



An invitation to support our rural community

The local shop was the heart of our village. So when our Co-operative store closed, the people of Hallbankgate and beyond set up a Community Benefit Society to buy and refurbish the building, which was originally purpose-built in 1877 for the Naworth Collieries Co-operative Society. We have upgraded these premises in stages to modern standards.

We are committed not only to creating a viable business, ploughing profits back into the local community, but to the wider potential of *Hallbankgate Hub* to improve the quality of life in this corner of the North Pennines. Our business plan and vision of *more than just a shop* attracted over a hundred shareholders as well as funding from Power to Change, the Prince's Countryside Fund, Cumbria Community Foundation and Farlam Parish Trust.

Phase 1 opened in December 2016, and we are successfully trading in our new shop and café, run by a paid manager and a team of volunteers. Already this is flourishing and gaining a reputation for its range of goods, its barista-made coffee, and the welcoming ambience.

Phase 2 is scheduled to open in May 2017. This will double the café area and provide a consulting room for visiting therapists and clinicians, a quiet area with a library link outreach from Cumbria library service, workstations with high-speed internet access, a manager's office and post office and, especially, a versatile *Hub* with an art gallery and space for meetings and local community activities.

Your help will make all the difference

Please consider helping us by buying some shares (or some more if you already have some), in return for which you will have a say in how the Hub develops and free advertising on our website and Facebook page and in store.

The share prospectus and application form can be found on the website or can be posted to you on request, and we also welcome straightforward donations.

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Our vision

We are well on the way to creating a focus for our catchment area, which lies to either side of the A689 between Milton and Slaggyford, and the hinterland which includes the whole of Farlam parish. The needs of our scattered rural population are recognised with our plans for online ordering and home deliveries.

There is no other shop or café in the eighteen miles between Brampton and Alston and so, being close to the main road, we are also starting to capture passing trade, a travellers' rest for motorists, cyclists and motorcyclists. Hallbankgate is also the gateway to the RSPB's Geltsdale nature reserve, attracting many walkers and birdwatchers.

We provide quality fresh produce and groceries, using local suppliers where possible, as well as frozen food, household necessities and, within reason, whatever people ask us for. Together with the staple provisions of a village shop we offer a range of fairtrade, organic and wholefood products, and we are rapidly becoming known as a 'destination', to which people are prepared to travel some distance.

With the completion of Phase 2 we will soon be able to offer hot soup and pies and more home baking from our kitchen, to take away or enjoy with a drink in the café. The quality coffee is supplied by *Bruce and Lukes* of Carlisle and we serve other hot drinks to accompany our sumptuous cakes.

Our aim is to reduce social isolation by providing a warm and attractive environment with disabled facilities, comfortable sofas, children's books and toys, and a versatile space for informal gatherings. The *Hub* is also designed to be a springboard for the development of local services and online micro-businesses. The website has full documentation of the project to date, and is our window into the future.

We welcome you to visit *Hallbankgate Hub* for a coffee and to look around, meet our manager and our friendly volunteers. We are sure you will come to share our vision for this exciting development.

