

# RETAIL AND WELLBEING STRATEGY.

**Community Shop**

**OPEN** FOR MORE

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# INTRODUCTION.

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Since opening the Community Shop pilot in Goldthorpe in 2013, and the flagship store in Lambeth in 2014, we have spent time with our members through the learning and development pathway, in our social cooking and eating space, and in the aisles of our retail store. As a result we have learnt a lot about what success means to each of our members and the barriers they face in achieving their goals.

Whilst individual goals and barriers may differ, all of our members share one common aim: to live **in a state of good health and wellness** as defined by them. Our aspiration is to build an environment that offers our members the opportunity, motivation and tools to succeed in achieving in this aim. This document sets out our principles of support and the way in which our retail offer support this. The aim is to balance the three priorities of all social enterprises;

## PEOPLE

We want to offer a great service to our members and to make sure that each interaction with them builds strong individuals and more confident communities.

This is delivered by the retail, social eating and learning and development elements of our stores. Each must pull together in the same direction and offer a holistic person centred service.

## PLANET

We want to prevent good food from going to waste. We recognise that Community Shop is part of a wider group, part of a bigger family. It is limited in its freedom to offer product categories and range because its environmental purpose is to stop food going to waste. Therefore we have to offer what we receive. This reality constrains the freedom of our offer.

That said... we should be unashamed to leverage the social value created by Community Shop within our group to seek out new and increased levels of stock in order to support the sustainability of the group business and constantly improve the quality of the offer of Community Shop.

## PROFIT

We believe in profit and purpose. We need to make profit to deliver our social impact services in our social enterprise and sustainability in our wider business group.

It is essential that we drive each Community Shop to create a level of financial surplus so that it can deliver its social aims and become strong for the future. This means giving it enough oxygen to grow. This takes the form of enough of the right stock at the right time for the needs and demographics of its members and also the right resource support to drive the recruitment and retention of members.

# CONTEXT.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs conveys how food is a building block upon which other areas of life can be successfully built. When basic needs such as food are compromised it can be hard to feel like anything else in life is going well and as a result both physical and mental health can be affected.

Our capacity to work, study, parent, socialise and manage the world around us well depends on the health of our minds and bodies. Hippocrates (supposedly) said "Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food." Like him, we believe that health and wellbeing is reliant on access to **good quality, nutritious food**.

Nearly 13 million people live below the poverty line and cannot afford healthy food and of those, 4 million people suffer from chronic food poverty (Food Ethics Council, 2013). Both chronic food poverty and poor diet can be a major health risk, and has become the leading cause of death and illness in the UK.

Chronic food poverty can consist of multiple barriers to eating well such as the expense of healthier foods, a lack of confidence around culinary skills, time needed to prepare a meal from fresh ingredients or limited transport to access stores with a good range of products.

When we have difficulties easily accessing enough of the **right types of food**, we can enter into psychological and physical survival mode.

Chronic food poverty prevents people from being productive, healthy, and able to take control of their lives, whilst the consequences of malnutrition can create yet another barrier for those trying to escape poverty. This can put severe stress onto family and spousal relationships, brings about feelings of depression and increases family dysfunction and, as a result, planning for the future or making positive life changes becomes very challenging.

**NEARLY 13 MILLION  
PEOPLE LIVE BELOW  
THE POVERTY LINE  
AND CANNOT AFFORD  
HEALTHY FOOD.**

# RETAIL CONSIDERATIONS.

## COMMERCIAL DRIVERS AND ASPIRATIONS

In order to create a sustainable model we need each unit to break even so as not to compromise the long term sustainability of the group.

This break even should be, in the short term, enough to cover the operating costs of the shop unit. In the long term we should consider the overhead and transactional charges such as transport, carriage in, disclaiming, handling and central support charges such as HR, finance, IT legal etc.

In order to achieve this each unit should achieve a turnover of £9k per week.

We know that the average basket spend over time is approximately £9.00. We know that in each of the current shops the active membership is approximately 80% of the card holders. Therefore we need to drive membership attraction and retention to deliver 1000 transactions per week at an ABS of £9.00. This would require 1200 – 1300 card holders in each store.

This would not compromise the learning and development offer because of the model we have built.

In order to do this Community Shop needs support from the group membership and marketing teams and additional capacity in each store to offer ongoing connection to referral partners (newsletter, visits, calls, etc) and roadshows in community locations to sign up new members.

We should not seek to increase basket spend through some classic forms of promotional activity because we recognise that people shop at Community Shop precisely because they have a limited weekly food budget.

We should additionally seek to leverage the social value offer of Community Shop by inviting suppliers to donate a percentage of the stock we transact with them and position this as their 'social investment'. The language for this needs to be carefully considered and coaching given to all those who function in a B2B role in order to achieve this.

## PRODUCT PLACEMENT AND PROMOTION

At all times product placement and promotional activity should seek to;

- Drive the commercial revenues we require to create a sustainable model.
- Attend to the needs of our members and the overall social impact the model is trying to create.

In particular places it may be appropriate to offer particular incentives. For example in South Yorkshire the NHS and CCG are seeking to address the significantly lower level of children's dental health (compared to the national average). For this reason acquiring additional low cost or free stocks of dental products should be achieved through specific messaging to the client about the impact proposed and the benefit for them of being involved. This is one specific example and there may be others which seek to address specific social or health challenges in areas, as our model grows.

In general we should seek to align our product and promotional activity around the needs of our members and the best research into wellbeing and the role of food in health.

This should always be caveated with the primary recognition that we are a residual stock businesses and as such are limited in our ability to source certain products.

# RETAIL CONSIDERATIONS.

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## PRODUCT PLACEMENT AND PROMOTION (CONT.)

That said, as a general rule we should seek to;

- Ensure that pricing across product groups does not create barriers to making healthy choices taking into account healthy and unhealthy equivalents. For example, the lowest priced packet of high calorie biscuits should never be lower than the lowest priced bag of fruit as both are likely to be consumed as snacks.
- Develop an 'Essentials Range' which includes several products from each product group to support those in most financial difficulty on the early part of their journey.
- Lay out the store in a way that maximises member's independence and choice and to refrain from using product position, marketing or pricing to increase sales at the expense of the health of members.
- Ensure that any influence that our retail practices have over member's purchasing habits is positive and healthy.

As examples of promotional activity we could create specific promotions (supported by links to Cook Club and The Community Kitchen) and recipes cards for balanced economy meals. We should discount of fresh fruit and veg to support this aspiration and make us attractive in a retail market which is leading on discounting these products.

## ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

In order to achieve this we should consider the delivery of these aspirations as a group wide activity.

In order to do this we need buy in from the group and support from;

- The Commercial Team and all those with a B2B portfolio.
- The new Membership Team with an attraction and retention strategy linked to a membership champion in store (who should not be the mentor or chef).
- The Marketing Team undertaking their role in the above.

# FOOD FOUNDATIONS.

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## OUR PRINCIPLES ON FOOD

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- WE BELIEVE THAT NO GOOD FOOD SHOULD GO TO WASTE AND THAT FOOD WHICH IS FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION SHOULD BE EATEN BY HUMANS.
  - WE BELIEVE THAT PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BE DEPENDENT ON FOOD AID FOR ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY.
  - WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO GREAT QUALITY, AFFORDABLE FOOD.
  - WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD HAVE ACCESS TO FOOD THAT IS RIGHT FOR THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.
  - WE BELIEVE THAT FOOD IS A TOOL THAT CAN BECOME A PLATFORM UPON WHICH TO DO AMAZING THINGS WITH INDIVIDUALS AND COMMUNITIES.
  - WE BELIEVE THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD BE CONFIDENT IN BUYING AND PREPARING FOOD AND EMPOWERED TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES.
  - WE BELIEVE THAT FOOD SHOULD BE A SOURCE OF PLEASURE, ENERGY, HEALTH AND CELEBRATION.
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# RETAIL SPACE.

Rising levels of obesity and weight-related illnesses has led to a public discussion around food retail practices, with many of the main UK retailers receiving criticism for a perceived lack of commitment to their customer's health. A Which? consumer survey, A Taste For Change found that only 39% of people thought that supermarkets were taking enough action to help. Community Shop, therefore, has the opportunity to lead in this area – as we do in so many others – and demonstrate how a food retailer can operate differently.

In order to promote health and wellbeing through each of our activities, including within our retail space, we seek to retail responsibly. Although, like all retailers, we face commercial pressures, it is crucial that our members' needs are at the forefront of our decision making and we do not use business practices to sell individuals more food than they need, or an unbalanced range of products, in order to commercially profit.

We are aware that there are food companies and local authorities that are hesitant to work with us because we are seen not to place importance on providing the right foods for our members. To lead in responsible retailing gives us another great selling point for both our members and Community Shop partners. It also makes us more attractive to food partners, all of whom have set their own consumer health strategies and therefore will be inclined to work with companies with a similar vision. More than anything, we know that it is the right thing to do...

## CHOICE

One of the key beliefs of Community Shop is that we should empower our members to make the choices in their life that are right for them and to give them the ability to enact those choices. This is so that our members can choose the food that is right for them and their families and can eat a diet that is appropriate to their needs and preferences.

Choice doesn't just refer to product range. It also refers to the ability to make decisions without being limited or influenced otherwise. Limitations and influences can arise from decisions around pricing, product positioning, and stock management. Those shopping on a low income are particularly susceptible to prices and as a result it is important that we ensure a range of different foods are accessible to all budgets.

## THE RIGHT FOOD

Through our focus groups and surveys, our members told us that what they want to buy most is fresh food. Our Customer Insight survey told us that 89% of members said that they visit the shop to buy fresh produce, fresh fish, and 85% of members visit to buy fresh meat. In 2015, 22% of our sales were confectionary and desserts, whilst only 7.4% of sales were in fresh meat, 5% in fresh produce, and 1.5% in fresh fish. This suggests a discrepancy between what our members want to buy and what is available to them.

When we asked our members to suggest how we make improvements to our product range, we received feedback that clearly showed us that members would like the option to buy more fruit and vegetables:

"MORE FRESH PRODUCE:"

"FROZEN VEGETABLES:"

"BETTER DISCOUNTS ON  
HEALTHY FOODS."

"FRESH FRUIT & VEG."

"VEGETABLES."

"MORE FRUIT AND VEG."



# RETAILING RESPONSIBLY.

## OUR STOCK GOALS

- To source products with the goals of daily availability in the store
  - Fruit and vegetables: 20 %
  - Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrate foods: 40 %
  - Dairy and alternatives: 8 %
  - Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other protein: 30 %
  - Oils and spreads: 2 %
- To ensure that pricing across product groups does not create barriers to making healthy choices taking into account healthy and unhealthy equivalents. For example, the lowest priced packet of high calorie biscuits should never be lower than the lowest priced bag of fruit as both are likely to be consumed as snacks.
- To develop an 'Essentials Range' which includes several products from each product group to support those in most financial difficulty on the early part of their journey.
- To layout the store in a way that maximises member's independence and choice and to refrain from using product position, marketing or pricing to increase sales at the expense of the health of members.
- To stock frozen foods so that access to frozen vegetables in lieu of fresh can be secured.
- To ensure that any influence that our retail practices have over member's purchasing habits is positive and healthy.

## HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE THIS

- We will compare our monthly inventory to our stock goals to measure if we are stocking the right amount of each product group.
- We will work with our commercial team to source additional products from our food partners and drive new partnerships with suppliers of products that we want to stock.
- We will actively monitor prices across healthy options (raw proteins, fresh produce and dairy) against less healthy options (confectionary, desserts and savoury snacks) and modify prices if necessary ensure equal access.
- We will be sensitive to using promotions and product positioning to ensure that they do not promote or increase access to unhealthy foods.
- We will trial an 'Essentials Range' over a month period to gain some learning in how best to increase access for members in financial difficulty.
- We will undertake research that seeks to understand how our retail space influences members purchasing habits over the lifespan of membership.

# COMMUNITY HUB.

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We believe that once people are removed from chronic food poverty, they have the energy and capacity to start building a successful life as defined by them.

## STARTING WITH ME - SELF-CONFIDENCE AND IDENTITY

The pathway offers each member access to a personalised programme specific to their barriers and aspirations.

All of this is supported by access to 'bespoke support'; those community and statutory agencies who operate in our communities and add value to the learning and development pathway of our members.

## OUR GOALS

- Deliver a holistic and personalised pathway that supports our members in achieving the goals they set themselves, facilitated and delivered by a team of mentors.
- Enable informed choice and control by empowering people to make well-informed decisions.
- Facilitate the work of community and statutory agencies who are able to capitalise on the relationships of trust that we have built with members and create a support network.
- Invite agencies that deliver services directly related to health and wellbeing, such as adult counselling, weight loss support, smoking cessation and physical activity.

## HOW WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS

- Continue to build and train a team of peer mentors who are able to increasingly offer mentoring services and host community groups.
- Use the workshops and sessions we offer to give members the tools and information necessary to make and enact decisions that are right for them.
- Build strong partnerships with local organisations and employ them appropriately.

# COMMUNITY HUB.

## MOVING TO WE - SOCIAL INCLUSION

We not only create a space for our community to spend time and build strong networks, but we actively promote opportunities for members to get to know one another, share experiences and offer informal peer support. The pathway is also about delivering a group based facilitated programme which builds community cohesion and capacity.

Everyone within the community shares the responsibility for creating an environment of respect and positivity – one in which everyone can make a contribution to the wellbeing of each individual and the wider community. We model this behaviour through our peer mentors.

### OUR GOALS

- Promote social inclusion by facilitating opportunities for relationships, peer support and active community involvement.
- Facilitate capacity and confidence building in individuals and the wider community and create a space of aspiration.
- Create an environment of cooperation and belonging, which is welcoming to all who are in need and meet the criteria.

### HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE THIS

- Empower and support peer mentors to perform out-reach activities that connect the local community with Community Shop and introduces those that need us most.
- Match groups of new members with a peer mentor to support them in their journey and in engaging with the wider community.
- Create 'Community Action Groups' from facilitated group activities who are encouraged to move through the programme together as a continued support mechanism.

**EVERYONE WITHIN  
THE COMMUNITY  
SHARES THE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR CREATING AN  
ENVIRONMENT  
OF RESPECT AND  
POSITIVITY.**

# SOCIAL EATING SPACE.

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## OUR GOALS

Our members join us because they have suffered from, or are at risk of, food poverty. As a result their relationship with food can be burdened with feelings of fear, anxiety and helplessness. Repairing this relationship is a key part of healing for our members and creates a platform upon which other barriers to success can be identified and addressed, in a bid to obtain overall wellbeing.

We want to lead people on a journey from food being the icon of life being tough and insecure to food being the symbol joy and celebration a celebration of life being worthwhile and a place where households and communities can gather to celebrate.

We will offer food mentoring through different mediums such as cooking workshops and food growing so that members have an opportunity to repair their relationship with food and are able to feel confident in growing, buying, cooking and eating food. We do this with the aim of helping members embrace and celebrate food outside of Community Shop and long into their future so that food is no longer a source of stress, but becomes a source of pleasure, energy and health.

## A SOCIAL EATING SPACE IS...

### An eating place

This is a hospitality led offer not a retail offer. Its purpose is to provide an enabling environment for our members and not principally to drive retail sales.

### A meeting place

A place where members and the wider community can meet to share food and stories.

### A learning place

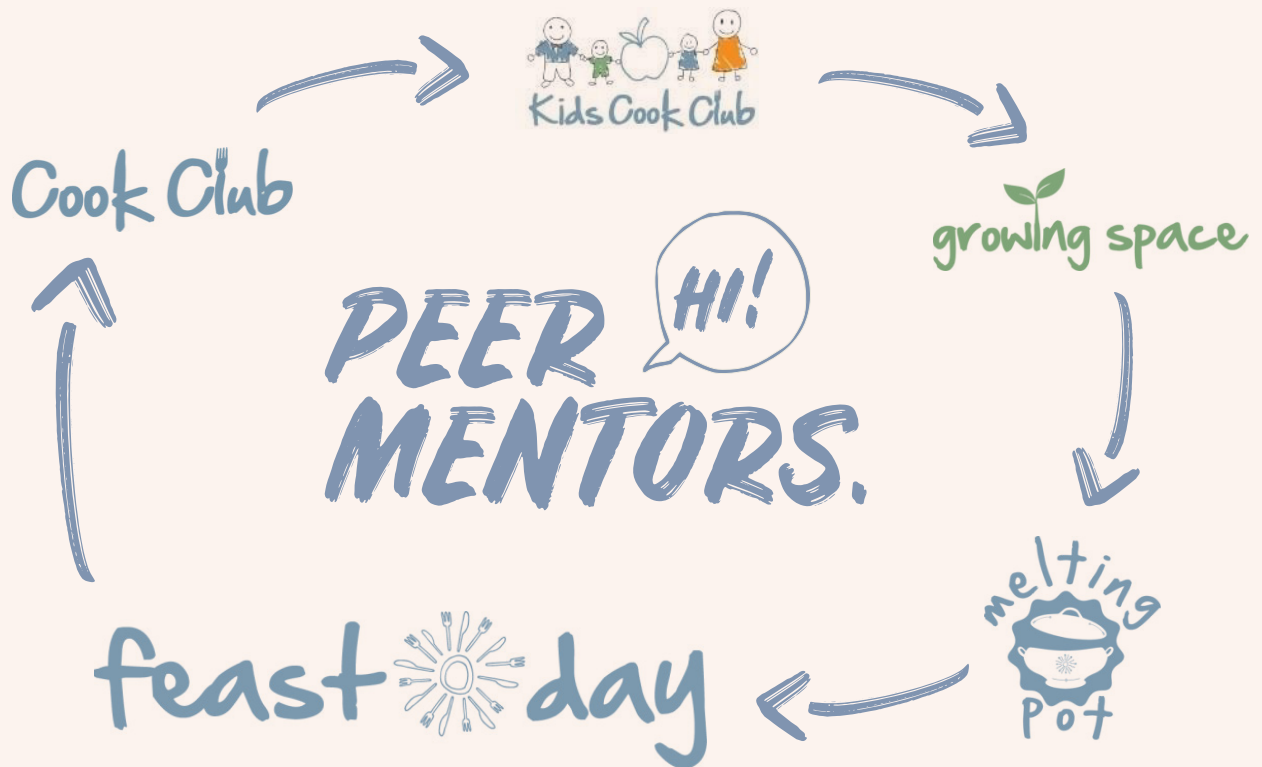
Not classroom learning but somewhere where we stand by our six core principles and reinforce the learnings of The Success Plan.

We operate an asset not deficit model of learning. We never try to undertake an activity that focusses on what 'we know' and other people don't, rather we play to the assets of the group in front of us and build on them.

### A celebration space

Where people can be seen sharing and enjoying great food together. People learn by example and not 'telling'.

# THE PROGRAMME.



## THE PROGRAMME WILL;

- Help people to love food and be confident in the kitchen.
- Tell good stories – always.
- Help people to enjoy the act of delighting others and enjoy sharing.
- Help people do a ‘small thing’ and succeed.
- Know a little about food and share it.
- Link to the success plan – kick start.


# THE PROGRAMME.

## SKILLS



- Planning, budgeting and buying skills – link to Money Matters.
- Kitchen skills, planning skills, functional skills, storage and waste.
- Creating a meal and sharing it with people – link to kick start and peer mentoring.
- Building community and leading through food.



## ENGAGEMENT AND OUTPUT

In order to get most impact from our food mentoring scheme we should set ourselves the target of engaging people in each part of the programme.

MONTH 1			
Activity	Cook Club	 Kids Cook Club	growing space
Members Engaged	8 per week/cohort	4 per week/cohort	5 per week/cohort
Annual total (over 10 months)	80	40	50
Notes	People involved in Month 1 of these activities should be invited to the Month 2 cohort of Melting Pot.		

# THE PROGRAMME.

MONTH 2				
Activity	<b>Cook Club</b>	 Kids Cook Club	<b>growing space</b>	 melting pot
Members Engaged	8 per week/cohort	4 per week/cohort	5 per week/cohort	12 (+50 guests)
Annual total (over 10 months)	80	40	50	120 (+500)
Notes	People involved in Month 2 of these activities should be invited to Month 3 cohort of Melting Pot.			

MONTH 3					
Activity	<b>Cook Club</b>	 Kids Cook Club	<b>growing space</b>	 melting pot	<b>feast day</b>
Members Engaged	8 per week/cohort	4 per week/cohort	5 per week/cohort	12 (+50 guests)	20 (+100 guests)
Annual total (over 10 months)	80	40	50	120 (+500)	80 (+400)
Notes	People involved in Months 1 and 2 should be included in the Feast Day celebration on Month 3.				

# ADVICE AND CONNECTING TO PARTNERS.

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## PARTNERSHIPS

We have three types of pipeline partners who help us deliver great results to our members.

### REFERRING PARTNERS

These are people who work with the same kind of people we attract as members, who know them and the area well. These can be our ambassadors into the local area.

### IN-PROGRAMME PARTNERS

These are people who want to work with us because they are tackling the same issues and we make it easy for them to connect with the people they are trying to reach.

These are people who do things like:

Debt advice, Health education,  
Job Coaching, Local education providers

## EXIT PARTNERS

These are people who can take our members on the rest of their journey once they have completed their six month membership.

It is important that we know really well who is doing what in our community to make connection with them long before a person's period of membership is up.

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## MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

At each store we work with a healthcare outreach team to provide onsite advice on healthy eating, weight loss and weight related illnesses so that members can access this services onsite.



# MOVING ON.

It is our intention that, after an extended period of access to deeply discounted food and support, members no longer require discounted food aid because they have overcome the barriers they identified at the beginning of their journey with us and, as a result, are empowered to live autonomously and confidently.

We understand that every member's journey is different, and so whilst a six month membership is considered average, we will extend the membership if we deem it necessary to the likelihood of a successful outcome for the member.

We want transitioning out of Community Shop membership to be a positive experience, and a source of pride for individuals. We also realise that it is a time through which some members may need additional support to readjust and our mentor and peer mentors should offer a wide range of options to help the individual.

- Every six months each of our members has their membership reviewed.
- The mentor, who has been working closely with each member, will evaluate the member's progress against overcoming their barriers and achieving their goals.
- Members transitioning out of Community Shop are given at least a month's notice so they have time to adjust.
- Members are offered a transition meeting with the lead mentor or, if they have been working closely with a peer mentor, their peer mentor.
- Support is offered as appropriate to ensure that the member feels confident about transitioning out.
- Many members will be signposted to one of our exit partners, and other community groups and activities, in order to remain supported in their journey.

- Former members may wish to continue visiting the café on a weekly basis or accessing some of the onsite services, and that option is made available to them.
- A former member can reapply for membership after twelve months and their need will be reevaluated on application.

## OUR GOALS

- To ensure that members transition out of membership in a positive way, engaging with other activities in the process and finding ways to stay connected with their social groups.
- To stay in touch with our former members and continue 'checking in' on a regular basis in the six months subsequent to the end of their membership to ensure that they do not experience any life shocks during this period of increasing independence and stability.

## HOW WE'LL ACHIEVE THIS

- Continue to build strong partnerships with organisations that can act as Exit Partners and ensure that the referral process is efficient and smooth.
- Make it clear that our former members are always welcome to access the services should they need to.
- Welcome our former members back for community meals so that we can touch base with them and get updated about their progression.

# Community Shop

**OPEN** FOR MORE