

Worcestershire shop bell rings again with team effort at local pub

The Bell Inn at Lower Broadheath near Worcester now boasts a shop and post office in its garden, courtesy of the Lower Broadheath community, the National Lottery, The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, The Plunkett Foundation, Ei Group and Pub is The Hub.

Local MP Harriett Baldwin and Simon Townsend, Ei Group's Chief Executive, were on hand to officially open the shop and post office alongside pub licensees, Ian and Lyndsey Davies and the community volunteers hosting the event.

The closure of the village shop and Post Office in May 2017 set the residents on a journey to re-instate these two essential services. The Lower Broadheath Community Benefit Society was created by the residents of Lower Broadheath to fundraise for a cabin and Ian came forward to suggest siting it in the garden of The Bell Inn.

Ian Davies said: "When the community suggested re-opening a village shop and Post Office, I stepped forward straight away to offer our help at the pub."

A share sale led to over £39,000 being raised by the local community along with a further £20,000 in other grants and £3,000 from Pub is The Hub. Ei Group, who own The Bell Inn, and Ian and Lyndsey arranged for the necessary legal permissions for the cabin to be positioned at the pub and it arrived in November 2018. Both shop and post office have been operating since the Spring 2019.

The shop is selling household essentials, locally sourced produce and newspapers while the Post Office saves locals from a four-mile round trip out of the village. Opening hours for the shop are 8am to 6pm from Monday to Friday; 8.30am to 12.30am on Saturday and 8.30am to 10.30am Sunday; while the Post Office is open for slightly fewer hours from 10am to 3pm from Monday to Friday and 10am to 12pm on Saturday. Both are staffed almost entirely by 50 community volunteers, with the exception of two part-time managers and local residents, Jessica Ronan and Victoria Howells, who started earlier this week.

Mark Glossop, Chairman of Lower Broadheath Community Shop Ltd, said: “The social centre has proved a great meeting place for the community, especially the lonely and the isolated. We have Mums from the village with their children through to pensioners using the shop. Our shop volunteers, many of whom are retired, have also said that their new roles have given them a sense of purpose and they feel useful again and they also really enjoy meeting the community. We also have young people gaining work experience.”

John Longden, Chief Executive of Pub is The Hub said: “This project has been a huge team effort by the community – and with support from grants, fundraising, a unique location to site the shop and lots of goodwill. When essential services like shops and post offices are lost to a community it can have a devastating impact, so working with the local pub that can cater to a community’s needs is a great option.

“It is testament to the community’s determination and organisational skills that they have pulled it off in such an extraordinarily successful way!”

(End)



For more information about:

- Pub is The Hub - contact Lisa Harlow on 07917 757860 or email lisa@lisaharlow.co.uk <https://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/>
- The Bell Inn - contact Ian and Lyndsey Davies on Tel: 01905 640220 <http://www.thebellinnbroadheath.co.uk/>
- The Lower Broadheath Community Pub Ltd - contact Jess Ronan or Victoria Howells on 01905 641512 or email info@lowerbroadheathshop.com <https://www.lowerbroadheathshop.com/>

Lisa Harlow Ltd
Mob: 07917 757860