

**Much Marcle Community Shop Ltd**

**(Village Shop and Post Office Local)**

**Business Plan**

**Version 12.5(07/04/2022)**

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1. Executive summary

1.1 The longstanding Much Marcle Village Shop and Post Office closed at the end of June 2019 due to retirement of the shop owner. Since the Shop and Post Office was declared a community facility in the Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2031, efforts were undertaken straightaway to find a suitable replacement. As the former building was not available, new premises needed to be found. This created a challenge but also lots of exciting opportunities for a new beginning.

1.2 The journey so far has been:

DATE	KIND OF MEETING	LOCATION	MAJOR POINTS
02/04/19	Public meeting	Memorial Hall	Create evidence for need and feasibility of a village shop and post office
21/05/19	Voluntary Working Group (VWG)	Hellens	Designed questionnaire for community survey
02/07/19	VWG	Hellens	Agreed questionnaire and means of distribution
27/08/19	VWG	Hellens	Analysis of survey/Brief summary for Mercury (Much Marcle monthly newsletter)/Possibility of a mobile Post Office in the Memorial Hall
13/09/19	Public meeting	Memorial Hall	Community supported a new village shop and post office/Strong encouragement to move to the next stages
02/10/19	Newly constituted Steering Group (SG)	Hellens	Constitution of a steering group with distributed responsibilities
14/11/19	SG	Hellens	Location and layout of village shop/ Discussion of figures for the business plan/ Possible donation by the Large Model Airplane Association
01/12/19	Communication	Much Marcle	'Why we miss the Village Shop'. Article in the Mercury
02/12/19	2 members of SG	Herefordshire Council	Meeting with local councillor and staff member for funding and enterprise
05/12/19	Chair of SG	Much Marcle	Secured 2 working days with community adviser from Plunkett Foundation
09/12/19	SG	Hellens	Mission Statement and statement of beneficiary impact of a village shop and post office

14/12/19	3 members of SG	Phillips House	Meeting with community adviser from Plunkett Foundation
20/01/20	SG	Hellens	Approved first version of business plan
28/01/20	Communication	Much Marcle	E-mail update to the Community
03/02/20	2 members of SG	Herefordshire Council	Meeting on business plan with 2 members of staff
27/02/20	Communication	Much Marcle	'Much Marcle Community Hub - A work in Progress Article' in The Mercury
27/02/20	7 members of SG	Worcestershire	Study Visit to 3 Community Shops: Crowle, Peopleton and Bretforton
02/03/20	SG	Hellens	Decision on Legal Structure
10/03/20			Membership of Plunkett Foundation
11/03/20	Chair and other member of SG	Memorial Hall	Update to Much Marcle Parish Council
14/03/20	Chair of SG	Memorial Hall	Update to audience at Film Night
30/03/20	SG	consultation by	Details of Model Rules of Association e-mail
01/04/20	Communication	Much Marcle	'FAQs about our Community Shop'. Article in The Mercury
14/04/20	Chair of SG		Posted letter with Model Rules of Association and application for Community Benefit Society status to Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
11/05/20			Registration as 'Much Marcle Community Shop Limited' under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 at the FCA
22/06/20	Chair of SG, other member of SG, architectural and planning consultant	Zoom	Discussion of design and lay-out and planning processes
08/07/20	Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of SG	Phillips House	Arrangements for opening a bank account
20/07/20	Chair of SG, other member of SG, architectural and planning consultant	Phillips House	Discussion of planning processes

29/07/20	Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of SG		Application for a bank account with the Co-operative Bank
02/08/20	Communication		'What's been happening to our Community Shop?' Article in the Mercury
09/09/20	Treasurer		Bank account opened with the Co-operative Bank
21/09/20	Members of SG	Phillips House	Next steps
07/10/20	Members of SG and Chair of Parish Council	Phillips House	Location and Lease Arrangements
13/10/20	Chair and member of SG and Managers of the Walwyn Arms	Phillips House	Exploration of alternatives
19/10/20	Members of SG	Phillips House	Next steps meeting
01/11/20	Communication		Much Marcle Community Shop. Article in the Mercury
02/11/20	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Discussion with donors
02/11/20	Members of SG	Phillips House	Preparation of mail shot for share offer
11/11/20	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Discussion with donors
01/12/20	Communication		Much Marcle Community Shop. Article in the Mercury
08/03/2021	Chair	Phillips House	Discussion with donor
07/04/2021	Memorial Hall Committee	Memorial Hall	First mobile Post Office set-up and thereafter on a weekly basis
24/06/2021	Members of SG	Phillips House	Discussion about presence at Hellens Produce Market
27/06/2021	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
22/07/2021	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Discussion of further option
31/08/2021	Chair and 3 members of SG	Phillips House	Discussion of further option
03/09/2021	SG	Phillips House	Confirmation of Vision, renewal of Plunkett Foundation Membership

05/09/2021	Chair of SG		Information to Much Marcle Parish Council
21/09/2021	SG	Phillips House	Setting next priorities
01/10/2021	Communication Group		Update in Mercury Newsletter
06/10/2021	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Details of pre-planning advice application.
20/10/2021	Chair of SG and Philip Burford, Director Hook Mason Hereford	Phillips House	Meeting to explore services
25/10/2021	SG	Phillips House	Logo/Share Offer/Pre-planning advice
28/10/2021	Chair of SG		Submission of confidential application for pre-planning advice from Herefordshire Council
06/11/2021	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
29/11/2021			Cancelled meeting due to pandemic
04/12/2021	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
21/12/2021	Secretary		Communication to donors
01/01/2022	Communication		Article in the Mercury
19/01/2022	Chair + member of SG	The Royal Oak	Meeting with Manager about a shop at the pub
05/02/2022	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
28/02/2022	Chair + member of SG	Phillips House	Consideration of Shop design
28/02/2022	SG	Phillips House	Target of Share offer
01/03/2022	Chair		Application for funds from the Mercury
05/03/2022	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
08/03/2022			Receipt of pre-planning advice from Herefordshire Council
16/03/2022	Chair + member of SG	Ludlow	Meeting with architect
21/03/2022	Meeting with two local residents	Phillips House	Discussion about Lay-out for the Share Offer

21/03/2022	SG	Phillips House	Discussion of pre-planning advice, Share Offer, Logo and Website
21/03/2022	Secretary		Communication to email contacts
22/03/2022	Chair of SG		Request of quote for full architectural service from two architects

1.3 The Marcle Community Shop will be a new built facility, in keeping with the village look and feel and minimising the impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings. The building will be erected on land owned by Walwyn Court, at the crossroads of the village. The building will cover a floor area of 150 square meters.

1.4 In terms of the location and building we are mindful of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework, the Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan and the positive and constructive pre-planning advice from Herefordshire Council.

1.5 The shop interior will be purpose designed, and the layout, fittings and product displays will create an attractive and welcoming retail environment, where the look and feel will be 'a friendly village shop' with café services and a flexible "pop-up shop" area, in order to provide a community hub.

1.6 A newly recruited, full-time, experienced and enterprising shop manager will run the business. The shop manager will be supported by a team of trained and dedicated volunteers. In later years additional fractional staff may be recruited.

1.7 Registration as 'Much Marcle Community Shop Limited' under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Society Act 2014 with the Financial Conduct Authority was achieved in May 2020. The Plunkett Foundation Model Rules of Association go with it. The chosen legal structure allows genuine community ownership with equal democratic control.

1.8 A Business account with the Co-operative Bank has been opened.

1.9 It is our vision that the launch of the Much Marcle Community Shop will be in about 18 months time, although the Corona virus pandemic and other local or global events may cause some further delay.

1.10 An estimated £250K is needed to build and set up the Community Shop. With conservative income estimates, the shop will be in profit from year two onwards. As a not-for-profit organisation we will aim for break even or modest profits. Any profits can be used for possible over payments to the loan, reinvestment into the business, for community projects and possibly interest on shares of the members.

1.11 The vision of Much Marcle Community Shop also includes the facility of a Post Office Local, although it is acknowledged that this may well take longer to establish. However, thanks to the Memorial Hall Committee and the easing of Covid restrictions, it was possible to set up a mobile weekly Post Office as of 7th of April 2021.

1.12 As next steps, this business plan has to be updated regularly, the planning process for the location and building prepared and completed, a lease agreement be drawn up, the launch of a successful share offer organised, and necessary fundraising levels achieved. As we have secured the support of the village community, Much Marcle Parish Council, Herefordshire Council and the Plunkett Foundation, we are confident that we can achieve our aims and objectives. At the same time, we are aware that this is “a work in progress” which will be reviewed and revised to reflect new thinking, new opportunities, and changing circumstances such as the Corona virus pandemic. Inevitably, the Corona virus pandemic had brought the whole process to a temporary standstill, but recently we have resumed activities.

## 2. Mission Statement

We aim to serve our community by developing a sustainable shop, Post Office and cafe, creating a friendly social hub in Much Marcle.

## 3. Aims and Objectives

In compliance with the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2031, we want to provide and sustain an attractive shop and post office for the good of the whole community. The village shop will sell quality goods and services, which will meet the whole range of shopping needs and interests of parish residents and adjacent parishes, as well as visitors to the local area. There will be an emphasis on supplying good quality, fresh local produce at a fair price in distinction to the surrounding supermarkets.

We also expect that Much Marcle Community Shop will have additional beneficiary impact on the community; such as

- Reduce the need to use cars and travel 11 miles or more to buy essential provisions, thus saving on fuel costs, pollution and time
- Promote the sale of locally produced fruit, vegetables and home-made produce, thus reducing food miles and supporting local businesses and producers
- Reduce social isolation by providing, both in the café and the shop itself, a friendly social hub, where people can meet neighbours and make new friends
- Plan to provide easily accessible Post Office services, including access to cash
- Provide free car and bicycle parking for the shop, if needed
- Encourage people to take daily exercise in their walk to the shop
- Provide a drop-in centre for Citizens Advice, as well as church welfare services
- Create at least one new full-time and potentially later another part-time job opportunity in the area
- Provide opportunities for volunteering, helping to build networks of friends and contacts

- Provide work experience for students from local schools and local youth organisations, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh Award
- Encourage local enterprise and support charitable causes through the provision of a bookable “pop-up shop” within the shop
- Support the village school by offering the “pop-up shop” area as an outlet for their young enterprise activities and by stocking recommended school equipment
- Support residents without transport, by giving them access to affordable essentials without the need for car travel or lengthy infrequent bus services
- Reduce anxiety about availability of essentials during a crisis like the Corona virus pandemic
- Improve house-price values by reinstating an important community asset
- Organise regular events to attract residents and other new customers to the shop
- Support village events, such as the Big Apple, the Steam Rally, Large Model Air Show, Hellens Music and Garden Festival through ensuring that merchandise meets the needs of the different groups who attend these events
- Provide other useful services for residents, such as dry-cleaning, photocopying, a local advertisements board, a water-stop for dogs and a hot-drinks stop for humans.

Some of these benefits of our community shop were confirmed in the Plunkett Foundation Report ‘Community Shops - A better form of business 2020’ ([plunkett.co.uk](http://plunkett.co.uk)).

#### 4. Background

The Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2031 ([www.muchmarcleparishcouncil.org](http://www.muchmarcleparishcouncil.org)) provides comprehensive background to the life, work and landscape of Much Marcle. As a brief summary:

Much Marcle contains a conservation area at its core, but the Plan is supportive of appropriate, sustainable development in the countryside. The new Community Shop will be just that and reintroduce a relevant community facility.

The Neighbourhood Area covers 19.62 km<sup>2</sup> (7.58 square miles). Much Marcle features in the Domesday Book of 1086 and has been a significant farming community ever since. The parish comprises the village of Much Marcle and the two smaller linear settlements of Rushall and Kynaston. The village of Much Marcle contains most of the dwellings, centred around the A449/B4024 crossroads. The location of the new community shop is just there, opposite to one of the three public houses - the Walwyn Arms -, near Much Marcle Garage and the Much Marcle Primary School.

According to the 2011 census, the parish has a population of 660 people, living in 286 households. The average household size is 2.3 persons. There is some social housing in the area and the Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan lists as objective MM04 ‘Identify new housing sites, to

achieve a minimum of 14% housing growth by 2031, with an appropriate mix of market, social and affordable units’.

Agriculture is the major land use in Much Marcle parish and the fifth largest employer of local residents. 9% of those employed in the parish work in agriculture according to the 2011 census. There is a small, but strong range of businesses in the parish. Weston’s Cider, Much Marcle Garage and Graham Baker Motors are major employers. 19% of working age residents of the parish are in managerial, directorial or senior official positions, which means there are more residents in professional occupations than is the case nationally. Likewise, the retired residents represent a wide range of expertise and competence and make up an encouraging base for volunteer work for building and running the community shop.

A recent survey of the average household income after housing costs in England and Wales, published on the BBC website on 5 March 2020, shows that Much Marcle Neighbourhood is in the second highest income range, i.e. £ 31200.

Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2031 has the Objective MM1 ‘Maintain and support existing community facilities and increase the range of activities they provide’ and the Policy CS1 ‘Development proposals for new and/or improved community facilities will be supported, subject to demonstrating that they respect local character and residential amenity’. The planning application for the new Much Marcle Community Shop will take account of the objective MM1 and the policy CS1.

At the moment, without a shop and post office in the parish, access to shops, supermarkets and a cash point requires a 11 miles round trip to Ledbury.

## 5. Evidence and Consultation

A public meeting in the Much Marcle Memorial Hall on 2nd of April 2019 decided to create evidence of the need for a village shop and post office by way of a questionnaire. A voluntary working group was constituted and designed the questionnaire. In July 2019 600 questionnaires were distributed, by hand and electronically. 210 questionnaires were returned, an excellent response rate of 35%. The results were presented at a public meeting in the Memorial Hall on 13th of September 2019 and published in the Mercury, the Much Marcle monthly newsletter. The key points of the survey were: over 90% wanted a replacement village shop and post office, mostly in order to avoid unnecessary car journeys to Ledbury. Overwhelmingly, the location of the new shop and post office had to be at the crossroads of the village, in order to be in the centre with regard to the whole community left and right to the A449 and in order to benefit from passing traffic on the A449. The majority were looking for the basics, but also for artisan, quality local goods and access to cash by way of the post office. There was also a strong feeling that there was a need for the village to have a community hub.

At the public meeting on 13th of September 2019, it was decided that the evidence supported further steps towards the establishment of a Much Marcle Community Shop.

As it is to be a shop for and owned by the community, feedback and consultation remains on the mind of the voluntary Steering Group. Since the survey and two public meetings, we have produced 7 informative articles about progress in the Mercury, the local newsletter. Each article encouraged

readers to come back with questions to the Editor of the Mercury, and these questions were addressed in subsequent articles. In addition, the closest neighbour to the proposed location of the Community Shop was invited and attended two of the Steering Group's meetings. The neighbour's questions were answered and a commitment was expressed that the possible concerns will be taken into account in the planning and running of the Community Shop. Views of the Church Group and the Gardening Club were also sought and their wishes and needs were incorporated in the lay-out of the shop. Since the inception of the monthly Hellens Produce Market, the Steering Group had a presence there with an information stand. We have organised another public meeting in the Memorial Hall for 26th of May 2022, which will coincide with the launch of the share offer.

## 6. The Steering Group

Initially, a Steering Group of roughly 10 volunteers operated as an unincorporated organisation. The Group has a Chair and a Secretary, and lead members were identified for particular strands such as Business Plan, Finance, Communication, the Post Office, and link to the Parish Council. Regular minuted meetings carry the business. Just before the restrictions under COVID-19 were introduced, the Group chose a suitable legal structure which allows genuine community ownership with equal democratic control, and subsequently registration as 'Much Marcle Community Shop Limited' under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 was achieved with the Financial Conduct Authority. While the restrictions under COVID-19 were still in place, some limited electronic communication amongst members of the Steering Group and limited 'Group of 6' meetings took place. In the meantime regular meetings have resumed.

The Steering Group secured from early on valuable support from Herefordshire Council, Much Marcle Parish Council and the Plunkett Foundation.

## 7. Much Marcle Community Shop

### 7.1 Premises

Much Marcle Community Shop will be a new built facility, in keeping with the village look and feel and minimising the impact on the setting of neighbouring listed buildings. The building will be erected on land owned by Walwyn Court, at the crossroads of the village. The building will cover a floor area of 150 square meters and will allow us to get the business up and running within the available projected budget.

### 7.2 Layout and look

A highly visual fascia will be created along with clear signage to provide maximum visibility of the shop from the main road (A449), some 40 metres away. Where possible, outside the store will be a colourful and enticing display of local and seasonal fruit and vegetables, all stacked in wicker baskets and wooden crates on tiered stands. Local plants in compostable/terracotta pots and flowers displayed in galvanised metal watering cans and buckets will provide a fresh and natural spectacle.

The interior layout is open with a relatively small retail counter later doubling as the post office counter. Most items will be self service. Frozen and chilled goods will be displayed in appropriate wall units. Fresh local fruit and vegetables, baked goods and artisan type products will feature prominently to achieve a quality farm shop look. The more day to day and household items will be displayed on wall shelving. There will be tables and chairs for a café facility and a 'pop-up shop corner' for varying displays, promotions, use by the primary school and Church Group, and regular visits by the Citizen Advice Bureau.

### 7.3 Environmental management

We are committed to minimising the environmental impacts of the community shop. Conscious of neighbours, we will be keeping noise levels and light pollution down at all times. We will also aim for minimising use of energy, reducing waste, and cutting resource consumption. We expect this policy to be cost neutral during start-up and that it will reduce day-to-day running costs. Below are some of the key ways in which we will build environmental management measures into the setting up and running of the community shop (measures will be finalised in consultation with the architect and shop manager):

- Wherever possible we will source used but high quality fixtures and fittings.
- We will specify cost-effective energy-reducing measures such as primary insulation, we will invest in energy-efficient refrigerators, chillers and lighting, and we will investigate both the sourcing of electricity from a green energy provider and the potential for renewable energy generation, such as solar panels.
- The building will require heating and we will install energy efficient heating units.
- We will use our purchasing power wisely so as to minimise food waste, and we will sell a range of portion sizes of fresh food to help customers to reduce their wastage as well.
- By sourcing a large percentage of goods from within 30 miles of the shop we will reduce food miles, and by providing the goods that local residents want we will reduce car usage and pollution.
- We will reduce, re-use and recycle packaging, and we will provide collection points for recycling batteries and fluorescent light bulbs.
- We will have a top permeable layer for the parking area.
- We will promote our environmental policy and the measures we take to implement it so as to help customers see how they can make savings and reduce their own environmental impacts.

### 7.4 Retailing hours and staffing

Initial proposed opening hours are as follows:

Village shop Monday to Friday 7.30am to 5pm/Saturday 8am to 1pm

Post Office Monday to Friday 8am to 4pm/Saturday 8am to 12am

The running of the business and management of volunteer staff requires a full-time shop manager. The role of shop manager will be advertised on appropriate websites and in local and regional media, and formal interviews on the basis of a clear job description and person specification will be held. While the community shop is becoming established there will be no other paid members of staff.

Given the extent of the proposed opening hours and services, and to keep costs down, a team of trained volunteers will be required to provide support to the shop and the shop manager. Given the population profile as well as from the community consultation through the survey and public meetings and demonstrated community spirit during the Corona virus pandemic, we are anticipating sufficient volunteers will come forward. At least 60 will be required to keep the business running. Volunteers will be recruited in the months leading up to and following the shop opening and a rota will be developed to suit volunteers' requirements. For the shop to operate efficiently volunteers will need to be able to commit on a regular basis for short periods of time of at least 3 hours.

Some volunteers will need to fulfil a management function and/or be trained to provide post office services when the shop manager is absent or otherwise occupied. A few volunteers will also be sought for standby duties, to be able to take over when a regular volunteer is unable to fulfil their shift. Volunteers will be expected to arrange a swap with another volunteer when they know in advance that they will be unable to perform a shift.

Mindful of security and safety, the Community Shop will be staffed throughout its opening hours by at least two people (including the shop manager whenever available). Actual staffing levels will be varied to match peaks and troughs in demand. A breakdown of assumed shifts can be found in the Key Facts Sheet. Customer feedback, demand for longer opening hours (for instance, late closing on one or two days) and actual footfall will be reviewed regularly and, where a viable business case for change exists, opening hours and salaried staff hours/posts will be revised by the Management Committee.

Staff and volunteers will receive an induction course in using the 'point of sale' till system, food safety, health and safety, hygiene, and age-related sales. A handbook of policies and procedures will be written. Regular refresher training will be provided and there will be monitoring and mentoring from the shop manager. New volunteers will be accompanied by another trained volunteer for the first session or two. The shop manager will report to the established Management Committee and will provide weekly sales and wastage reports. Any urgent issues will be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Management Committee immediately.

Having volunteers is a very visible way of demonstrating that the business is community owned, and allows all those involved to feel a sense of ownership and contribution.

## 7.5 Products and services

The Community Shop will offer the products and services that are most useful to the community, at competitive and fair prices, and provide a market for local producers. The shop will meet the needs for convenience, basic shopping (fresh produce, meal-for-tonight, top-up items, etc). It will in addition provide a good range of artisan, quality items that will expect to achieve a higher margin than basic provisions and will have seasonal/festive promotions. Our aspiration for the shop is that it will be increasingly used for weekly shops, attract customers from further afield and that we can provide a delivery service for less mobile parishioners.

By way of the 'pop up' corner, the building will provide space for varying crafts sales, seasonal specials, use by the Primary School, and regular visits by the Citizen Advice Bureau. A door will provide the option for privacy in that area. Together with the café facility, the 'pop up' corner will serve as a general information point for residents and visitors. This is all wholeheartedly supported by the Church Group of St Bartholomew's.

We will establish close ties with the local primary school and may, for example, be able to provide learning opportunities and exhibit children's art work. We will also provide the opportunity for local secondary students to gain work experience.

#### 7.6 Post Office services

We have liaised with Post Office Ltd about hosting a Post Office Local. This model entails having the post office counter as part of the main shop counter with a shared POS system. The shop manager and a number of volunteers will be given training. A PO Ltd trainer will be on-site during the first week that the post office is open.

A Post Office Local provides all the basic products and services, and most importantly, access to cash.

Apart from convenience for customers, another benefit of providing post office services is that it will generate additional footfall for the village shop. However, it is acknowledged that the establishment of the Post Office Local may only happen after the Community Shop has been opened.

However, thanks to the Memorial Hall Committee and the easing of Covid restrictions, it was possible to set up a weekly mobile Post Office outside the Memorial Hall as of 7th of April 2021.

#### 7.7 Storage space

In order to maximise sales floor space in the shop itself, there will be external and secure storage provided through metal storage containers. There is adequate space for these on the site.

#### 8 Catchment area and customer base

Although named after its geographical location, the intention is that Much Marcle Community Shop serves the wider community, i.e. the whole of the surrounding area including, outlying farms and houses, adjoining parishes and visitors. So, in terms of the catchment area, we are talking of a radius of at least 8miles from the location of Much Marcle Community Shop.

We want to reach out to the about 700 inhabitants, as well as to staff, parents, and children of Much Marcle Primary School, visitors to the Walwyn Arms, customers of the local garage, passers by on the A449, and visitors to regular events in Much Marcle, such as the Steam Rally, the Large Model Air show, the Big Apple, Hellens Music, the Garden Festival and social gatherings in Memorial Hall. The shop will be prepared for these events with stock which is relevant to each event.

We are also aware that Ledbury is having a substantial number of new houses built at the outskirts of Ledbury next to the A449. We will aim to attract some of the new residents there with a quality local offer in distinction to the supermarkets of Ledbury and the advantage of avoiding an often congested centre of Ledbury.

## 9 SWOT analysis

The Steering Group see the following strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Much Marcle Community Shop:

### STRENGTHS

A positive attractive response to the confirmed need at the survey and the current widespread view of a missing social hub

Community ownership

Offer of a wide range of quality local produce at a fair price

Availability of essentials during a crisis like COVID-19

Offer of new facilities such as a café and the 'pop up' corner

Creation of a new job in the area

Advantageous location

Takes account of the Much Marcle Neighbourhood Development Plan

The project has the support of Much Marcle Parish Council, Herefordshire Council and the Plunkett Foundation

Reduction of carbon emission from the need of travelling to shops and supermarkets in Ledbury

Local money remains in the local economy

Strengthening links with Much Marcle Primary School, the Church Group, the Gardening Club, and local producers and crafts people for the good of the community

### WEAKNESSES

Dependency on one paid full-time shop manager and a group of volunteers

New building and interior fit-out needed

Location just outside the settlement boundary

Closeness to flood risk area

## OPPORTUNITIES

A totally new beginning for an important community facility

Purpose designed layout in a green environment

Minimising staff costs by making use of enthusiastic volunteers

Provision of basic convenience food as well as high quality local artisan products

Social hub for information, news and guidance and advice for the local community

Create a community wide membership with an attractive share offer

## THREATS

Residents have got used to having no shop and post office

Online shopping and service offered by major supermarkets

Lack of sufficient voluntary help

Difficulty of attracting necessary funding

Shop and Post Office may not create enough revenue in order to be viable in the long run

Failure to recruit an enterprising shop manager

We will try to mitigate the identified weaknesses and threats by:

- Demonstrating that the chosen location is the optimum solution in terms of the survey, of economics and of social cohesion reasons
- The location is roughly 50cm higher than the current flood risk area near the road and it will have a suspended beam floor which will raise the building by another 30cm to floor level.
- Establishing a competent Management Committee which will monitor the business and running of the Community Shop and Post Office Local efficiently and effectively
- Establishing necessary funding levels in order to cover the identified start-up costs
- A dedicated marketing campaign near the launch of Much Marcle Community Shop
- Offering attractive local produce at a fair price within easy reach
- Listening to our customers and adjusting our offer accordingly
- Having a clear exit strategy with stepped break points and a major review after 5 years

- Appointment of the shop manager a month before the envisaged launch of Much Marcle Community Shop.

## 10 Action Plan

The journey so far has been:

DATE	KIND OF MEETING	LOCATION	MAJOR POINTS
02/04/19	Public meeting	Memorial Hall	Create evidence for need and feasibility of a village shop and post office
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02/12/19	2 members of SG	Herefordshire Council	Meeting with local councillor and staff member for funding and enterprise
05/12/19	Chair of SG	Much Marcle	Secured 2 working days with community adviser from Plunkett Foundation
09/12/19	SG	Hellens	Mission Statement and statement of beneficiary impact of a village shop and post office

14/12/19	3 members of SG	Phillips House	Meeting with community adviser from Plunkett Foundation
20/01/20	SG	Hellens	Approved first version of business plan
28/01/20	Communication	Much Marcle	E-mail update to the Community
03/02/20	2 members of SG	Herefordshire Council	Meeting on business plan with 2 members of staff
27/02/20	Communication	Much Marcle	'Much Marcle Community Hub - A work in Progress Article' in The Mercury
27/02/20	7 members of SG	Worcestershire	Study Visit to 3 Community Shops: Crowle, Peopleton and Bretforton
02/03/20	SG	Hellens	Decision on Legal Structure
10/03/20			Membership of Plunkett Foundation
11/03/20	Chair and other member of SG	Memorial Hall	Update to Much Marcle Parish Council
14/03/20	Chair of SG	Memorial Hall	Update to audience at Film Night
30/03/20	SG	consultation by	Details of Model Rules of Association e-mail
01/04/20	Communication	Much Marcle	'FAQs about our Community Shop'. Article in The Mercury
14/04/20	Chair of SG		Posted letter with Model Rules of Association and application for Community Benefit Society status to Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)
11/05/20			Registration as 'Much Marcle Community Shop Limited' under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 at the FCA
22/06/20	Chair of SG, other member of SG, architectural and planning consultant	Zoom	Discussion of design and lay-out and planning processes
08/07/20	Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of SG	Phillips House	Arrangements for opening a bank account
20/07/20	Chair of SG, other member of SG, architectural and planning consultant	Phillips House	Discussion of planning processes

29/07/20	Chair, Treasurer and Secretary of SG		Application for a bank account with the Co-operative Bank
02/08/20	Communication		'What's been happening to our Community Shop?' Article in the Mercury
09/09/20	Treasurer		Bank account opened with the Co-operative Bank
21/09/20	Members of SG	Phillips House	Next steps
07/10/20	Members of SG and Chair of Parish Council	Phillips House	Location and Lease Arrangements
13/10/20	Chair and member of SG and Managers of the Walwyn Arms	Phillips House	Exploration of alternatives
19/10/20	Members of SG	Phillips House	Next steps meeting
01/11/20	Communication		Much Marcle Community Shop. Article in the Mercury
02/11/20	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Discussion with donors
02/11/20	Members of SG	Phillips House	Preparation of mail shot for share offer
11/11/20	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Discussion with donors
01/12/20	Communication		Much Marcle Community Shop. Article in the Mercury
08/03/2021	Chair	Phillips House	Discussion with donor
07/04/2021	Memorial Hall Committee	Memorial Hall	First mobile Post Office set-up and thereafter on a weekly basis
24/06/2021	Members of SG	Phillips House	Discussion about presence at Hellens Produce Market
27/06/2021	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
22/07/2021	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Discussion of further option
31/08/2021	Chair and 3 members of SG	Phillips House	Discussion of further option
03/09/2021	SG	Phillips House	Confirmation of Vision, renewal of Plunkett Foundation Membership

05/09/2021	Chair of SG		Information to Much Marcle Parish
21/09/2021	SG	Phillips House	Setting next priorities
01/10/2021	Communication Group		Update in Mercury Newsletter
06/10/21	Chair and member of SG	Phillips House	Details of pre-planning advice application.
20/10/2021	Chair of SG and Philip Burford, Director fHook Mason Hereford	Phillips House	Meeting to explore services
25/10/2021	SG	Phillips House	Logo/Share Offer/Pre-planning advice
28/10/2021	Chair of SG		Submission of confidential application for pre-planning advice from Herefordshire Council
06/11/2021	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
29/11/2021			Cancelled meeting due to pandemic
04/12/2021	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
21/12/2021	Secretary		Communication to donors
01/01/2022	Communication		Article in the Mercury
19/01/2022	Chair + member of SG	The Royal Oak	Meeting with Manager about a shop at the pub
05/02/2022	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
28/02/2022	Chair + member of SG	Phillips House	Consideration of Shop design
28/02/2022	SG	Phillips House	Target of Share offer
01/03/2022	Chair		Application for funds from the Mercury
05/03/2022	Members of SG		Presence at Hellens Produce Market for information and fundraising
08/03/2022			Receipt of pre-planning advice from Herefordshire Council
16/03/2022	Chair + member of SG	Ludlow	Meeting with architect
21/03/2022	Meeting with two local residents	Phillips House	Discussion about Lay-out for the Share Offer

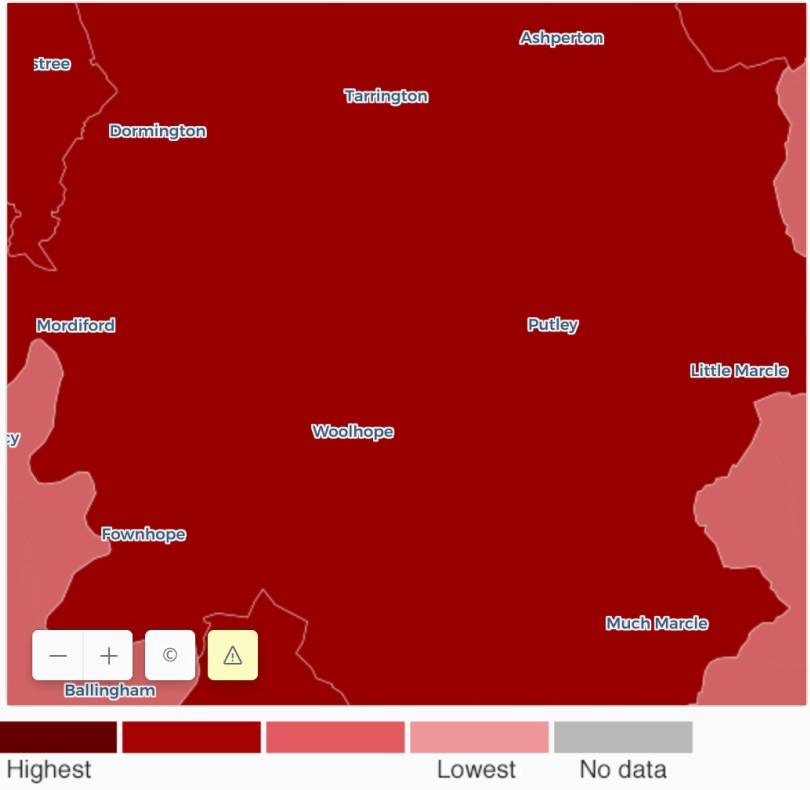
21/03/2022	SG	Phillips House	Discussion of pre-planning advice, Share Offer, Logo and Website
21/03/2022	Secretary		Communication to email contacts
22/03/2022	Chair of SG		Request of quote for full architectural service from two architects

We regularly update our action plan towards the opening of the new Much Marcle Community Shop.

1 Much Marcle Neighbourhood Average Household Income

### What is the average household income in your area?

Click to see the average household income after housing costs in your area



ONS. Map built with Carto.

A quarter of London's local areas and a fifth of those in the South East were ranked in the top 10% of wealthiest areas.