – 17:00
Sat	08:30 – 16:00
Sun	08:30 – 12:00