

[From Bob King, vice chairman St Tudy Community Shop Management Committee]

St Tudy Community Shop crowned best in region for contribution to community

St Tudy Community Shop has been crowned the winner of the South West of England Award as part of the Rural Community Ownership Awards 2016, the only national awards programme recognising community co-operation around the UK.

St Tudy Community Shop and Post Office has been trading since 2011 after the sole existing retail outlet in the village closed as it was no longer a viable independent business. Fundraising and grants successfully resulted in a brand new building opening the following year, which we now need to expand due to the increase in trade. It is hoped to extend the building to provide a community hub with a coffee shop and library in order to continue widening the services we can offer. Volunteers cheerfully run the shop and post office on a weekly rota basis with a shop manager.

The Community Ownership Awards are run by Plunkett Foundation, the national charity supporting people to set up and run community co-operatives – businesses that are owned and run democratically by large numbers of people from within their local area – to help overcome issues ranging from isolation and loneliness to poverty.

Shop manager Karen Roberts said “I am absolutely thrilled and delighted with this recognition for our thriving shop which serves our village and the surrounding area, and the success of which is largely due to the dedication and enthusiasm of our wonderful band of volunteers. It is fantastic to be acknowledged as the best in the South West!”

St Tudy Community Shop competed with shortlisted entries and was crowned the best community owned co-operative in the South West of England. The winners were announced at a national ceremony in London to an invited audience of over 100 special guests from around the UK.

James Alcock, Head of Frontline at Plunkett Foundation said: The winners of the Rural Community Ownership Awards all represent fantastic examples of community enterprise. The award nominations clearly demonstrated community co-operatives at the top of their game; all the winners fought off seriously tough competition and truly deserve this accolade. We wish them all every success for the future.”

Community co-operatives come in many forms: shops, pubs, bakeries, farms, community hubs, woodlands, broadband projects – the list is endless! They are a business, but trade primarily for the benefit of the local community. Like any business, a community co-operative must be profitable. Due to their focus on the local community, and investing profits back into the business or local area, they are able to succeed where other commercial ventures may fail. For example, around 400 commercial village shops close each year and in the region of 21 pub closures a week, community-owned shops and co-operative pubs not only represent a better form of business, they directly respond to some of the key challenges facing rural communities today such as lack of services and isolation.

For information:

About the Community Ownership Awards 2016:

The Community Ownership Awards are about celebrating the most inspiring examples of people in rural areas working together to improve their communities. They are designed to help communities celebrate their own success and learn from each other, and to raise awareness about the co-operative model and community ownership to a wider audience. For more information visit the Awards website at: www.communityownershipawards.com