

Longborough

Community Shop and Cafe

I can't believe it's December already. With Christmas less than 3 weeks away, this will be the last Newsletter of 2023.

Christmas Is Coming

The shop has had a busy few weeks since our last Newsletter in the autumn.

Many of you will have visited us over the past month and experienced the excitement and buzz that we all feel about the build up to Christmas.



The decorations are up and the lights are sparkling all over the shop and café.



Our window has a little wooden Polar Express train running all day around the Christmas tree and there are cheeky knitted elves hiding all around the fireplace. (Thank you Gillian!)

Christmas Launch Night



Christmas Launch Night 8th November 2023

Our Christmas launch was held early last month and it went very well with over 50 people in the shop at its busiest time and that's not counting the staff.

The shop has had lots of new and exciting stock in for Christmas and we have enjoyed picking a range of goodies for all the hampers that many of you have been buying for family and friends. So far we have sold over 25 Hampers and have orders for at least another 20 hampers before the end of the year. Thank you all so much for your support.



Melvyn Flatt with his original label design

On the same evening, we also launched the new Longborough Dry Gin and we are delighted that it has had some great reviews by our customers. Over 100 bottles were sold in the first 10 days! We have now almost sold out of our first batch of 162 bottles and we await more in the next few days to



meet demand over Christmas and New Year. We are very grateful to our local artist, Melvyn Flatt for his lovely label design for the gin. He also very kindly donated this beautiful original pastel painting of St James Church in Longborough, which was purchased by the shop staff for Jenny Hitchman to thank her for all her support over the past years as Church Warden. As many of you will know, she retired earlier this year.

Jenny Hitchman enjoying a coffee in the café and receiving her gift from the shop

Cafe News



We have also made some changes in the Café, with fresh homemade soup now being served on Thursdays and toasted sandwiches, made to order, on a Friday. The plan is to try to continue this into the New Year and we would be grateful for more home-made soup donations for January. Even the committee have made soup using winter vegetables from the shop and we have enjoyed trying the wonderful fresh and tasty recipes that have been donated so far. Thanks to all of you who have been chopping, roasting and stirring.

On other days, we are serving a Yeo Valley fresh soup of the day from our stock in the shop fridge. These are delicious and organic. A nice warming lunch option, served with Marks bread. We also try to offer toasted sandwiches to order on other days of the week. Please bear with us though, if we are busy, as there might be a wait.



Our Brilliant Bakers

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank all our regular bakers who have been delighting the village with their extremely tasty cakes, scones, mince pies, traybakes, fairy cakes and muffins for the last six months. Your contributions are wonderful and your hard work and generosity is never taken for granted and always appreciated.

A Community Space

We are delighted that the shop and cafe are being used for community activities. The craft group continues meet on a Wednesday morning and new members are always welcome.

Last Saturday, we held two very Christmassy wreath making sessions. There were drinks and mince pies (thanks to Lizzie) to get people in the mood. There were a lot of laughs and it was amazing to see the variety of styles that came from the beautiful natural materials that Ellen provided. She is a brilliant instructor and everyone came away with a stunning wreath to decorate their front door



Christmas Opening Hours

Longborough Shop & Café Christmas Opening Hours	
Saturday 23 rd December	8:30am – 4:00pm
Sunday 24 th December	9.00am – 11.00am
Christmas Day	CLOSED
Boxing Day	CLOSED
Wednesday 27 th December	9.00am – 2:00pm
Thursday 28 th December	9.00am – 2:00pm
Friday 29 th December	9.00am – 2:00pm
Saturday 30 th December	9.00am – 2:00pm
Sunday 31 st December	9.00am – 11.00am
New Years Day	CLOSED
Tuesday 2 nd January	8:30am – 4:00pm

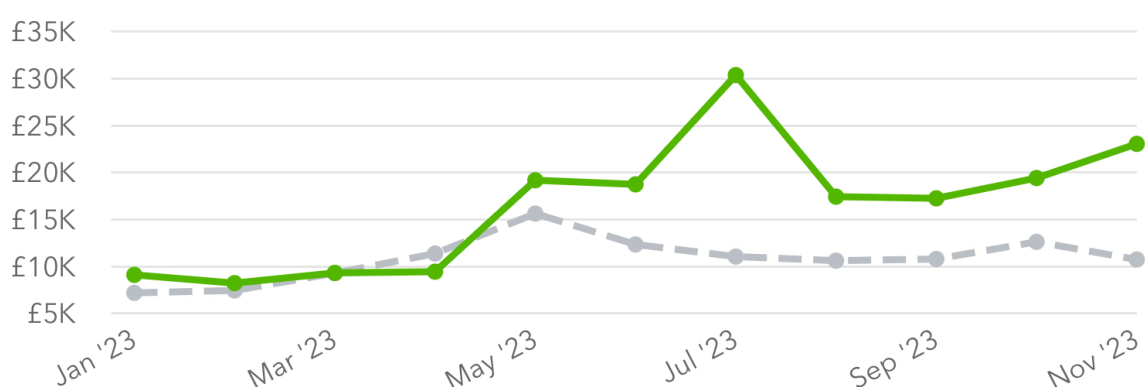
Sales and Donations

The shop has had another good month of sales in November and we received a very generous donation from LaSCA, following their fantastic Fireworks event on the 4th November. They have given the shop £3,000 of capital to buy new equipment in 2024. This will make a huge difference to our cash reserves next year and we would like to thank the Trustees for their generosity. Last month, we also had confirmation from Gloucestershire County Council that we will be receiving a Grant of £1,357, from their Build Back Better Councillor Scheme, this will enable us to purchase a new produce chiller for the front of the shop. This should be received and installed early next year.

Shop sales were also up last month, largely as a result of Christmas sales, including the sales of hampers and gin. Total Sales and donations this year are up by over 40%. The graph below shows the relative difference in total income between this year in green and last year in grey.

The sales margin has also improved on last year, following a change in some of our suppliers and of course the increased Café sales. We hope to increase the average margin from 26.8% in 2022 to over 32% this year.

Finally, although our wage overhead will be higher this year than last, these costs as a % of sales have reduced significantly from 34% to 28% because of increased sales. We would hope for this % to reduce again next year.



* the income peak in July is due to the £14,500 crowdfunding.

We have 4 weeks of trade remaining in 2023 and we look forward to starting the New Year with more new ideas and initiatives for our lovely little shop. If you have any ideas or would like to join our team, do pop in for a chat or drop us a line.

It just remains for us to say a huge 'thank you' to all the volunteers and our customers for your amazing support this year. Your help and generosity has kept us going. We love being in the shop and we hope you do too.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2024.

Don't forget to Love our Longborough Shop....LOLS

Community Shop Committee

Richard, Charles, Patrick, Mandy and Kathryn