

This shop's success is because of the hard work, determination and support of literally hundreds of people from our community!



The  
Village  
Shop  
WIGGINTON

The story  
behind our  
Shop & Cafe

[www.wiggintonshop.org.uk](http://www.wiggintonshop.org.uk)

Our journey started back in 2016, when Rebecca Fleckney moved to Wigginton and spotted that, while the village has a thriving social scene, public house and two churches, there was a gap in where people could go to meet on their own terms. A survey of the village and the surrounding Hilltop Villages revealed a strong appetite for a village shop and café; a community hub that would also serve as a shop window for local producers, built, owned and managed by the community - our shop is run mostly by volunteers! Joined by Simon Crichton (treasurer) and Deborah Simcock (vice chair & marketing), the three would become the original founding management committee, a plan began to emerge.

A huge working party soon formed, to fulfil the many aspects needed to drive the project forward. Let's be clear, this shop is what it is because of the hard work of many people: an architect, a planning expert, structural engineer, fundraisers, cake bakers, book keeper, website builder, volunteers to pound the streets to gather support; HR, marketing and retail experts; a lawyer, environmental consultant, interior designer, decorator, joiner, electrician and builders, The list goes on and on...

**2016** - Towards the end of the year, a wonderful team of volunteers visited around 640 homes to canvas support by answering a survey. We used the results to create a proposal for the shop that was presented to the Parish Council at its December meeting - it received strong support!

**2017** - We formed a Community Benefits Society so we were official! We received advice from the Plunkett Foundation, a charity that advises and supports community owned businesses. And invaluable support from community shops near and far, including Wilstone, The Lee, North Marston and Hughenden Valley, who were so generous in giving their insights as well as inviting us to go and work volunteer shifts to understand what's involved in running a shop of this nature.

Having eventually settled on this site to build the proposed shop, a series of fundraising events paid for the professional services needed to draw up the lease with the Parish Council who own the sports field; and the architectural drawings so we could submit the planning proposal, with support from Dacorum Borough Councillor at the time, Stan Mills.

**2018** - We held a Public Exhibition and opened our share offer to raise the funds needed to build our shop. We were blown away by the response - 184 people from our community bought shares, raising £89,500 which was match funded by Big Society Capital. Soon after Rebecca stepped down, and Debbie Meech took the role as chair, and by this time Caroline Burrage (grants) and Terri Baker (people) had also joined the committee.

We secured grants totalling £36,750 from LEADER, who funded the building's structure, Big Lottery Fund, Dacorum, Shanly Homes, Turpin Trust and Chiltern Society who all contributed to kitting out the kitchen and café.

With planning permission granted, the contract to build the shop was put out to tender and awarded to local business Datum Point Construction.

The build started in September. Around this time we appointed the shop's manager, the wonderful Sally Clarke, and having recruited around 75 amazing volunteers, we trained a core team of 40 so we could open our doors for the first time at 8am Saturday 1st December 2018.