



**RURAL COMMUNITIES:  
Local at Heart**

**Leonard Stanley Community Enterprise Group**

*"To re-establish and maintain a more cohesive, inclusive and sustainable rural village community in Leonard Stanley by stimulating, supporting and managing village-based social and business enterprise activities and in so doing increase awareness, respect and participation in it by all sections of the community." **Leonard Stanley Community Enterprise Group's mission.***

Leonard Stanley Parish Plan & Community Shop Group cordially invite you to a **Mini Market Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> November 7 p.m.**



With local food producers and crafts people, Community Shop questionnaire results, Opportunities for your thoughts on village life, Results of local food hamper Draw and Refreshments

VARIETY is the spice of village life in **Leonard Stanley** near Stroud – especially since the Community Enterprise Group was formed.

While the village hall is an ideal venue for the many local clubs and organisations and there is a church, a pub and a school – but no shop. And although there is a lot going on, a group of villagers felt more events were needed to bring the whole community together - and to think about the possibility of a village-run shop.

Community Enterprise Group co-founder David Newton said: "We felt there were not enough

opportunities to bring people of all ages and from all parts of the community together, to get to know each other. We wanted to get people together with events that promoted this 'inclusive' environment and at the same time to give us an opportunity to start asking what they felt the village needed in the future."

With active support and some funds from the Parish Council and other groups, the Enterprise Group has organised a variety of activities, including an annual Apple Day, now in its third year, where people bring their own fruit to juice and share, a visit from the Old Spot Theatre group, a village trail to raise awareness of local history and to get people out and about and, most recently, a community marketplace event.

The Group has also visited community-run village shops in nearby Coaley and at Hewelsfield

and Brockweir in the Forest of Dean, which proved inspirational.

"As a community, we are keen to try and get some sort of village-run shop off the ground – but we felt we needed something more along the lines of a community marketplace, promoting local produce and the talents of artists and craftspeople, which at the same time provides an essential meeting place for all in the community," said David.

"We are lucky to have excellent local producers of cheese, fruit and veg, fresh meat and pies – but we also have cake makers, and craftspeople producing great things.

"We're also keen to help people get to know local tradespeople and to encourage new local enterprise – sometimes, unless you've lived in a village for years, you have no idea that there's a great local plumber or electrician. We currently help promote the local food producers through the bi-weekly village newsletter which reaches 75 per cent of the community."

Leonard Stanley's first community marketplace was held in November offering a range of produce, arts and crafts and attracting good numbers. Local food producers also worked together to produce a Christmas shopping list so villagers could order their seasonal shopping, and picked it up centrally in the village hall.

The event also gave people the chance to discuss the parish plan and view the results of a questionnaire about the future of a community shop or marketplace.

The Community Enterprise Group has had the invaluable support of Gloucestershire Rural Community Council's rural adviser through the Store is the Core programme, and expert advice from Gloucestershire Enterprise to help them develop their ideas and keep focused.

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"We have the full support of the Parish Council; unlike them, we are a loose group of people who are not constricted by the formalities of the democratic process, and so we can try out ideas and involve people with specific skills for particular events," said David.

"Organising all these events has helped bring people together so that when we did the community consultation, we felt we really had involved most of the people. What we decide to do next about a shop or marketplace will be very much based on what local people have said they want, and what they will support. There are exciting times ahead!"

#### **Extract from the Enterprise Group's Remit**

We believe that the **backbone** of a healthy rural village community are the social and business enterprise activities that encourage daily or regular **informal social networking** amongst the wider village community. It is this contact that cuts across age and social groupings to bind us into a more cohesive, inclusive and sustainable rural village community and in so doing encourage a healthy sense of respect and ownership amongst its inhabitants.

#### **Such activities include:**

- ▶ Newsagent or post office
- ▶ Food/drink establishment
- ▶ Daytime café/internet café/book café
- ▶ Production and sale of local foods and produce
- ▶ Other service trades – hairdressers etc
- ▶ Entertainment activities – amateur dramatics
- ▶ Sports – cricket, football, tennis etc
- ▶ Community events – village fair etc

It is these core activities that we aim to encourage and support by co-ordinating and managing the efficient, economic and sustainable use of community-based assets to the benefit of the community, whether in direct control or through partnership with other individuals, businesses or groups.

Where possible we will seek to adapt or re-locate facilities to a central location that will be mutually beneficial in the use of resources and strengthen the village centre identity.

**For more information, contact David  
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