



Case Studies

Please send us information about your campaign or others that you have heard of so that we can update the case studies section in future editions of this pack.

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Introduction

When you start your campaign, remember that you aren't the first person to try and support local shops – you can get lots of ideas from other places. These case studies vary in their size and style, but ultimately they have the same goals:

- to raise consumer awareness of the benefits of shopping in local shops vs shopping in big supermarkets,
- and to get consumers to shift at least some of their shopping from big supermarkets to local shops.

Whether they were run by a concerned individual or a city council, they all demonstrate what people can do to highlight the threats faced by independent shops and to how people can promote the diversity of shopping.

There are also examples of the next step that local shops can take – the promotion of local produce. Independents are already often the best and only place to buy locally produced food but we think that there's a lot more potential to make local food more widely available. But don't forget that at this stage of the campaign the most important thing is the protection of local shops in the first place.

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1) Shop Local Campaigns

First Stop Local Shop - Forest of Dean, Gloucestershire

First Stop Local Shop is a scheme designed to boost retail and support local shops in the Forest of Dean's four market towns. Retail support officers working at the Forest of Dean District Council manage and co-ordinate the campaign with support from local traders and two local papers. The newspapers run frequent stories about the campaign which helps to keep the public updated and enthusiastic.

It was launched in the autumn of 2005 and aims to support retailers by a number of schemes:

- **Retail Awards** for local shops
- **Loyalty Scheme** - offering rewards for residents shopping locally
- **Eating Out Guide/Mini Guide** - co-ordinated with the Forest of Dean tourism department, this will include shop listings for each town as well as food and drink, events and attractions.
- **Promotion of events** – they plan to involve retailers in the organisation and promotion of a local events programme.
- **Retailer Newsletter** – this quarterly publication provides a forum for retailers to use to gauge their thoughts on town related matters to raise awareness of activities and promotions.
- **Shopping directory** – an online directory of local shops and businesses.
- **Shop front grant scheme** – the council are offering grants of up to £1000 to local retailers to improve the appearance of their shop fronts.

The retail awards were the first stage of the scheme to be launched. Stanton's butchers in Cinderford's High Street won first prize in the scheme's "community working" category. After six years in business, the Cinderford butchers shop is doing a roaring trade and its owner has no fears about the coming of Tesco to Cinderford. He said:

"When I first opened, people said I was mad to open a shop in a town with three other butchers and a Co-op, Lidl and Spa which sell meat. But people are coming back to the butcher - we use all British meat and our staff are fantastic. We're close to the people, we're on first name terms with hundreds and hundreds."

Hundreds of people nominated businesses for the prize, demonstrating the keen public interest in the campaign. People who took part in the nominations were also entered into a prize draw to win vouchers for local shops. 'First Stop Local Shop' now plans to run the scheme again but on a larger scale. Over fifty shops have also already signed up to be involved in the reward card scheme which is due to be launched in April.

For more information go to:

http://www.firststoplocalshop.co.uk/content.asp?nav=&parent_directory_id=830&pagetype=&Positioning_Article_ID=&Language=

Christmas Promotions

For those of you wishing to run an ongoing campaign, Christmas can be an excellent time to increase local support and media interest. At a time when people are busily buying food and presents, encouraging them to shop locally can start a trend which will continue into the New Year.

The Scottish Borders Council and Radio Borders run an annual 'Christmas Shop Local' campaign for retailers and shoppers throughout the Scottish Borders. On 'Local Big Discount Days' in November and December 2005, local shops displaying Rudolph the Reindeer window stickers offered a 10% discount on a selection of Christmas products. The radio station also ran a competition for shoppers with till receipts from local shops.

For more information, please contact the Economic Development Section at Scottish Borders Council on 01835 826527 or ped@scotborders.gov.uk

In Somerset, the leader of the West Somerset District Council launched their 'shop locally' campaign by visiting local stores in a Santa suit. Getting local officials to participate in such stunts helps to gain media interest which will get the campaign noticed by the public. He said:

"Of course, there will always be some things you can't get locally and the internet is breaking down local and national boundaries. But I still believe that the bulk of our needs can be found within West Somerset. And this is especially important coming up to Christmas when local businesses - many of which have had a hard time recently - need all the support they can get."

Towns in the region also held late night shopping days to encourage people to spend their money locally. For example, 'Dunster by Candlelight' takes place every year on the first Friday and Saturday in December, when the village lights its streets with candles. All the local shops stay open late, and the event proves so popular that they have to run a park and ride scheme because the village gets too busy to park in.



Photograph by www.magicfingers.co.uk

For more information go to <http://www.dunsterbycandlelight.co.uk/>

Local Food Maps - Old Trafford, Manchester

Old Trafford is lucky in that its main street is still full of independent shops. However, a survey of local retailers found that most had suffered due to the opening of a Tesco Metro and a large ASDA superstore nearby. A local shopkeeper said *"the street is like a community centre, but it is losing that."* Some were doing okay because of the large multi-ethnic population's demand for goods that aren't easily found in supermarkets – but they were still affected. Others, including butchers, bakers and small convenience stores were close to going under.

A local campaigner decided to run a 'one stop shop' in the local library to find out what residents and retailers thought of the situation. Even this relatively small scale action managed to convince a fair few people that shopping locally was important for the area and the community. She said:

"The project in general has been met for the most part with interest by the shop keepers. They have all been fantastically helpful and their comments are true evidence of the detrimental effect of supermarket competition on local communities."

The next step in the campaign has been the production of a local food map, to show where people can shop to support their local stores. A launch event will coincide with the posting of the map to all residents in the area. The organiser of the scheme hopes that the seeds of interest will have already have been planted in people's minds by an article in a community newsletter – once again highlighting the importance of getting the media involved.

For more information go to <http://www.afsl.org.uk/livinglocal.htm>

Birmingham – Unique Shopping

In Birmingham city centre, fifty-nine independent retailers signed up to be part of a free promotional campaign and to be included in a 'unique shopping' leaflet. At the launch in 2004, fifty-nine balloons were released, one for each member of the scheme.



Image supplied by Birmingham City Centre Partnership

Hidden among the balloons was a "Golden Ticket" shopping voucher to be redeemed at any of the retailers featured in the leaflet. Each tag also had the details of one of the shops that signed up to the promotion. An interesting launch like this is always likely to increase the chances of getting valuable media attention.

Birmingham city centre has undergone a massive transformation over recent years so it was very important that the independent stores didn't get swamped by all the new developments. Birmingham's City Centre Director said:

"The individual, unique stores in Birmingham are a vital part of our vibrant and diverse city and it is important that these retailers receive as high a profile as any other developments within the city."

For more information about the scheme, and to see a copy of the leaflet, visit:

http://www.birmingham.gov.uk/GenerateContent?CONTENT_ITEM_ID=47680&CONTENT_ITEM_TYPE=0&MENU_ID=13710&EXPAND=12400

Middleton Tyas - Community Shops

Middleton Tyas is a small village on the northern boundary of North Yorkshire. With a population of 700, about half of the community is retired and the majority of the working population commute to employment centres throughout the region. There had been a shop in this village for at least a century but in April 2003 the sole village shop and Post Office closed. Facing the prospect of having no retail facilities within their community, local villagers decided to take a serious look at the problem.

They undertook a survey of local residents, and found that the clear majority wanted a local shop. They were lucky enough to have a vacant community controlled building already in the village - and with Grant aid from the Countryside Agency and DEFRA they managed to fund the necessary alterations to create the new village shop.

It was opened in August 2004 by local MP William Hague, and is now open 55 hours a week selling basic groceries, local produce, deli, greengrocery, drink, bread baked in-store, newspapers and magazines. Turnover is in excess of £2,000 per week. The shop employs two part time staff and eight volunteers.



Image supplied by ViRSA

Middleton Tyas is just one of many successful community shops across the country. For more examples visit www.virsa.org.

Town Centre Managers

Town Centre Managers and their equivalents can be very useful in the setting up and running of campaigns to support local shops, so a good first step is to find out if you've got one. The following examples are from places where Town Centre Managers are already helping to promote independent shops - hopefully yours would be willing to do the same.

- **Amber Valley, Derbyshire** – They are currently in the process of setting up Town Centre Partnerships in all of the towns in the area. One town, Ripley, already has a well attended Town Centre Forum which they work with to improve the town. Under the banner 'Re-energising Ripley' they are working with local traders to consider how to promote the town to local people to increase vitality and trade.
- **Brentwood, Essex** - They have created a local loyalty card scheme, called Retail Plus. Their aim is to encourage local retailers to offer customers incentives to shop locally.
- **Bromley, London** – The Town Centre Manager provides town centre management services for 8 local and district towns in the London Borough of Bromley. They are planning on developing a 'Shop Local' campaign which would involve local businesses working together and providing a discount scheme that could be promoted through the local newspapers to encourage more people to shop locally.



- **Caerphilly, Wales** - Independent retailers in Caerphilly are in real difficulty as they face increased competition from national stores. To try and support them, the County Council have set up the Caerphilly Independent Retail Partnership (CIRP) which is a partnership for local retailers run by local retailers.

The Town Centre Manager offers advice and support to retailers on a wide range of issues. A major aim of the CIRP is to get retailers to work together, and to look at how they can promote their businesses and run promotions when the council put on special events in the town, such as the July flower festival.

The Town Centre Manager also has responsibility for 2 other towns, Blackwood and Bargoed. In order to support the independent retailers in all 3 towns, they produce the 'Retail News'. This is distributed each week to around 80 stores in the 3 town centres and sent to another 30 by email. This newsletter aims to broaden the retailer's knowledge of current retail issues and helps to highlight any emerging trends.

- **Coventry, West Midlands** – Their award-winning programme involved recruiting niche/specialist independent traders from scratch to open new retail and leisure businesses in Coventry City Centre. They provided incentives such as 50% rental and capital grants for the duration of the project funding, and advice on premises searches.

The scheme ended up creating 19 new businesses and supported 8 existing ones – creating around 125 new jobs and safeguarding others.

- **Falkirk, Scotland** - The Town Centre Manager in Falkirk also look after 4 smaller centres in the local area. They have just started an initiative aimed at encouraging local residents to shop locally in all five centres.
- **North Tyneside** – They are currently running a bus back/press campaign in the run up to Easter with the strap line 'Shop around the Block' - save time and money and still get all you need.
- **St Ives, Cambridgeshire** – St Ives has long been actively involved in promoting its appeal for lovers of small specialist shops offering great customer service, rather than the high street big boys.
- **Stroud, Gloucestershire** – They have just launched a new District-wide campaign to boost and retain the vitality of their market towns, by encouraging residents and visitors alike to use their local shops, mostly small independent retailers. This should improve and retain the availability of local services, as well as attract new ones. In addition to being good news for the local economy, their environment will benefit when less people drive to do their shopping.

To raise awareness of the issue, each town has their own canvas shopping bags to distribute to the local residents, carrying the Shop Local emblem on one side of the bag and the town's own symbol on the other. In addition to this, special Shop Local shopping list pads have been produced, as well.

Each town also organised their own launch event which involve prize draws, fairground rides and face painting.

Although not all Town Centre Managers are guaranteed to be so helpful, it is worth trying to get them on side – after all, promoting a thriving town centre the aim of this campaign, and is also their job.

Europe - Gran Centre Granollers

Granollers is a city with a population of 52,000, located 25 kilometres northeast of Barcelona. The Gran Centre Granollers Retail Trade Association (RTA) was set up in order to address the changing behaviour of Spanish consumers – and the socio-economic problems that it had caused. Over the last three decades, Spanish consumers have followed a similar pattern to the British, moving away from the high street to supermarkets and malls.

In 1994 the RTA decided to take a proactive stance, and has now grown from a handful of retailers to 75% of the independent retailers and businesses located in Granollers town centre. Their motto is 'city, culture and commerce', a mission statement which sums up the importance they place upon the community and heritage as well as their jobs. This has helped the scheme to capture the imagination of Granollers' residents.

Activities they have run have included:

- **Customer loyalty credit card** – The RTA has set up an extremely successful loyalty card scheme which has 15,000 users. It is so successful in fact that it is the second most successful credit card in the region by turnover after VISA itself. It is an elaborate scheme, offering good financial incentives to its users – but don't let this put you off trying a smaller scale loyalty card scheme. The RTA recognises that it is its clear sense of local identity that has contributed to its high level of acceptance. In other words, you don't need to be a bank manager to give it a go!
- **Have a seat, have a chat** – although not so well suited to our winter climate, this scheme helped to promote local businesses, and increase community spirit. Local retailers each donated a wooden chair with a small advertisement on, to be placed together in pedestrianised islands in the city. This meant that shoppers had somewhere to sit and chat to one another, hopefully about the shops that had donated the seats they were sitting on.
- **Cultural events** – Gran Centre organise numerous social and cultural events to attract people into the town centre. These include music concerts, puppet shows, a carnival and a Christmas party. Frequent events such as these have helped to draw people back to the town centre, and the shops.



Photograph by Gran Centre Granollers
(see www.grancentre.com/)

In spite of the fact that Granollers is still facing the same threats as before, their approach to this problem has been positive rather than purely reactionary. Their scheme has built upon the historical strengths and heritage of the town centre of Granollers – and more than ten years on is still going strong.

For more information see the Retail Enterprise Network website at:
<http://www.retail-network.org/index.asp?s=pubnews&newsID=84>

USA - 'Local First Campaigns'

Towns in America are facing the same problems as towns in Britain – and in the case of ASDA/Wal-Mart, the same big companies. The problems are often even greater than they are here, although Britain appears to be following the same path. In spite of this, locals have still managed to run successful campaigns to protect their local shops.

For example, Salt Lake City in Utah ran a 'Buy Local First' campaign to great effect. More than 300 locally owned businesses kicked off the campaign with nine days of special discounts and events. The discounts were used to encourage people to give their local stores and restaurants a try, rather than heading straight for the chains.

Participating businesses displayed 'Buy Local First Utah' posters and bumper stickers, held contests, and talked with their customers about the importance of locally owned businesses. They also directed people to the campaign's web site, which has a searchable directory of local retailers.



'I Buy Local First' bumper sticker

They managed to gain a great deal of publicity through the media, beginning with a press conference attended by the mayor of Salt Lake City and other local and state officials. The mayor even officially designated it "Buy Local First Week." The press conference helped to bring in media attention, and the campaign was subsequently covered by Salt Lake City's two daily newspapers and many local television and radio programs.

A similar campaign in Bellingham, North West Washington has also proved to be successful. The campaign coalition provided every participating business owner with a kit that included tips on how to promote the campaign; a fact sheet on the top ten reasons to support local businesses; a poster to display in their stores; and a window decal with the campaign's logo.

The kits also contained six different thank-you cards for business to give to their customers. Each had a unique message about why supporting locally owned businesses is good for the community. One, for example, read "Local businesses are owned by people who live in this community, are less likely to leave, and are more invested in the community's future."

Like the campaign in Utah, the Washington campaign has received press coverage. A letter-to-the-editor in the Bellingham Herald said:

“My wife and I recently moved to Bellingham... We have been very impressed with the buy local campaign. It has influenced our shopping patterns and choices. We went to locally owned furniture stores for furnishing our new home. We shopped at local grocery stores, which also provided insights in to the many local meat, fish, dairy and produce sources in Whatcom County.... Programs like this buy local campaign can influence newcomers to become contributors to the local economy much more quickly than would otherwise be the case.”

For more information on all the Local First campaigns go to:

www.livingeconomies.org/localfirst/campaigns

Clone Town Britain – Liverpool

Members of Friends of the Earth Liverpool have surveyed most of the Centre of Liverpool, using the New Economic Foundation Clone Town Britain Survey. The Survey was designed by nef (the new economics foundation) to determine whether towns are clones, indistinguishable from dozens of others around the country; or genuine home towns that are distinctive and recognizable as unique places.

Unfortunately the survey found it to be a clone town, with nearly the same shops as any other town across Britain. Small, unique shops are struggling to survive, which is a threat to Liverpool’s unique atmosphere and culture.

Friends of the Earth Liverpool have recommended that Liverpool City council should devise a plan to protect, nurture and support small independent retailers in the City Centre. They also suggested that small, locally owned businesses in Liverpool should form a mutual support group – something that could be done with the help of this pack.

To learn more about the Clone Town Britain survey visit the nef website at:

<http://www.neweconomics.org/gen/clonetown.aspx>



2) The next step – locally produced food

Norfolk – ‘Localise It’

This campaign, which was led by a Friends of the Earth Local Group co-ordinator and a local shop owner, was started because of the recognition of a common concern for the preservation of an active local economy of diverse and independent retailers. It was supported by a variety of companies and charities including Norwich Friends of the Earth; RedOrange buying group Ltd; East Anglian Food Link; the West Norwich Partnership and Bizzfizz business initiatives.

The express intention of the campaign was to emphasise the economic advantages of using local businesses, whilst treading softly-softly on the environment arguments – being aware that environmental scare tactics could turn some people, especially independent shop-owners off. They felt that the environmental benefits (such as food miles, less vehicle use and so-on) would come about naturally if they could persuade customers to use their local shop and businesses. This might be a tactic worth pursuing if you find that people are put off by green issues.

The campaign has been very successful in taking this approach and therefore maintaining support, especially from those businesses that are cynical of the environmental message.

The scheme encourages small business to use other small businesses (painters, builders, electricians, accountants, solicitors, post offices and so-on the list is endless) and buy local produce and use local suppliers. This encourages and nurtures a thriving local economy in which entrepreneurs are encouraged and more small businesses start up.

They received funding and assistance from a variety of sources including ‘Local Works’, a national campaign for sustainable communities, RedOrange Ltd and Norwich City Council’s community economic development unit.

They held a launch in May 2005 which was attended by a local MP, members of the press and the national chairman of the Association of Convenience Stores. Around 100 people attended, which demonstrates that holding a well organised campaign launch can help get the campaign noticed by the public and the press.

Bridport – ‘Beacon Town’

A number of Beacon Towns have been set up across the country by the Countryside Agency in order to highlight the problems faced by market towns, and to show how they can be overcome. Each one addresses a specific issue, with Bridport dealing with local food. Although local food is the main focus of their campaign, it has also been of great help to local shops. By gaining beacon town status, Bridport receives funding from the Countryside Agency and much valued publicity.

People have been campaigning for local food in Bridport for a number of years, particularly through a group called the West Dorset Food and Land Trust. This group is backed by local communities, businesses and producers, as well as the local Friends of the Earth group.

They managed to attain beacon town status by a number of initiatives. These include the West Dorset Food Links Project which organises Farmers' Markets in the area and a Local Food Directory. They offer training for the area's producers, who can use the group's premises to develop new products. In 2003 they established the Centre for Local Food, which acts as a hub for many of their activities. It is equipped with commercial kitchens, IT equipment, workshops and food distribution facilities.

They also started the West Dorset Food festival, which has been running for two years, and includes workshops by celebrity chefs on 'cooking exotic with local ingredients'. It has been promoted through the local free magazine that sponsored both the festivals. They have a trailer that can cater at events and promote local producers and are continuing to evolve new ways to support their flourishing community of local businesses.

The extra tourism created by the beacon town status has helped increase sales in local shops. The shops selling local produce also tend to be the independent stores, so by encouraging the public to buy local food, the campaign is also encouraging people to shop locally.

A report has been published to examine the success of the Beacon Town projects. The main finding is that community involvement is essential - the more the better. Only by gaining the support of local people can such schemes get off the ground.

For more information contact Keith Hatch at keith-hatch@lineone.net or 0130 842 8315.