

st anns catering and conference service limited

LEGAL STRUCTURE	Company limited by guarantee
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE TYPE	Social firm
MAIN ACTIVITY	Café
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	Less than 5 employees
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	15 with a further 15 friends/interested parties
TURNOVER	Less than £50,000
LOCATION	Nottinghamshire
TRADING AREA	St Anns
DATE FORMED	1997
PERCENTAGE GENERATED INCOME	50-99% generated income
HOW IT STARTED	Community
FINANCE	Grants, donations, self generated income

INTRODUCTION

This catering business was started as a community café within a self built community centre. It was originally run by volunteers only, and was very much a 'wander in and make a cuppa' kind of kitchen. It is a very different place now; they have had funding this year for a brand new counter. The old wooden counter has gone and it is generally a more professional place.

The Café on average serves between 25 and 40 meals per day and in the last year developed its external catering services, which have been well received and they now have regular bookings. This was primarily to support the café which has struggled financially. They want to keep the café as an affordable place for healthy food for people in the community.

The outside catering side of the business is aimed at providing working lunches to local businesses. They serve breakfasts and home cooked lunches 5 days a week between 9am and 2pm. Lunches are varied to suit all tastes. They serve curries on Tuesdays and Caribbean food on Fridays. The rest of the week they serve a range of traditional British or European dishes. They provide food for their own healthy eating events and also any other events run by any of the other projects run from the centre.

This enterprise is one of the projects run from the Chase Neighbourhood Centre supported by the Chase Action Group (CAG). The group not only support St Ann's Catering and Conferencing Services Ltd, but a sister company, a launderette which is also an independent company limited by guarantee.

The launderette has 50 - 70 customers per week (mostly from the locality), daily service washes, employment and door to door services for those who find it difficult to get out of their homes. The launderette finished its financial year in profit and the Café's new external catering venture has meant the loss on this years accounts are smaller than they ever have been with the % of grants needed being less. Both employ local people.

HOW IT STARTED

The Chase Action Group is a social business, a registered company limited by guarantee established in 1992. In that year St. Ann's was earmarked as one of the areas for a large-scale regeneration programme through the City Challenge initiative.

The local community wanted to see investment in community facilities; the Chase Action Group initiated and led a comprehensive consultation to develop schemes that had resident support and by 1995 over 1000 local people had contributed their views. The overwhelming response was to have a multifunctional neighbourhood centre that would provide services and activities in response to community needs.

As a result, a 'green' multifunctional building was completed by May 1997. Today this is the home of the Chase Action Group and the projects it delivers.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The enterprise employs 3 people, a Café co-ordinator/development worker on 21 hrs per week, 2 Chef Supervisors on 24 and 9 hours per week and they have one regular volunteer at the moment.

SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT

The enterprise's aims are:

- To provide employment and volunteering opportunities to local people.
- To provide healthy affordable meals.
- To be a valuable place for people to come and socialize with others and to engage in some of the other projects being run at the centre. For example there is also an advice centre based upstairs.
- They recycle and use local suppliers where possible.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

There is a board of directors with whom the staff hold regular meetings. These are all people who are either local residents or who work in the centre, or both. They have also in the past presented to the board of directors for C.A.G (Chase Action Group) when they have supported the enterprise financially.

KEY TO SUCCESS

The Café is the 'core' of the community centre in many ways.

Each time that we have struggled financially, C.A.G has been supportive as the enterprise has such an important role in the building.

LESSONS LEARNED

They have found that it is really hard to change people's thoughts and especially where there is a cost involved. This is right across the board. The community had free fruit for a year thanks to a Health Initiative Budget and since they have had to sell it again even at a subsidized rate, they have not sold any at all. The enterprise gets people in business not wanting to use the centre because they are a little more expensive than some competitors and yet they are a social business.

VISION

The company need to recruit more volunteers/staff. That way they could develop existing staff potential. They also would like to do more marketing, to increase public awareness of both the outside Catering and the Café as a Social Enterprise.

FINANCE

The enterprise still relies on funding. Ideally this would be for staffing and food subsidy but so many funders will not support existing projects. They are not yet a sustainable business. They have though had some fantastic funding with which they have managed to refurbish the café and kitchen this year.

INTERESTING FACTS

They are the only social catering business in Nottingham City.



All information was correct at the time of going to print and consequently Enterprise Solutions Northamptonshire cannot be held accountable for any losses from the use of this pack.

CONTACT DETAILS

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