



## Reynoldston Post Office & Shop Gower, Wales



**R**eynoldston Post Office and Shop had been on the market for two years and not attracted a buyer. As a result, in 2015, the post mistress served notice to Reynoldston Community Council that she and her business partner would close the post office at the end of the year. Reynoldston Post Office is the last remaining designated main Post Office in South West Gower and as a result it serves a wide hinterland of residents and businesses.

In recognition of the importance of the Post Office as an asset to the village and the surrounding community, a small start-up team was formed and undertook a community consultation exercise. This led to the formation of a Management Committee and the establishment of a Community Benefit Society called 'Reynoldston Community Shop Limited (RCS)'.

The RCS wanted to purchase the property and freehold of the building from the present owners, and raise the capital through a community share offer.

RCS approached WCVA – one of the country partners delivering Village SOS – for support with their governance structure, fundraising and ongoing community engagement.



### Keeping in touch...

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### PROJECT DETAILS...

RCS is overseen by a Management Committee. This is made up of seven Reynoldston residents who came forward at a public meeting to express their support for the project and willingness to join the Management Committee. The Committee is elected annually at the AGM.

### Action taken with VSOS support:

- WCVA held meetings with the RCS Management Committee to discuss community support for the initiative as well as the opportunities and risks of operating a community shop and post office.
- WCVA supported the Management Committee to organise and prepare an agenda for a public meeting to update residents on project progress – this also involved asking residents to make an initial declaration as to how much money they were prepared to pledge to finance the project.
- WCVA linked the Management Committee with the Plunkett Foundation who provided them with a template of model rules for establishing a Community Benefit Society, help in establishing a Management Committee and a small bursary to cover essential start-up costs

## Funding the project...

- £120,000 was required to purchase the building, cover legal costs and allow for renovation and building work.
- 183 local residents as well as 'ex pat' investors from around the UK have raised £105,000 through a community share offer. This funding was used to purchase the building and cover legal costs.
- The Management Committee then received donations and grants from a number of organisations including the Methodist Chapel and the Reynoldston Society. This funding has been used to refurbish the shop.
- The Management Committee is intending to make an application to the Post Office Community Fund to refit the post office counter.



**R**eynoldston Community Shop group have purchased the shop and post office. The Management Committee have also held community meetings and distributed an e-bulletin, to ensure that the shop and post office is supported locally and that it is run as a viable concern on behalf of and for the benefit of the community.

Following the work completed with the Reynoldston Community Shop group by WCVA, the group wanted to pass on the following 2 core principles which other groups could learn from:

- Purchasing a community asset can be a lengthy and involved process – with issues around having the necessary grant/share funding in place, and then appointing staff through to claiming social investment tax relief.
- Seek support from other organisations that can provide your project with professional support (e.g. WCVA, The Plunkett Foundation, Wales Co-operative Centre).

## What comes next?

Reynoldston Community Shop group want to ensure that the shop and post office is fully renovated and open for business in 2017. The Management Committee has prepared a business plan with financial projections – and ideas for future development which may include developing a café.

## Other useful sources of support...

 Plunkett Foundation  
[www.plunkett.co.uk](http://www.plunkett.co.uk)

 Wales Co-Operative Centre  
[www.wales.coop](http://www.wales.coop)

 Post Office Ltd  
[www.postoffice.co.uk](http://www.postoffice.co.uk)

 Rural Shops Alliance  
[www.ruralshops.org.uk](http://www.ruralshops.org.uk)

### WCVA

This case study was produced by Wales Council for Voluntary Action as one of the Village SOS partners in Wales.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND COUNTRY PARTNERS

