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Business in the Community

Business in the Community is a unique movement in the UK of over 700 member companies committed to improving their impact on society in the community, environment, marketplace and workplace

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Business in the Community Putting down roots in market towns

COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT MARKETPLACE WORKPLACE



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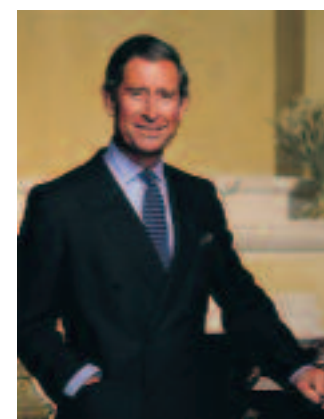




CLARENCE HOUSE

As President of Business in the Community, I believe that business can play an enormously important role in shaping and delivering a more secure future for rural areas. Since launching our Rural Action programme in July 2001, I have been immensely encouraged by the increasing number of companies which I have found are prepared to make a positive impact in rural communities, both through the way in which they do business and also through the way in which they connect with their wider community.

The role of business has been fundamental to the health of market towns for centuries. Market towns are the very heart of a wider rural community, bringing business, people and activities together to create prosperity and a real sense of identity and belonging. In recent years, the market town has suffered a serious decline. There are many different reasons for this, ranging from the centralization of businesses to the overall decline in the agricultural economy. But I happen to believe that the role of the market town in both social and economic terms is of such importance that every effort must be made to reverse this decline. Business has a central role to play in achieving this, working alongside other organizations and as part of town partnerships. More companies are now recognizing the business case for putting down strong roots in market towns, whether through local sourcing, their contribution to the built environment or their support for employers to volunteer in the community. I could not be more grateful for their ideas and actions which are presented in this Guide and I hope that they will inspire many others to follow their example and find ways to help market towns re-establish themselves as vibrant and vital centres in the rural economy.



Supporting rural communities



Market towns make a significant contribution to the economic, social and cultural life of our country. At Tesco, stores in market towns are a key part of our UK business, providing jobs, training and investment, as well as a great shopping experience for customers.

Market towns enjoy a number of strengths and advantages. They often have a high quality built environment and strong historical roots. Many have a core of concerned local residents who are willing to take action. And they offer the opportunity to develop the type of links between local suppliers and other businesses that become next to impossible in major urban conurbations.

It is clearly in our interests to contribute to the long term vitality of the local economy and community to ensure the long term success of our stores. Supermarkets act as magnets for market towns, keeping people shopping locally. They help to prevent leakage to other areas by retaining and attracting customers. This will help to ensure the longer-term sustainability of the local economy.

We are proud to be working with local communities to find and deliver the kinds of creative projects highlighted in this report. Together we can improve people's quality of life, increase access to essential services, jobs and goods, and enhance the diversity and vitality of rural economies.

Lucy Neville-Rolfe,
Company Secretary and Group Director of Corporate Affairs
on behalf of the Board of Tesco plc

The engagement of business in market towns



Market towns are a crucial element of rural life. They provide the hub for employment, retail, professional and public services for communities living in and around the town. They also offer a centre for community activities, leisure and tourism.

Each market town is unique in its character, each using its strengths to overcome the challenges posed by social and economic change.

Businesses are key to the long term vitality of market towns. They provide employment and income for local people and stimulate markets and demand for goods and services.

A competitive business will recognise the potential benefits of playing a positive role in market towns, in creating successful trading conditions and developing a strong sense of community loyalty. Companies can deepen business relationships, improve employee commitment, develop staff skills, access new markets and enhance company reputation by getting involved.

This guide provides illustrations of why and how a business can get involved with the local community, economy and environment and the mutual benefits that can result.

pg 3  Workplace

pg 7  Marketplace

pg 11  Community

pg 15  Environment



Your business and the local workforce



People are the greatest asset of any business. A responsible business is one which develops the skills and experience of its local workforce. Both your business and the community can benefit if you employ local people and develop positive relationships with your staff.

By supporting your employees, you can help to develop team spirit in the workplace and improve staff loyalty to your business. Developing the skills and knowledge of your staff through training and volunteering can



88% of British employees believe that it is important that the organisation they work for is committed to living its values, but only 45% believe their employer does.

BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY,
FASTFORWARD RESEARCH, 2003

improve their performance at work. You can also improve the quality of your workforce by implementing flexible working practices and employing people with diverse skills. Demonstrating commitment to your staff can enhance your local reputation, helping to improve recruitment and retention of a high quality workforce.

Where your staff are involved in volunteering, the community benefits directly from the contribution of time, knowledge, and enthusiasm to local organisations or charities. Broadening the employment opportunities in a town can encourage individuals back to work and enable local people to find suitable employment in their own community (reducing the migration of workers to larger urban centres).

TAKE THE ADVANTAGE

A company well rooted in the local community can benefit from:

- More motivated staff
- Improved staff skills
- A diverse workforce providing a range of talents
- An enhanced reputation as a good employer attracting and retaining staff

IMPROVING RECRUITMENT AND INCREASING RETENTION

Courtesy of Tesco

TARGETING RECRUITMENT - Tesco

CASE STUDY

Tesco actively recruits older people in its stores across the UK; it is a member of the Employer's Forum on Age and also a Government Age Positive Champion. In Mansfield, a Tesco store lies at the heart of the historic town centre.

"Tesco treat and respect me as a person for the job I do, not for my age."

Harry Willey Customer Service Assistant, Mansfield



Of the 159 staff working there, almost a third are workers aged 50 years and over. Tesco has had very positive experiences with employing older people and by actively targeting this sector of the community they are providing opportunities for those who otherwise may not have stayed in or rejoined work.

Tesco also targeted recruitment at the long-term unemployed for a regeneration store in Alloa. The decline of traditional local

industries left the town of Alloa with relatively high levels of unemployment and a declining town centre. The Tesco regeneration store created over 100 new jobs aimed at local long-term unemployed people. Overall the approach was to

select employees on attitude and aptitude rather than experience and qualifications. This approach resulted in positive employer - employee relationships and has contributed to retention and commitment of staff in the store. ■

"In Tesco stores across the country, thousands of our customers are receiving great service from older workers. At Tesco, we actively recruit people over the age of 50 and give all our staff the option of working for as long as they want to." Clare Chapman HR Director, Tesco

PROVIDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG UNEMPLOYED - Marks & Spencer

CASE STUDY

Marks & Spencer is currently establishing their Marks & Start programme, providing skills, training and employment for students, parents, homeless people, unemployed young people and people with disabilities. To reach unemployed young people, Marks & Spencer

have decided to work with the Prince's Trust to provide two week placements for some young people on their Team course. Prince's Trust Team is a twelve week personal development programme for people from 16-25 years old who have experienced difficulty getting into work. The Marks & Start

programme provides uniforms, travel expenses and meals for those on placements, and also gives a reference at the end of the fortnight. Pilot work in October 2003 saw half of those taking part finding a job with Marks & Spencer or another employer within six weeks of the experience. ■





PROMOTING WORKFORCE MOTIVATION AND FULFILMENT - Adnams

CASE STUDY

Staff development and fulfilment are central to the success of Adnams, a brewer, wine merchant and hotelier based in Southwold. Adnams are the first small company to win Business in the Community's annual Awards for Excellence - the 2003 Impact on Society Award. They believe that commitment to society starts where it can be most effective, in the workplace. All of Adnams' work is measured against a stated set of values, including fulfilment, integrity, diversity of experience and opportunity, and pride in the company. Awareness

and understanding of the company's commitment to customer satisfaction, environmental performance and impact on the local community have increased staff motivation and a sense of pride in the company. For example, a percentage of annual profits are used to fund the Adnams Charity, which supports worthwhile causes within a 25 mile radius of Southwold. Adnams believes that its approach leads to a better motivated workforce who are committed to the company, and better business results. ■

DEVELOPING STAFF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

PROVIDING CREATIVE SKILLS AND ADVERTISING TO SUPPORT A READING SCHEME - Brahm

CASE STUDY

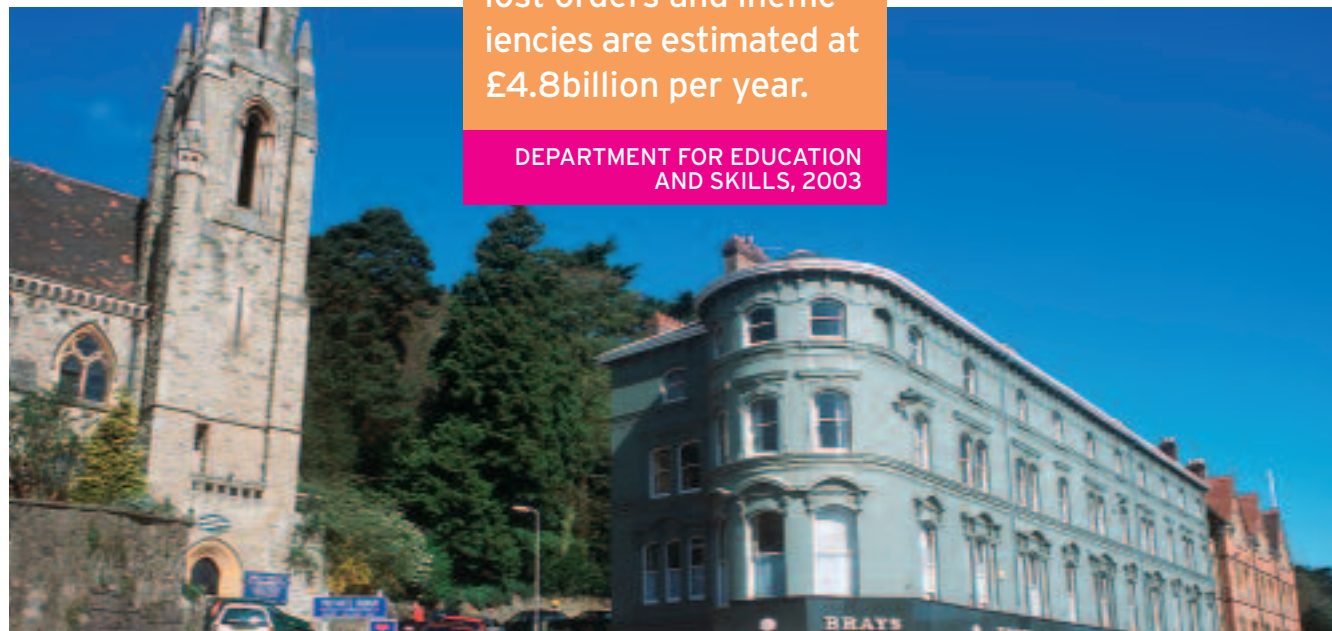
Brahm is a communications consultancy employing 120 people. They have provided valuable support for the 'Right to Read' programme, which aims to raise literacy levels by providing reading volunteers to local schools. Brahm has given creative and management time, made use of supplier relationships to produce advertising at cost, and worked with partners to deliver free advertising.



Over 6.8 million adults in the UK have a standard of literacy or numeracy below that expected of an 11 year old. Around 50% of these people are in employment. The resulting costs to UK business through lost orders and inefficiencies are estimated at £4.8billion per year.

DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS, 2003

This has had a significant impact on the success of the reading scheme, recruiting over 4,500 volunteers. For Brahm, the initiative provided an opportunity to use their skills to bring about changes in the local community, a commitment made in their business plan. It has also allowed Brahm's staff to apply their strategic and creative skills in a free thinking environment unconstrained by commercial pressures. ■



© Countryside Agency - Photographer Rob Fraser

PROVIDING LEGAL SUPPORT TO A CHILDREN'S CHARITY - Allen & Overy



© Countryside Agency - Photographer Tony Jedrej

CASE STUDY

Two of the corporate lawyers from Allen & Overy have been sitting on the management committee of the charity, Friends United Network (FUN), providing legal advice and acting as the company secretary. The Friends United Network matches children growing up in socially isolated lone parent families with adult volunteers who can provide supportive friendship. The lawyers have drawn on others in their company to provide advice on employment, property, charity, tax and corporate law. This has helped the charity to access professional resources, with Allen & Overy's pro-bono hours valued at more than £6 million in 2001. For the lawyers, the project has fitted within the firm's community programme, and has had benefits through skills development and staff satisfaction. ■

DONATING TIME TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES - Boots

CASE STUDY

Boots store teams give their time and skills to their local community in a number of different ways. Pharmacists share their expertise with local community groups on issues such as smoking and healthy lifestyles, store employees are involved in management committees for local community groups and stores host work experience placements. As well as supporting the community, many of the volunteering opportunities are mapped against business competencies. Last year, Boots' employees spent 80,000 hours doing voluntary activities. ■





Your business and the local economy



Integrating your business into the local market town economy can be good for business and good for the town. Your business can benefit by increasing markets or saving costs, but you can also have a positive impact on the economic health of the area by retaining and recycling local spend.

You can make an impact by buying as many of your goods and services locally as possible. A local supplier can be more responsive to your needs and develop a greater understanding of your business. Using local materials or products can improve your reputation with customers by providing quality local produce; it can even help you to develop access to new markets.

 **Eden Community Outdoors** found that by employing local people and sourcing from local businesses, every £1 spent by ECO results in £2.08 for the local economy.

NEW ECONOMICS FOUNDATION

increase the range of products and services available to the local community. Working in co-operation with other organisations, businesses and even your competitors can help to raise the profile and visibility of your business. It can lead to greater customer awareness of the businesses and traders in the area and can lead to increased local sales.

Customers sometimes use the distinctiveness of a local product to differentiate between businesses and in exceptional cases local products and services can attract visitors and tourists to the area.

You could also work with other businesses or organisations to provide new products and services. These approaches support other local business, encourage local spending and

TAKE THE ADVANTAGE

'What goes around comes around' and by finding ways to engage with and support the local economy your company can benefit from:

- Local distinctiveness
- Increased customer loyalty
- Mutual trade initiatives

LOCAL SOURCING

BUYING FROM LOCAL SUPPLIERS – R Wisby Ltd

CASE STUDY R Wisby is a butcher based in Wragby and Horncastle, Lincolnshire, selling red meat, poultry, cooked meat and eggs. They also operate a mobile unit delivering their service to the surrounding rural villages. The butcher sources its products from



local farms in the Lincolnshire Wolds. This gives reassurance to the shop over the way the animals are reared, which not only relates to their interest in animal welfare, but also ensures fresh, high quality, tasty produce. In addition, local sourcing appeals to the customers in the area, which has a strong agricultural heritage. ■

CREATING DISTINCTIVENESS FROM LOCAL PRODUCE – Westmorland Group

CASE STUDY The Westmorland Group owns two service stations on the M6 in Cumbria. Following foot and mouth disease, the idea was developed for local farm shops to accompany the existing service stations. The stores stock the top range of locally produced, reasonably priced Cumbrian specialities. They are aiming to beat the standard motorway fast food fare and the services have developed a strong reputation amongst motorists with sales doubling in the last six months. ■

"It's a wonderful opportunity to give motorists from all over Britain a taste of our region and a distinctive alternative to the industrialised mass market of today." John Dunning, Director of Westmorland Service Station

SUPPORTING LOCAL SUPPLIERS TO MEET DEMAND – Tesco



Courtesy of Tesco

CASE STUDY Catherine Mead began by producing 30 tonnes of Cornish Yarg cheese per year at her Lynher Dairies for Tesco stores in Cornwall and the South-West. As the product gained in popularity, Tesco helped Catherine to manage her distribution and acted as consultant on the design of her new production facilities. She now produces 200 tonnes per year and the product is sold nationally. ■

USING LOCAL TRANSPORT – Bottle Green Drinks Co.

CASE STUDY Bottle Green is a family run company manufacturing soft drinks using local spring water in the Cotswolds. As the business grew, they needed a suitable company to distribute their products. The local firm they chose was also able to provide storage of Bottle Green products, enabling them to carry out regular physical stock takes essential for the business – this would not have been achievable with a national distribution company. Using this firm has saved storage costs for Bottle Green and contributed to the income of another local business. ■





EXPANDING YOUR MARKETS

PROVIDING DISCOUNTED PRODUCTS TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY – Cochranes Nurseries

CASE STUDY Cochranes Nurseries produce fruit and vegetables in Longtown, Cumbria, and were asked to participate in a scheme to provide seasonal fruit and vegetable bags to the community at a discounted rate. Volunteers, headed by the chair of the Market Town Initiative Health Improvement Partnership, work with the head of the local primary school and manager of the neighbourhood nursery, taking weekly orders to distribute a range of healthy fruit and vegetables to the community. This has encouraged greater consumption of these products. Cochranes are able to discount their produce as providing produce in bulk and using volunteers for labour and distribution offsets their costs. Cochranes are able to access a wider customer base, as they did not previously have a town outlet. ■



IGD'S 'CONSUMER WATCH' In March 2002 IGDs Consumer Watch identified that 59% of respondents were 'quite to extremely interested in buying local food'.

IGD'S 'CONSUMER WATCH'



ACCESSING MARKETS THROUGH CO-OPERATION – The Ludlow Sausage Company

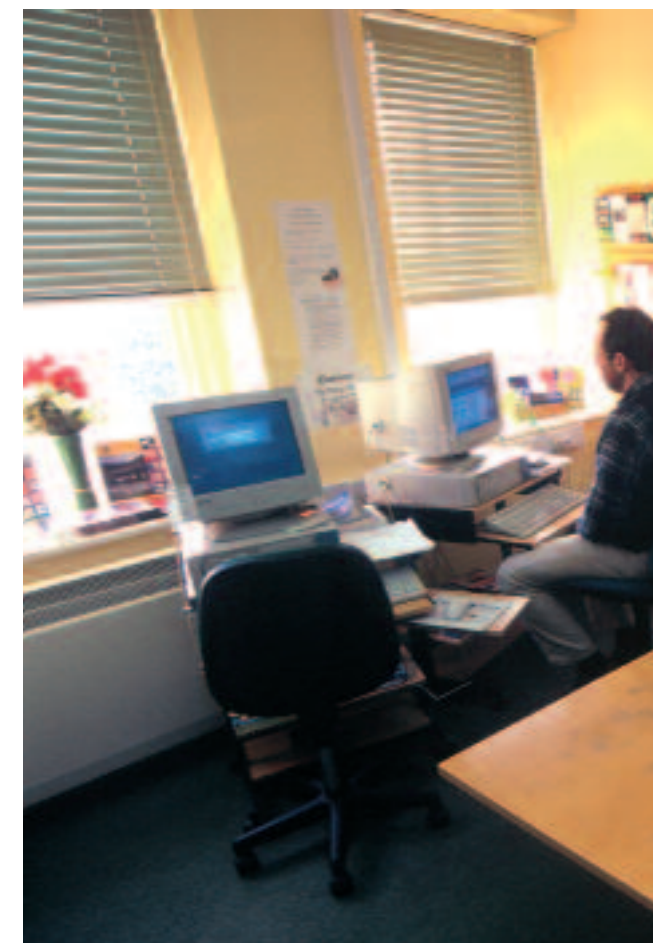
CASE STUDY www.theludlowsausage.co.uk is an online store selling the sausages of five separate butchers from the same market town.

Townscape, a web company in Ludlow, saw the potential for the town's five traditional retail butchers to work together online and established the web site with seedcorn funding from Advantage West Midlands. The Ludlow Sausage Company now has five thriving butchers serving a national and local customer base that helps to attract visitors and spending power to the town. Townscape believes that this model of co-operation between competitors or 'co-opetition' as they call it, is replicable for many saleable products not just food. ■

IMPROVING CUSTOMER AWARENESS – Local Business Partnership

CASE STUDY Buy In Grayshott (BIG) is a campaign run by local businesses to encourage people to buy goods and services locally. There are currently 145 members of BIG and the campaign has been successful in increasing local sales and raising awareness of a wide range of businesses and traders in the area. Part of the campaign was to produce a business directory listing all businesses in Grayshott, the majority of members paid for advertising in addition to being listed in the directory. This paid for the directory production and raised over £2000 for local community events. Grayshott was the winner of the Business in the Community/Calor Village of the Year award for business support in 2002. ■

“Buy In Grayshott is recognised throughout the district and has expanded the reputation of the village increasing visitor numbers to the Potteries. We have benefited from this reputation, as a tourist attraction and a business, and it is something we are proud to be involved with.” Phil Bates, Grayshott Potteries and member of BIG



© Countryside Agency – Photographer Charlie Hedley

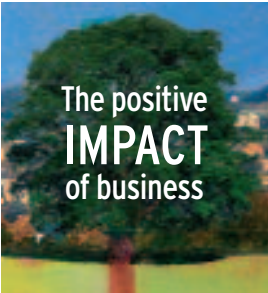
SUPPORTING LOCAL BUSINESSES THROUGH A CRISIS – Lloyds TSB Foundation

CASE STUDY Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Service (UTASS) provides advice services to the agricultural community in and around Teesdale, which has the market town of Barnard Castle at its heart. This area is heavily dependent on tourism and agriculture and was hit badly by the Foot and Mouth outbreak. UTASS provided support and advice during the outbreak dealing with over 35,000 requests for help, transforming the office from 28 hours a week to a virtual 24 hours a day operation. The Lloyds TSB Foundation gave a grant of £10,000 towards core costs and salaries, recognising the work that UTASS provided to help local businesses stay afloat. ■

“Without funding from Lloyds TSB Foundation, UTASS would have had to close our doors. The grant enabled us to continue our much needed holistic work in preventing problems from getting to the desperate stage.” Diane Spark, Upper Teesdale Agricultural Support Services



Your business and the local community



There are direct and valuable relationships between companies and the market town communities in which they operate, not least because employees and owners of businesses often live locally. Market towns and companies themselves can benefit when businesses take an interest in and contribute to the needs of the local community.

You can make a positive impact in the community by contributing time, money, or products from your organisation, or through involving the community in your business. This can help to improve the reputation of your business amongst your customers and employees, and may also generate new business opportunities. For example, renovating disused premises for community use can provide income from rent and improve security outside working hours.

Improving the integration of your business with the community has benefits for the market town. Encouraging local purchases and sales enhances customer loyalty, keeping



Over half (55%) of community organisations and schools say that business support is crucial.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT, BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY/MORI, 2002

spending local and contributing to the health of the local economy. Donating time, money, space or skills provides support for community initiatives that contribute to improving local quality of life and promoting a sense of community spirit.

- TAKE THE ADVANTAGE

Contributing to the local community can have real benefits to your business by helping to:

 - Build your local reputation and profile
 - Develop relationships with other businesses and service providers
 - Increase employee loyalty

IMPROVING COMMUNITY AMENITIES



Picture courtesy of The Broadgate Group

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING - The Broadgate Group

CASE STUDY

The Broadgate Group is a housebuilder, care provider, commercial developer and commercial property landlord based in Spalding, Lincolnshire. The Group is aware that local businesses are largely reliant on a local workforce and that there is limited availability of low cost homes in the area. The Broadgate Group operates a scheme to allow buyers to purchase 60-80% of their property and pay low rent on the remaining portion. Provision of lower cost housing helps local businesses retain their workforce, and therefore minimises the likelihood of those businesses, currently renting commercial property from the Broadgate Group, relocating to another area. This commitment to the local community has secured positive relationships in the area and enhanced the Broadgate Group's reputation with employees, tenants and local people and organisations. ■

REBUILDING A COMMUNITY HALL - South Derbyshire ProHelp

CASE STUDY

ProHelp is a national network of 1,000 professional firms who give their time and expertise for free to community groups and voluntary organisations. Southern Derbyshire ProHelp were approached by local villagers, John Cartmell and Frances Toye to provide support in making a funding application for a new community hall for the village of Hatton.

Derby based architects Morrison Design, took the lead on the project and a number of other ProHelp member firms became involved by offering their services for free. These included quantity surveyors, Sir William Baird & Partners and GCA (UK) Ltd., who gave advice on ground conditions as well as Cooper-Parry, who helped prepare the business plan that was needed to accompany the funding application.

Extended services now available in the new hall include child-care, a luncheon club, Brownies and activities for the elderly. It provides an excellent community facility for events and private functions. The anticipated number of users is expected to increase threefold in the future! ■



© Countryside Agency - Photographer Graham Parish



FILLING A FUNDING GAP - CE Electric

CASE STUDY

Through work with BitC, CE Electric became aware of the gap in funding medium-sized projects under the Market Towns Initiative. At the £2,000-3,000 level it was not worthwhile to seek Government or European funding. Therefore, CE Electric have offered to fund a project chosen by the local community in each of the fourteen designated market towns in the North East. This has helped the local community in different ways, with support ranging from funding for a local newsletter in Seahouses, through payment of architects' fees for the refurbishment of a Community Hall in Crook, to a Walking and Cycling Festival in Haltwhistle. The initiative has provided CE Electric with an opportunity to understand local electricity service needs and what is being done to improve quality of supply. ■



© Countryside Agency - Photographer Andy Tryner

PROVIDING FINANCE TO COMMUNITY PROJECTS - Barclays and Home Housing

CASE STUDY

The North-East Community Loan Fund is one of a number of regional community loan funds, and is supported by Barclays and Home Housing. The fund is used to finance or part-finance community projects that have been turned down for funding through traditional routes. One such project is the Rookhope pub, which has been purchased by the local community both to provide a pub and also to provide a location for training for the local college and for other social activities. The loan was provided with money from the Community Loan Fund as well as Northern Rock, Unity Trust Bank and small amounts from grant trusts. For the finance providers, the contribution fulfilled objectives to invest in community enterprises and use their loan and grant funds. ■

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN DECISION MAKING

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN A NEW DEVELOPMENT - Taylor Woodrow

CASE STUDY

As part of the Millennium Communities Programme, Taylor Woodrow, in partnership with English Partnerships and Borough of Telford and Wrekin, are working to remediate and develop a brownfield site in Ketley, Telford. The development is called the Telford Millennium Community (TMC). The plan is to build up to 800 homes to achieve high sustainability standards.

The development process has included a detailed programme of community engagement including specialist workshops headed up by consultants addressing all issues that will influence the masterplan, regular meetings with the Community Consultation Group, public exhibitions, design week activities that included community input into the development of the masterplan and a communication strategy to keep all stakeholders informed of progress. By involving the community in the planning and design of the development it is hoped that TMC will become a successful, vibrant and sustainable community. ■

CONTRIBUTING TO THE COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

PROVIDING SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY PROJECTS - Tesco

CASE STUDY

The new Tesco store in the historic centre of Beverley in Yorkshire attracted over 1.2 million shoppers in its first year, two thirds of whom visited other shops in the town centre. Local business leaders say it has boosted the town's reputation as a shopping destination and is helping to revitalise the town centre. Tesco's commercial success has been closely linked to their strong record of community involvement.

Since 2002, Tesco have supported or sponsored the Festival of Christmas, folk festival, comedy festival and Beverley in Bloom. They have donated a wide range of equipment and software through Computers for Schools and a recent initiative saw Tesco sponsor the introduction of water-coolers to a local secondary school to encourage children towards healthier lifestyles. ■



© Countryside Agency - Photographer Graham Parish

"It's very important to us as a company to get involved with community initiatives. Our store has a lot to offer, has gone down really well with local people, and has helped to really boost Beverley."

Tony Bailey, Tesco Store Manager

FORMALISING A COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY - Langdale Leisure

CASE STUDY

Commitment to the local community has always been central to the work of Langdale Leisure, a business in the Lake District with around 200 employees. The company is committed to fund-raising for local environmental projects and staff participation in community groups. One of the initiatives they are most proud of is establishment of the Langdale Valley Initiative Network, in which local people and businesses worked together to minimise the impact of foot-and-mouth disease. The Initiative is now tackling other issues such as a playground for local children and obtaining Government funding to provide Broadband access to the area.

Langdale Leisure have formalised their community programme by entering and being awarded Business in the Community's CommunityMark. As a direct result the company has increased the benefits to their staff of community involvement and generated opportunities to meet staff development needs. The company's operating performance has significantly improved and a large amount of positive PR coverage has been generated. ■

The CommunityMark is the national standard for responsible business practice for small and medium sized businesses. It helps businesses to recognise and encourage their current contributions and enhance future projects within the local community.



© Countryside Agency - Photographer P. Greenhalf





Your business and the local environment



The character and atmosphere of market towns are influenced by the quality of their local environment. There is significant opportunity for businesses to enhance the image of market towns. An attractive and cared-for environment can improve the town as a place for people to live, work, shop and visit, all of which are beneficial to local businesses and the local economy.

Improving the image of the town can attract more customers to your business. Improving shop fronts, removing graffiti, funding hanging baskets on the high street, or contributing to local ecology or heritage projects can all enhance your company's reputation and strengthen links with the local community.

Improving the environment creates a better look and feel to the town. This can encourage local people and those from further afield to spend time and money in the town, and can stimulate inward investment. By improving



86% of UK adults believe the environment is the most important issue for companies to focus on.

MORI'S ANNUAL CSR STUDY, 2001

the environment through town centre improvements or building renovation, you can contribute to the local quality of life and encourage people to feel proud of their town.

TAKE THE ADVANTAGE

By taking responsibility for caring for the environment your business can:

- Attract new customers
- Save money e.g. through waste reduction and energy conservation
- Raise your local reputation
- Meet environmental requirements



IMPROVING YOUR OWN LAND OR PREMISES

CONVERTING DISUSED PREMISES INTO FLATS – Living over the Shop

CASE STUDY

The Living over the Shop (LOTS) project encourages businesses or individuals with empty space above shops to convert this to useful premises. One successful example was in a prominent building in Otley, where derelict floors above an estate agent were converted into two flats. The owner of the building was unwilling to fund the total cost of the work, but LOTS Project worked with Leeds City Council to persuade him to apply for Historic Buildings grant aid. The conversion itself was relatively straightforward, and the main barrier had been financial. However, the flats are now let to young single people at rents of between £350 and £400 per month. In addition to increasing revenue from rent, converting the premises has also improved the security of the building, and has contributed to the image of the area. ■



© Countryside Agency, Photographer Graham Parish

IMPROVING THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THE TOWN

HELPING TO RENOVATE DERELICT BUILDINGS TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE TOWN – Barclays

CASE STUDY

Barclays SiteSavers is a scheme co-ordinated by Groundwork, which helps communities take more control of their surroundings by transforming derelict areas and buildings. Barclays also encourages its locally based employees to work alongside the communities they serve on these projects. The St. Laurence Parish Centre, Wirral, was surrounded by a neglected piece of wasteland, which served little purpose for the local people. Via a series of community consultation events and open days, residents were able to contribute to the plans for the site. Local residents and Barclays staff then undertook a series of practical days to create the community space. As a consequence there has been an increase in the use of the Community Centre, vandalism has reduced, and the grounds now provide useful space for all the community. ■

RETURNING LANDFILL TAX CREDIT MONEY FOR COMMUNITY PROJECTS – Waste Recycling Group

CASE STUDY

Waste Recycling invest money claimed via Landfill Tax Credits into community and environmental projects, administered by Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd. (WREN), benefiting communities close to company facilities. Projects they contribute to are identified and reviewed by WREN advisory panels made up of local community volunteers and have included a community hall refurbishment programme and several community and environmental projects. Since 1998, Waste Recycling's landfill tax

credits have helped to renovate and refurbish over 400 village halls across the UK with £6.2 million in funding. One project helped the Kenninghall Lands Trust in Norfolk to purchase and develop over 10 acres of farmland to create a community woodland that provides accessible greenspace for the local community, contributes to environmental improvement and supports local biodiversity. Such projects help Waste Recycling to maintain their relationship with the community and deal with potential controversy over waste management facilities. ■

“WREN, along with many environmental bodies across the UK, has a proud track record of helping fund the regeneration of communities across the country through the Landfill Tax Credit Scheme which aims to hand benefits back to populations living near landfill sites.” David Wheeler, Managing Director, WREN





HELPING TO IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE TOWN – Spilsby Traders' Action Group

CASE STUDY

Spilsby Traders' Action Group was formed by local traders to help improve the image of the town and to encourage more people to shop there. Although started relatively recently, the Group has already secured contributions from around three-quarters of the businesses in the town to buy window boxes and flowers to display above the shop windows along the main street. The Group is hoping to build on this success to buy festive lights and decorations for Christmas. One local estate agent who has supported Spilsby Traders' Action Group, Turner Evans Stevens, finds that their company benefits from the more appealing image of their premises specifically, and the whole town more generally. ■



© Countryside Agency – Photographer Anne Katrin Purkiss

“Improving the look of the building improves our company's image; it also improves the look of the town, and our business is part of the town.” Caroline Evans, Turner Evans Stevens

SUPPORTING VOLUNTARY SECONDMENTS TO SUPPORT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVITIES – Waitrose



© Countryside Agency – Photographer Mike Williams

CASE STUDY

As part of the John Lewis Partnership, Waitrose participates in the John Lewis Partnership Golden Jubilee Trust, which allows employees to take a secondment to registered charities for up to six months. This provides staff with the opportunity to donate skills and expertise to the market towns where many of Waitrose' stores are located. One secondment was undertaken by Peter Saker, of the Waitrose Burgess Hill branch, who spent 4 months working full time at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust in Arundel to support the redevelopment of a community garden. ■

“The benefit is two-way: partners improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the charity, while gaining the experience of working for a worthwhile cause in a different environment.”

Waitrose Environment Report, 2002

“I have observed many examples of people returning from their secondments invigorated and with improved skills and confidence which can enhance both their lives and careers.”

Chris Jones, Golden Jubilee Trust Secretary

COMPENSATING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS – Scottish Power

CASE STUDY

When violent storms raged across Britain a few years ago, knocking out electricity for some **Scottish Power** customers for a couple of days, there were few complaints about how the company handled the situation. A £20m programme to fell trees threatening power lines, carried out in co-operation with local communities before the storms, limited the severity of storm damage. Scottish Power compensated for the removal of trees with a community-based tree-clearing initiative, which replanted a tree for each one felled and paid for local

“In 1998 some customers were extremely unhappy, which did untold damage to the reputation of the company.” Dominic Fry, Scottish Power

amenities such as playgrounds. In addition they developed their Rural Care Grant Scheme to deliver environmental restoration projects. Scottish Power provided £1m funding for the scheme but by working with Local Biodiversity Action Plans and other environmental partners this amount increased to £4m. These schemes helped to secure the Business in the Community Company of the Year award for Scottish Power in 2002-3 based on their services to customers, communities and the environment. ■



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REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

MINIMISING WASTE – The Scottish Nappy Company

CASE STUDY

The main commitment of the **Scottish Nappy Company** is to its environmental aim of reducing landfill through minimising the “disposable” nappy mountain. The company provides local people with a weekly home delivery of fresh cotton nappies and collection of soiled ones and their subsequent laundering. This brings benefits to the environment and health of their customers and the community within the area of service. The operation was established with environmental considerations given to selection of operational site, choice of chemicals, energy, machinery and marketing. The success of the Scottish Nappy Company demonstrates how a small enterprise can turn an environmental issue into a significant new business opportunity. ■

INTEGRATING ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES THROUGHOUT THE BUSINESS – Beacon Press

CASE STUDY

The printing industry is one of the worst performing sectors for environmental performance. **Beacon Press** has tackled its own environmental impact head-on, using a combination of innovative technology and more straightforward good practice to create clear differentiation within a competitive industry, and a reputation as a world leader in the sector. The environmental focus saves money and contributes to staff satisfaction. Beacon Press has made substantial savings in both energy and water use, has reduced its use of chemicals and emissions and has embarked on a comprehensive recycling program. Action to improve the local environment includes grants to support environmental projects in the local community by staff and initiatives to encourage wildlife on its site. ■



Our purpose:

To inspire, challenge, engage and support business in continually improving its positive impact on society



Business in the Community has a twenty year track record of connecting business with their communities. The Rural Action campaign puts forward the business case for companies to be involved in rural areas. Market towns provide an excellent opportunity for companies to make a positive impact in rural communities.

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The Countryside Agency is the statutory body working to make:

- the quality of life better for people in the countryside
- the quality of the countryside better for everyone

The Countryside Agency is committed to the regeneration of market towns through its Market Towns Initiative. **Fiona Markwick**, Programme Manager for Market Towns **Tel:** 01242 521381
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