

Sheila Constance – Dressmaker's Workshop

Background

A keen volunteer and very active in the local community, Sheila Constance ensures her business – the Dressmaker's Workshop, based at High Green in Sheffield, is the hub of the local community. As Sheila used to be the local liaison officer for the area, members of the community come into the shop and raise issues about local parks, roads and litter.

After working on and campaigning on a number of issues, Sheila really saw the benefits of linking business needs and community gains and feels it really is important for businesses to support their local voluntary and community groups.

A local business working with the community

As well as running a dressmaking and alteration service, Sheila runs courses for local people. Through this they support local causes by collecting donations for a range of organisations, including the Wildlife Trust, Sheffield Children's Hospital and Barnsley Guide Dogs.

"People shouldn't forget local charities when fundraising as they do such vital work" says Sheila, who has also helped raise money for CATS through fundraising coffee mornings held at the shop. "We also hold 'knit and natter' sessions the first Saturday in the month and have collected donations for the Spinal Injuries Unit. But every little bit helps, even collecting oddments of wool to crochet blankets for the dog rescue".

Benefits for businesses

There are so many benefits for a business to gain when supporting local groups. This can be anything from the 'feel good' factor to boosting your business image within the local community – who are your customers. Corporate Social Responsibility is big business for big companies, but often is not a term used by the small business owner, but Sheila explains why small businesses can really make a difference: "Small businesses need the support of the local community and the two way relationship is beneficial for both parties. The larger business can afford to put profits back into the community easily, but small businesses can support the community too in many ways, from fundraising to supporting volunteers".



PROFILE IN BRIEF

Dressmaker's Workshop:

Supports local groups and charities and has offered volunteering opportunities and employment to local people

"Helping to improve the quality of life for local people, gives me a 'feel good' factor"

Dressmaker's Workshop is a small business selling fabric, haberdashery and wool and their services include dressmaking, alterations and classes in dressmaking and textile art. You can contact Sheila on 01 14 2846868

Friends of Charlton Brook can be found at www.friendsofcharltonbrook.co.uk

Responding to a need

Sheila first started working with local groups through talking to customers and students and listening to their concerns and then held a public meeting to organise local activity.

Through building local contacts and helping to mobilise local people around a good cause, Sheila now volunteers as the Chair of the Friends of Charlton Brook action group who aim to improve green spaces for the community. Sheila said "The hard work and dedication of local people has really made a difference at Charlton Brook, and raised thousands of pounds to regenerate the area"

Final thoughts

Sheila is looking forward to supporting more community activity in the future and was really pleased to have an opportunity to raise the profile of the great activity that is happening around her area.

"The Amazing People campaign is a really good way to raise the profile of the community and voluntary groups to local businesses, and like me, if you have a story to tell, why not register today!"

See www.amazingpeople.org.uk for details

