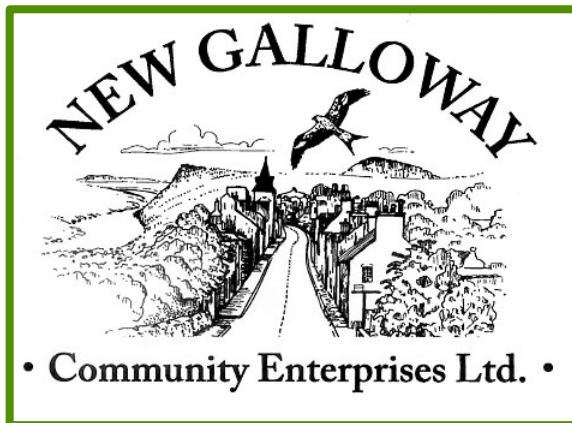




Report on the Year 2017-18

On 1st October 2017, as our financial year began, our community shop had been operating for less than three months. Although still in its old premises it had quickly been transformed through the imaginative leadership and energy of the General Retail Manager, Lynsey Hogg, supported by her assistants. They had extended the opening hours, expanded the stock range - while maintaining the basic necessities - and refreshed the appearance. A new layout allowed customers to browse the stock. People were already noticing, and appreciating, the efficient service and warm welcome.

This was very satisfying, but as the 1st of October 2017 dawned we knew we were only at the beginning of our project. In the year ahead we were to address an immense work load: we were committed to refurbishing the building, creating a new shop, converting the house into high-quality self-catering accommodation, and launching a totally innovative community engagement service.

That's what kept us busy in the year to September 30th 2018. By then we were employing no fewer than six staff members (five on a part-time basis). We were also providing casual work to three more, arguably making us one of New Galloway's largest employers. This had been one of our objectives from the start and we are proud of this achievement and hope to build on it.

A thriving shop

During the year the shop continued to thrive and engage with the community. There was a tremendous response to our request for 'glut' fruit and vegetables and numerous gardeners donated surplus fresh produce, including the children of Kells Primary School who also helped in designing window displays. The shop secured an alcohol licence and staff underwent the required training. Christine Rankin provided a first aid awareness session.



The old shop in the first weeks of community ownership.

...as the 1st of October 2017 dawned we knew we were only at the beginning of our project.

There has been a steady increase in the range of produce sourced from local suppliers, another of our objectives as a community shop. Several of these traders featured in our Christmas Tasting evening. Branded shopping bags and personalised gift hampers generated interest and business. After some initial difficulties an electronic card reader was installed. Sourcing appropriate stock-monitoring software proved a

challenge and various options were explored. Facebook postings quickly built up a social media following and news of new products or events spread quickly.

Throughout the year the shop consistently outperformed the turnover targets set in the original Business Plan, even during our period in temporary premises, which we will return to shortly.

Our proposal to the Big Lottery (BLF) included the provision of volunteering opportunities for people seeking experience to rejoin the workforce after a period of absence. Izzy Ross has been our first volunteer in the role and has made a significant contribution to the operation while gaining invaluable experience. This has already led to her seasonal employment in the tourist trade. She is now hopeful of a permanent retail post thanks to her shop experience.

The Mission of New Galloway Community Enterprises Ltd is to work with the people of New Galloway to revitalise and sustain the economic and social well-being of our community.

The shop, however, is only one of three major strands to the proposal we had successfully submitted to the Big Lottery Fund (BLF), the others being community engagement and the provision of self-catering accommodation.

Promoting community engagement

Creating the post of part-time Community Engagement Worker (CEW) was an imaginative element in our bid to the BLF. The job is designed to foster the economic and social well-being of the



community. It reflected recurring references in our surveys to the shop having a vital social role at the heart of the community. People wanted the shop not just as a place to buy daily essentials, but as a place for bringing people together, to share news and ideas and to make things happen. The idea also attracted the interest of

voluntary and statutory organisations who immediately saw the value of having a point of contact in New Galloway.

The BLF responded with five years of funding, and recruitment started in the autumn of 2017. Not surprisingly the post attracted a strong field of local candidates. The Board of NGCE set up a rigorous two-stage interview process including role-playing exercises and experts from outside the community. Sam Rushton emerged as the successful candidate and took up post at the beginning of January 2018. She lives in New Galloway, has a background in teaching and child support, and runs her own dance business.

Sam rapidly made contacts throughout the community, working with organisations such as LING and GCAT as well as the local council and health board and national charities. Projects quickly followed, ranging from an Alzheimers Awareness workshop to hosting Citizen Advice surgeries. Working with Active Sports, Sam arranged for the installation of goalposts on the playing field. These are now actively used by all ages throughout the year, attracting 37 players on one summer evening. Sam has also established a business club to encourage networking opportunities among local businesses and regular ladies' sport sessions at the Galloway Activity Centre (see front

page picture), to name only a sample of her projects. During the year, with support from Janosh Schnee, a student attachee (engaged at no cost through the



Participants in the Alzheimers Awareness workshop with their certificates.

Bright Green Business project), she prepared the groundwork for the oil fuel buying cooperative which is now (2019) operating with great success.

While the shop and community engagement progressed, refurbishment of the building was delayed when we had to appoint a new quantity surveyor, McGowan Miller. The building contracts went out to tender to five contractors in December, and in January we appointed Luce Bay. They came on site on 3rd April 2018 to renovate the shop and convert the house into two self-catering units.

By this time the shop had moved to temporary premises in Kitty's Tearoom. The move was assisted by many of our shareholders who take their sense of ownership seriously. They spent a couple of days ferrying stock and equipment up the High Street. Lynsey Hogg and her staff adapted the shop operations to fit the tearoom with great imagination and effort and our customers loyally followed us.

Our stay at Kitty's proved longer than expected. Back at our own building there were some surprising encounters with old field drains and the water table proved challenging. Some of the roof beams turned out to be less than adequate. The most noticeable exterior change in the appearance of the building was the addition of an extra dormer window. Unusually this addition to a building in a conservation area improved the appearance, as well increasing light inside. After four months, work was sufficiently

advanced on the building to allow the shop to return.

An open evening gave everyone the chance of a preview. The redesigned shop, fitted out by local company Good One Ltd, won widespread approval, especially among those who had feared it might lose its 'village shop' character. Long-standing residents were delighted to see the historic window above the door had been



The new football goals - another initiative organised by Community Engagement Worker Sam Rushton - have proved popular all year.

retained, with its 'R.S.Kay' licensee inscription. The antique weighing scales, now a feature in the shop, were the generous donation of the Gordon family. The omission of a chair for customers who might need a rest was noted by viewers. Around the same time we had received a donation from the friends and family of the late Joan McCosh. The family agreed that a chair would be a suitable purchase and Livingstons of Castle Douglas provided a period bentwood chair at a preferential price.

The open evening was also an opportunity for an early viewing of the self-catering accommodation. There was much interest and many favourable comments on the facilities and appearance. Those anxious that we might lose the marble meat counter from the old shop were relieved to see it has been successfully incorporated in one of the bathrooms, still with the knife marks of generations of carvers.

New accommodation

The shop opened for business on 14th August as work continued on the apartments. Progress slowed as more trades and subcontractors became involved. However an excellent working relationship between our Project Manager, Helen Keron, Board members including Emma Curtis, who provided a free interior design service, our architectural consultant, Marc Henkelman, and our contractors, Luce Bay, (especially Jock, the perpetually helpful and good humoured site foreman), meant that by the end of September it was obvious that we were on the way to creating two very impressive apartments to create a sustainable income stream for NGCE and the benefit of the community.

A request to Members for suggestions for names for the apartments brought dozens of replies and the Board finally opted for Stroan and Skerrow,



The shop re-opens, with extra dormer, new interior, and preserved window sign.



named after two of our beautiful local lochs.

A marketing strategy for the accommodation was prepared led by vice-chair Jean Marsden, working with Lynsey Hogg who will be responsible for managing the lets. Talks were initiated with Castle Douglas-based Discover Scotland to act as our agents. Visit Scotland was consulted with a view to achieving a four-star rating. Meanwhile, final fitting out continued and installation of a wood pellet boiler and completion of the plumbing were awaited as the year ended.

Many to thank

2017-18 was an exhausting year but also one of many achievements. We have many people to thank for that. Thanks must start with the Big Lottery's 'Growing Community Assets' programme which recognised the potential of our project and backed us. They were supportive throughout the year and we maintained a very constructive dialogue with them.

I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of NGCE, the hard work and generous support of many people.

The creation of the Community Engagement Worker post was new territory. We were greatly helped by the expertise of former Board member, Mary Smith who has been co-opted onto Sam's support team alongside Margaret Watson. Christine Clark of Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway and Ivy Stanley, formerly general manager of Stewartry Abbeyfield, provided vital outside

expertise and independent scrutiny in the appointment process. Actor Cath Monk ensured candidates had a challenging client to deal with in the role-play tests. Christine Rankin's expertise in safeguarding matters has been of great value. We are very grateful to all those who helped establish this vital post for the community. **Continued >>**

Management Committee (Board) Membership : 1 March 2018 - 7 March 2019

The year in brackets is the year of the AGM at which each member's current 3-year term expires.

David Briggs [2020]
Michael Brown - Chair [2020]
Emma Curtis [2020 - resigning 2019]
Jean Marsden - Vice Chair [2020]
Jon Nimmo - [2021]

Christine Rankin - [2021 - resigning 2019]
Dawn Spernagel - Treasurer [2020]
Margaret Watson - Secretary [2020]
Joan Walker - [2021]

Finding suitable temporary accommodation for the shop was essential. We were relieved and grateful when Sylvia Brown agreed to rent us Kitty's Tearoom. Of course the tearoom furniture had to go somewhere, so we were greatly indebted to William Johnstone for the use of his garage, for somewhat longer than expected. Various others kindly gave house room to odd bits of equipment.

We have had support and encouragement from our Members and the New Galloway Community at large. We appreciate the way they generally put up with the noise and dust of having a construction site in the High Street. We hope that, seeing the completed building and the services it is providing, they will feel it was worth it.

Finally this would not have happened without the tremendous work of our Project Manager, Helen Keron, Community Engagement Worker, Sam

Rushton, and General Retail Manager, Lynsey Hogg, and her staff and the untiring commitment of my colleagues on the Board. Emma Curtis and Christine Rankin are standing down because of pressure of other commitments. Emma's contribution to the development of the apartments has been immense and Christine has willingly shared her expertise in health and safety. We will miss them and hope to call on them again. Meanwhile we look forward to welcoming new members, bringing their skill and energy to our cause.

I think we will always remember our first full year of operation and the creation of our wonderful shop and accommodation. I do believe it has been worth all the effort.

Mike Brown, Chair

Declarations of Interest in the Financial Year

1st October 2017 - 30th September 2018

Board Members

Dawn Spernagel: Co-owner of 'Love to Eat'
David Briggs: Co-owner of the Smithy Tearoom, New Galloway [until 12 Jan 2018]
Emma Curtis: Director, Glenkens Community & Arts Trust : Director, Good One Ltd
Craig Millar: [Left Board 1 March 2018] Vice Chair, New Galloway & Kells Community Council: Vice Chair, Local Initiatives New Galloway (LING)
Margaret Watson: Director, Glenkens Community & Arts Trust

Management Staff

Helen Keron, Project Manager: Co-owner of "Love to Eat" : Director, Glenkens Community & Arts Trust: Director, Galloway Glens Partnership : Director, Third Sector Dumfries and Galloway

'Love to Eat' products are stocked in the New Galloway Community Shop.

Good One Ltd successfully tendered for the fitting-out of the shop and construction of the kitchen and smaller bedroom in unit two of the accommodation.

NGCE undertakes collaborative ventures with LING and GCAT and hires their facilities.

The Smithy Tearoom has hosted NGCE events.

Marion Briggs has been employed as a shop assistant on a casual contract since Jan 2018.

About us

New Galloway Community Enterprises Ltd (NGCE) is a Community Benefit Society owned by its Members (shareholders) and governed by a Management Committee (Board) appointed by them. NGCE is established under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act, 2014, and is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, registered number, 7143.

Contact us

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NGCE5000@gmail.com : Facebook: New Galloway Community Shop and Enterprises

Twitter: @NGCommShop