

Our
shop

Est. 2017

Houghton & Wyton
Community Shop

Volunteers' Handbook

Introduction

Welcome to Our Shop!

We hope that you will have a long and happy association with us, and enjoy helping to make the shop a key part of village life. We are owned and run by Houghton & Wyton Community Shop Limited (H&WCS) which is an organisation run on behalf of over 300 shareholders (members) who mostly live in the village. The shareholders elect a management committee to act on their behalf.

Our organisation, a Community Benefit Society, works for the benefit of our community, and it is vital we all understand our role to provide excellent service and make a real difference. We are part of a growing family of Community Owned shops, of which there are now 400 in operation.

Our Shop relies on volunteers working alongside paid staff to deliver our aims and objectives. Our staff and volunteers are essential and the most important asset of our organisation. We currently (summer 2020) have ten full and part-time employees in the shop and post office, and approximately 40 volunteers.

This handbook is to help all our volunteers become acquainted with H&WCS policies and procedures. It consists of extracts from a longer document which is issued to paid staff. Alongside this document is the Retail Operations Manual which is designed to guide you through all the retail operating policies and procedures.

Please note that hard copies of both these documents are available at all times on the shelf beneath Till 2 in the shop. However please refer to the electronic version, via hwcommunityshop.org/community, for the most up to date version of this document and the latest policies.

Please read the information carefully and if you are in doubt about anything in it, or if you want further clarification, please ask one of the two Volunteer Co-ordinators or the Shop Manager.

Personal details supplied when you start volunteering are maintained by our Data Controller. This information is treated in strict confidence and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (as amended) and the General Data Protection Rules that came into force in May 2018.

If there is something you do not understand, please ask. Equally, if you have suggestions about your role or the organisation, we'll be delighted to hear them. Membership of the committee (themselves all volunteers) is open to all volunteers, elected by the shareholders at our Annual General Meeting.

We look forward to welcoming and working with you in Our Shop.

H&WCS Management Committee

August 2020

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Please note: the numbering in the Volunteers' Handbook contains a number of gaps. This is the result of the contents being extracted from a longer document issued to all paid staff, which includes details of their employment of no relevance to volunteers. It is useful, though, to have both Handbooks using the same numbering system.

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2. About ‘Our Shop’

There has been a shop on the site for over one hundred years. Houghton & Wyton Community Shop Limited was set up to retain the valuable village asset of a profitable village shop for the benefit of residents and visitors, and was purchased from the retiring owners in April 2017. The overall ambitions of Our Shop are to serve the community, to operate as a successful and profitable business and to distribute part of those profits to our shareholders and to the Houghton and Wyton Community Fund. This is a charity, run independently of Our Shop by three trustees, which gives financial support to local individuals and projects, and promotes neighbourliness and community values.

Over 300 shareholders bought shares in Our Shop in 2017. Their interests are represented by the Management Committee who are elected annually by the members to run the shop. We are governed by our Model Rules and are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Ensuring the shop is profitable is one of three key aims for a successful shop. We rely heavily on our pool of volunteers to help deliver this objective.

Feedback from existing customers and members tell us that Our Shop is more than just a business – it is at the heart of our community. It offers valuable goods and services, and promotes friendliness and concern for our customers, many of whom are elderly and/or live alone. Our Home Delivery service has recently helped many ‘locked down’ local residents, and our Community Corner is designed as a friendly place to sit, browse, chat and use the coffee machine for individuals and small groups. We have also recently acquired dementia-friendly status.

In addition, Our Shop strives to do its bit to save the planet through actively seeking out local suppliers, encouraging residents to support the village shop rather than getting in a car to visit a supermarket, and by promoting recycling.

2.1 *Our Vision*

We want to run Our Shop as a thriving, profitable shop and provide a focus for community life for Houghton and Wyton and the surrounding villages. We want to help current and future residents to manage some of the challenges facing rural communities today, such as the lack of services and isolation. Visitors to Our Shop also value our friendly approach and range of goods and services we provide.

2.2 *Our Values*

Core Values:	The way we work together:
We are friendly	We try to make everyone welcome and happy to shop. We have time for people, are familiar, and approachable. We are part of this community providing a social and community hub.
We are trusted	We are open, honest, fair and dependable, always acting in the best interests of the Society and our community. We recognise we are much more than a mere shop and a rare facility which needs to be treasured.

We care	We care about each other and our planet, and will act to promote values of community and sustainability.
We listen	Everything we do is based on the experiences of those who live locally and use our shop and Post Office
We inspire	We may be a little quirky, but our energy, determination and success inspire those around us.
We are appropriately commercial	We do not try to make profits at any cost, but neither are we embarrassed by running a sustainable venture where surpluses can be distributed for the benefit of our community.

2.3. Expecting the Unexpected

Our Shop is prepared for the unexpected through our planning process that identifies potential impacts that threaten Our Shop and provides a framework for an effective response that safeguards the interests of its customers, staff, volunteers, shareholders and reputation within the community. The actions we need to take are built into our service-recovery systems, making it part of the way that Our Shop runs its business, rather than having to ‘firefight’ any emergency. We aim to offer ‘business as usual’ in the quickest possible time. Members of staff, volunteers and the Management Committee work together to provide that re-assurance to our customers.

These aims have been particularly relevant during the Coronavirus pandemic.

3. About Your Time as a Volunteer

3.1 Your Initial Induction

Our employees and volunteers are our greatest asset and we are committed to your development, starting with an induction when you join us. We aim to support and develop you so that you feel confident to undertake your responsibilities and contribute to the success of the shop.

Induction will be spread over your first few weeks with us. The content and duration will depend on the scope and complexity of your job. On your first day with us, a Volunteer Co-ordinator will discuss with you your induction programme, and explain the day-to-day operations of the shop.

Contact with the Volunteer Co-ordinators continues on an informal basis throughout your time with us.

You will also receive regular emails from our Rota Manager giving details of shifts to be filled in the coming two weeks.

If you are unable to fill a shift at short notice, please contact a Volunteer Co-ordinator.

If/when you decide to finish volunteering at the shop, it would be helpful if the Volunteer Co-ordinator had as much notice as possible.

4. Standards of Performance and Behaviour at Work

4.1. Appearance

Please dress appropriately when at work and ensure that your personal hygiene and grooming are properly attended to before starting work. We will give you a Houghton & Wyton Community Shop apron or tabard to be worn whilst you are at work. Volunteers are encouraged to wear an Our Shop badge when in the shop.

4.2. Company Property

We ask that you treat our property and equipment with care and respect. Please do not remove property unless you have authority from the shop manager to do so. If anything is lost, damaged or faulty, report this to the manager as soon as possible. Secure items, which might easily be removed from the premises, by storing them properly when not in use.

4.3. Personal Property

Any personal property such as jewellery, cash, credit cards, clothes, cars, motorbikes or bicycles etc. are left on Houghton & Wyton Community Shop Ltd premises so entirely at your own risk. There are six lockers for volunteer use in the rear storage area. Our Shop does not accept liability for loss or damage to any personal property whatsoever.

4.4 Mobile phones

Personal mobile phones should be set to silent mode during normal working hours, unless there is a specific emergency or urgent reason.

4.5 Smoking Policy

It is illegal to smoke in enclosed public spaces. Smoking (including e-cigarettes) is therefore strictly prohibited on H&WCS Ltd premises.

4.8. Disclosure in the Public Interest

Our Shop is committed to being open and honest about how the shop is organised, and to learn from staff and volunteers when things can be improved. There may be times where a member of staff or volunteer has reason to believe that there is or could potentially be, or has been, a serious problem. This is commonly called 'whistleblowing'. Any such allegation or disclosure must be made in the public interest. The issues could include:

- A criminal offence
- The breach of a legal obligation
- A miscarriage of justice
- A danger to the health and safety of any individual
- Damage to the environment
- Deliberate attempt to conceal any of the above.

The employee or volunteer must first raise this with the Manager or Volunteer Co-ordinator who will ensure that their concerns are discussed with the appropriate members of the Management Committee in order that a full investigation is carried out. Our Shop takes seriously any breach of good practice as this has the potential to damage our reputation and that of those connected with the shop. The employee or volunteer will be kept informed when the investigation is complete, and a meeting held with them to inform them of the findings and the remedial actions that will be taken.

If the route through the Manager or Volunteer Co-ordinator is not appropriate, the employee or volunteer should raise it directly with a member of the Management Committee. However, if the employee or

volunteer feels they cannot disclose the matter of concern to any representative of Our Shop or if the employee or volunteer is unhappy about the decision made, they should contact a prescribed person or body (guidance is available from the website 'GOV.UK - Blowing the whistle: list of prescribed people and bodies).

4.9. Use of Private Vehicles

The conditions of use by employees and volunteers of the private vehicles on Our Shop business are that:

- the owner of the vehicle covers the car by a comprehensive insurance policy issued by a reputable insurance company;
- the insurers have been informed that the vehicle will be used on Our Shop business;
- if the vehicle is used to carry goods for Our Shop, the owner specifically advises their insurance company;
- confirmation has been obtained by the owner from their insurers that the third-party cover indemnifies Our Shop against all liability;
- the vehicle can be legally used on public roads;
- the vehicle is properly maintained according to the manufacturer's specification;
- the employee/volunteer driving the vehicle has a current driving licence appropriate to the vehicle being used.
- In claiming expenses for the use of a private car on Our Shop business, the employee is confirming that the above conditions have been fully met.

Expenses: Mileage rates when travelling by your own private transport will be the current HMRC rate. (45p per mile for a car as at August 2020).

5. Information

5.1 Information we hold about you

On joining, volunteers are asked to fill in a Volunteer Information Form, giving details of

- Name
- Address
- Contact numbers/e-mail
- Next of kin contact

You will also be asked to sign a Privacy Notice (PN) which sets out the information we hold. This ensures that you know what personal information we hold for you and why we hold it. This is required by the General Data Protection Regulations that came into force in May 2018. Our Privacy Statement is on Our Shop's website.

5.4. Confidentiality and Disclosure of Information

One of the conditions of your appointment as a volunteer is that you have a duty of confidentiality with regards to Houghton & Wyton Community Shop Ltd. This means that if you find yourself in possession of sensitive information, the disclosure of it could be construed as a breach of confidentiality. You must not discuss any sensitive or confidential matter with any outside organisation including the media.

5.5. Use of CCTV in Our Shop

CCTV is installed at the Shop premises for the purposes of the safety of customers, staff and volunteers, and for premises security. Cameras are located at various places on the premises, and images from the cameras are recorded and stored for 31 days before being automatically deleted.

Viewings of recordings directly from the system are not permitted for data subjects or disclosed to others. The secure viewing room will only be used by the Processor, Controller and shop staff/volunteer if required for identification purposes.

6. Valuing Our Colleagues and Customers

6.1 Safeguarding Those at Risk

Our Shop has a range of customers who may require assistance. We have produced a safeguarding policy that promotes the dignity, wellbeing and safety of children, young people and vulnerable adults. (Vulnerable adults could include adults with learning difficulties or physical disability, frail, elderly people and their carers.)

Our Shop offers the following extra services to all customers including those who may need additional support:

- Carry to car services
- Home delivery service
- A seating area in Community Corner

6.2 Valuing Diversity

H&WCS Ltd values diversity and seeks to provide all staff and volunteers with the opportunity for work, career and personal development based on ability, qualifications and suitability for the work as well as their potential to be developed into the job. Our policy

- Supports the promotion of a culture of equality of opportunity and diversity within H&WCS and our community.
- States that all staff and volunteers will have a duty to comply with and support the policy and to report instances of discrimination to the shop manager at the earliest opportunity.

6.3 Dignity at Work

6.3.1. Statement

We believe that everyone connected with Our Shop should always treat other customers and colleagues at work as they would like to be treated.

6.3.2. Team Working

Members of staff and volunteers are always expected to act in the best interest of Our Shop so that the community benefits from a strong, committed and loyal team. This means that members of staff and volunteers are expected to treat each other with dignity, respect and fairness.

If you feel that you are not being treated as described, you should bring it to the attention of the Manager or a Volunteer Co-ordinator in order that proper action can be taken. (*See also 11.1*)

8. Health and Safety Statement

Our Shop is committed to protecting, as far as is practicable, the health, safety and welfare of members of staff and volunteers. The Management Committee has a general duty of care to those that are affected by what H&WCS Ltd does or fails to do.

H&WCS Ltd employs more than five people and is therefore required to set up a full health and safety management system, including the provision of written risk assessments.

The Shop will follow best practice and adopt supporting arrangements to provide a practical framework that will enable H&WCS Ltd., to comply with the principles set out in the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (H&SWA) and other work place health and safety legislation.

The Health and Safety arrangements, including Fire Safety and Evacuation procedures, are explained in the Retail Manual.

Reporting on health and safety matters will form part of the discussion of the retail report discussed at every meeting of the Committee in order to ensure that significant hazards are identified, suitably assessed and appropriate, timely, action taken to remove or reduce those risks.

9. Training and Development

9.1. Training and Development Policy

Our Shop aims to provide training opportunities which include a scheme to enable staff and volunteers to develop relevant skills and acquire knowledge to underpin their current role.

9.2. Aspirations

Opportunities may be identified for employees and volunteers to undertake additional, non-mandatory training to develop their potential and add value to the service provided by Our Shop. This will be discussed by the employee/volunteer and the Manager or a Volunteer Co-ordinator. While every effort will be made to assist with additional training, serving customers and keeping the shop well stocked and tidy must remain our priority.

11. Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures

11.1 Grievance Procedure

If you have a grievance about any aspect of volunteering in the shop, you should raise it in the first instance with a Volunteer Co-ordinator, who will, as necessary, raise the matter with the Shop Manager.

In most cases, the grievance will be resolved informally.

If this is not possible, you should set out the grievance in writing, and a meeting will be held between the volunteer, a volunteer co-ordinator and the shop manager.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of this meeting, you should refer the matter to the Chair of the Management Committee, who will hold a further meeting and give you a decision within 24 hours.

11.2 Disciplinary Procedure

Our Shop aims to promote encourage improvement in conduct and performance in its staff, and this applies to volunteers as well.

As part of the induction process, each volunteer will be made aware of the standards expected, both in conduct and performance.

If the shop manager considers that any aspect of a volunteer's performance in the shop is unsatisfactory, he will raise it with a volunteer co-ordinator, who will investigate the circumstances and then hold a meeting with the volunteer to discuss the problem and try to find a solution.

If a solution at this stage cannot be found, the matter will be referred to the Chair of the Management Committee, who will hold a meeting with all relevant parties. The decision of the Chair following this meeting will be final.

If an alleged offence considered by the shop manager is sufficiently serious (such as theft, fraud, wilful damage to property, bullying etc), the volunteer will, pending investigation of the matter, be asked to stop working at the shop.

12. Inspections of Our Shop

12.1 Introduction

Our Shop must follow a number of rules in order to trade as a retail outlet. We may receive visits from a number of inspectors from statutory organisations including:

- Environmental Health
- Trading Standards
- Local licensing authority for alcohol and tobacco (Huntingdonshire District Council)

In our experience, inspectors are keen to give advice and help us to remain a viable, safe and productive support to the local community.

12.2 Managing Inspections

If you are on duty when an inspector visits, please notify the shop manager or senior member of staff on duty. They will check the person's identity and make the necessary arrangements for any inspection. Although Our Shop has sound systems in place to enable you to follow the necessary rules and regulations, every member of staff and volunteer plays a vital part in ensuring we are given a 'clean bill of health' by following the guidelines and training they have been given.

13. Security

13.1 Safety Statement

Every employee and volunteer working in Our Shop has the right to feel they are in a safe place, however, there may be a rare occasion when an unpleasant or potentially violent incident may occur. You are not expected to put yourself in danger at any time. These guidelines are there to help you manage the incident, however remote the possibility.

Incidents could include shoplifting, armed robbery and burglary. CCTV cameras cover the whole of Our Shop and act as a very effective deterrent. We also have arrangements to bar someone from Our Shop because of their unacceptable behaviour.

Security arrangements that set out what you should do in that unlikely event will form part of your induction. If you are concerned, please speak to the Manager or a Volunteer Co-ordinator.

13.2 Support for Staff Members and Volunteers

If a member of staff or volunteer is a witness to any of the above incidents, they will receive the support and assistance they need. It is important that the member of staff or volunteer lets the Manager, Volunteer Co-ordinator or a member of the Committee know that they require help to return to normal duties.

14. Using Our Shop Building

Our Shop occupies an old and much-treasured building in the centre of the village of Houghton, which also contains a separate first floor flat which is rented out. It is the responsibility of the Management Committee, together with members of staff and volunteers who are users, to take great care of this asset.

14.1 Electrical Items

All portable electrical appliances owned by Our Shop will be checked periodically but at least every two years after purchasing and a record maintained by the shop manager within the Health and Safety File.

Members of staff and volunteers should not use or cause to be brought into general use any piece of electrical equipment which is unsafe, or which has not been approved by the shop manager. Electrical equipment must be used, stored and maintained in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.

14.2 Building Defects

In order to ensure the safety of members of staff, volunteers and customers, any defects which are considered to be hazardous and which are related to the fabric of the building must be immediately reported by the person noticing the defect to the shop manager, who will arrange for repairs to be made or the item to be isolated to avoid danger.

15. Sustainability

15.1 Statement

One of Our Shop's main aims is to support the reduction of waste, the use of recyclable packaging and the more efficient use of resources, including energy by encouraging people to change the way they think and behave. We also want to be able to show that we 'do what we say'. Our Shop relies on members of staff and volunteers to support these principles by reminding customers about the opportunities provided for them to participate. Our Shop is already pro-active by

- recycling packaging wherever possible using a fortnightly collection by the local authority
- recycling of ink cartridges, batteries, crisp packets and stamps
- making available filtered water to customers for refilling of re-usable water bottles
- improving the range of goods and services offered to local residents to avoid unnecessary driving
- reducing waste through re-use and recycling of products and materials where these are available, for example reusing clean plastic bags and bags for life.
- Encouraging customers, staff and volunteers to cycle whenever possible

15.2 Reducing Waste

Members of staff and volunteers need to undertake daily checks to ensure wastage of stock is minimalised. All wastage is recorded in the wastage book and this allows Our Shop to monitor how well we are doing and report this in our Annual Plan.

Food that is out of date but still considered safe to use is available for members of staff and volunteers to take home free if they wish at their own risk. Our Shop will not be responsible for any harm that may result from consuming these products.

15.3 Improving Our Sustainability

If you have any ideas about recycling or reducing waste or conserving energy in Our Shop, please speak to the Manager or a Volunteer Co-ordinator. You can also refer to our Sustainability Policy available via our website.

16. Serving Our Community

16.1 Supporting our Community

Our Community Corner provides a comfortable seating area for the residents of the villages and for visitors. Our Shop also supports village clubs, societies and events such as Feast Week through our notice board and window displays. Our Shop also offers volunteering opportunities for the older and younger members of the community.

16.2 Helping the Less Able Customer

Members of staff and volunteers of Our Shop contribute greatly to an important service to the local community, especially for those who are less able, for one reason or another. You can offer these customers a variety of help such as the carry-to-car service for heavy or bulky items and a home delivery service. Our Shop is also part of the 'Standing Up for Sitting Down' campaign and seats are available for the less mobile, as are trolleys. Our customers value the thoughtfulness of members of staff and volunteers, that is so important in remaining a successful community shop.

16.3 Listening to Our Customers

It is important to know how we can improve Our Shop and the services and goods we provide, so we need to encourage customers, members of staff and volunteers to give us feedback. To achieve this, Our Shop relies on the friendly and helpful relationship that grows between our members of staff, volunteers and our customers.

In a more formal way, we carry our periodic customer surveys and we encourage customers to write in the customer comment book and give feedback to our members of staff and volunteers. We want to celebrate the good news that Our Shop is playing a huge part in supporting the villagers and those who live in the small towns and villages in the area, and to learn from their comments.

Thank you for reading the Volunteers' Handbook. Full details of day-to-day operations and procedures in the shop are in the Retail Operations Manual.

Handbook Amended: August 2020

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