

Village celebrates 10 years of community volunteer support

It is 10 years since BBC North West covered the opening of Gawsworth Community Shop and now they are busy preparing to celebrate their 10th birthday on the 10th March this year.

Back in 2011, a group of local village residents raised funds from a community share offer, grants and donations to buy their village shop, the last remaining shop in their rural community.

It created a hive of activity that has provided opportunities for customers and volunteers aged 14yrs to 80+ that were brought together and benefited from this unique community project.

The shop is an integral part of village life, open 7 days a week thanks to an army of just under 50 dedicated volunteers, many of which have been involved since the day it opened. The shop is owned by the community and run by volunteers for the benefit of the community.

During COVID 19 multiple lockdowns, the shop has still thrived. It has continued to provide a wide range of delicious locally sourced products including gifts and cards, in addition to everyday household provisions and has been an essential lifeline to many of the elderly, isolated residents and those having to work from home.

In 2019 Gawsworth Community Shop shareholders supported the reinvestment of surplus income into the purchase of the adjoining ground floor flat to create a Community Hub.

The local John Upton Charity supported the project providing funding to enable the integration of the two buildings. A successful application for National Lottery Reaching Communities Funding provided £53k of funding to make the required structural alterations to enable access to all and to employ a part time Hub Manager to develop and deliver a range of community information, support and social activities.

As a direct result of COVID 19 restrictions, local residents have been unable to come into the Hub, so the Hub has gone out to the community with weekly quizzes and newsletter delivered to the door. The local community were encouraged to use lockdown time to utilise their craft skills and make items for the Hub to sell, raising over £2,000 for local charities.

The birthday party that had been planned for March will now be deferred until later in the year but the 10th March will not go unnoticed, there will be special recognition of this milestone for all customers visiting the shop on this day. Ray Shaw, Chairman would like to thank all employees and volunteers past and present, and all supporters and users of the shop in helping us to reach this amazing milestone.

For more information visit www.gawsworthshop.co.uk