

# The Talking Shop Story

## Who We Are

Talking Shop is a group of local volunteers, aged from 9 to 80, working to provide opportunities for our community to get together and to bring valuable resources back to the village. We won Best Community Project in the 2013 OCVA awards.

After four years of hard work, we were able to create our own space, The Talking Shop, in a new extension to the Village Hall, Sandford-on-Thames. We run a community hub from here: a drop-in space where everyone is welcome, with a café and local produce shop, workshops and community education programmes, pop-up restaurants and lots of other ways to get people together.



## Our Story So Far

Over time Sandford lost many of the things that bring people together: shop, post office, school, local pub... In 2010 a small group of us started exploring the possibility of setting up a community shop, as much for the social opportunities it would bring as for the shopping. Going door-to-door we discovered people were hugely supportive and with 21 volunteers we started the Saturday café and market in April 2011. We have run a market almost every Saturday since and five years on we have about 80 volunteers involved.

The café and market generated the seed funding that enabled the redevelopment and extension of the hall. Over the years we've also added a bike mechanic team, a lunch club and table tennis sessions.

With our new home we can continue to grow: to provide the networks, services and resources that people feel are missing locally; to create opportunities for our wider community to learn as we start up new ventures; to build a structured volunteering programme with tangible skills development and the provision of references for those who want that and, most importantly, to make sure we all have a lot of fun in the process.

**We hope you would like to  
get involved and help shape  
the future of Talking Shop!**

# Our Mission

**Sandford Talking Shop Ltd ('Talking Shop')** aims to

- create a space where everyone is welcome
- provide a range of activities and services that meet local needs
- offer a rewarding and constructive volunteer programme
- build local skills particularly in growing, cooking and eating healthy food
- provide the community with a source of quality, fresh, local produce
- support independent local producers
- run a community-owned, economically viable project with all surplus fed back into community benefit

# Our Values

Talking Shop is a project that brings people together. As a group we have defined how we look after each other and how we work together.

**Open to everyone...**

Everyone is welcome just as they are. Everyone has something to offer. Everyone has a say and a right to be listened to. We ensure it is easy to get involved.

**Support each other...**

We respect difference and embrace diversity. We avoid judgment. We encourage, support and take care of each other. We make time for people. We allow everyone to give what they can, when they can. We recognise every effort and contribution.

**Create opportunities to learn...**

We create a safe space to build confidence and skills. We enable people to share skills, knowledge and experience, in particular across generations. We build local partnerships and networks.

**For the community for the long term...**

We are committed to health, good food, fair prices and environmental sustainability. We support local producers. We actively encourage growth and fresh starts for individuals and for our local economy.

**Proud to do the best we can...**

We provide top quality customer service, products and resources. We are valuable, relevant and meaningful for our community. We achieve the most when we work together and have fun!

## To make sure we can all play our part

**Talking Shop is committed to:**

- providing a safe, secure environment
- respecting confidentiality
- honesty and integrity
- being responsible and reliable
- clear structures and processes, with plenty of support
- transparency in decision-making and inclusion through information-sharing
- high standards and professionalism.