

# Morebattle Community Shop



The villagers of Morebattle in the Scottish Borders have run a thriving community shop and outreach Post Office since January 2019. Without community ownership, residents would have faced a fourteen-mile round trip to the nearest supermarket in Kelso. The village has a population of around 270 and there are a further 500 or so people in the surrounding Kale Water area. Morebattle is on the St Cuthbert's Way which runs from Melrose to Lindisfarne, making the shop a popular stop off point for walkers and cyclists.

The village's community ownership journey started when the previous owner, who was keen to retire, called a village hall meeting to discuss the future of the business. The meeting was packed and an open call for interested people to take the project forward led to a Steering Group being set up.

The village has an older demographic and there are twelve units of specialist housing for people with mobility problems in Morebattle, so having a local shop was particularly important. The community was awarded £143,000 by the Scottish Land Fund (SLF) and raised the rest of the money they needed through a very successful Community Share Offer. The community set up a Community Benefit Society, Morebattle Community Shop Ltd, which allowed them to raise funds this way.

**Community Shares Scotland provided the support they needed and they raised an amazing £62,300.** Like all new shop businesses, they needed money in the bank to buy stock and keep equipment up to date, so the Community Share income was used for both match-funding the SLF grant and getting the business off to a good start.



The community was awarded

**£143,000** by the Scottish Land Fund





The turnover of the business has significantly increased to **£255,000** a year.

They also received help from the Plunkett Foundation, which provides support to community-owned businesses, particularly shops and pubs. The purchase included a flat above the shop and a small garden to the rear of the property.

The flat is rented out to a long-term tenant. Thanks to work of the Committee and volunteers, the shop didn't have to close during the handover from the private owner to the community.

A retail consultant was employed for a fixed term, an existing member of staff was TUPE-ed over and one stayed on as a volunteer, this provided continuity.



The business is run by a combination of staff and volunteers. The business employs two job-share Shop Managers who are supported by a volunteer team of 19.

The shop has a large age range amongst its volunteers and they've found that young people particularly benefit from the confidence building aspect of working in a community shop.

The volunteers all have access to a shop manual and receive initial training. They are also on a WhatsApp group which helps them coordinate cover if someone is on holiday or has an appointment.

Since the community purchased the shop, the turnover of the business has significantly increased to £255,000 a year.

They've taken advantage of being on the St Cuthbert's way by installing a coffee machine and providing seating both in front of the shop and in the garden to the rear of the property.



# The community aspect of their work is really important.

## Top Tips for other shops:

In the longer term, they hope to be able to be able to develop a covered area in the garden to protect people who want to stop and have a coffee from the elements. Passing walkers bring in around a fifth of the shop's income.

The community aspect of their work is really important. A Warm Welcome Social Space has been set up in the village and the shop is providing the tea, coffee and biscuits, they also take collections for the local foodbank and for Ukraine.

The shop also provides space for local raffles, fundraising for local groups and charities including the primary school, and also for individuals raising money through a raffle for larger charities with a particular focus.



It's helpful to have a Committee Member or another adviser who understands the funding and support environment



Get volunteers involved from the outset



The Committee needs to have a diversity of skills. Running a community shop requires different skills to running a private business

