



# The Handmade Bakery

[www.thehandmadebakery.coop](http://www.thehandmadebakery.coop)

**REconomy Project**

## **Mission**

We aim to provide excellent, healthy nutritious bread and food, sourced as locally as possible using organic ingredients wherever we can. We care about the development of local food networks, take an ethical stance in choosing who we build relationships with and as a workers co-op, we are active members of the co-operative movement. We are a non-profit making organisation.

## **Is there a link with Transition?**

We have no formal links to MASTT, the local transition town group. However, one of the founders was briefly connected to the start up of that group and some of the ideas for a local food business emerged from that period.

## **Your product or service – how much does it help improve resilience in your local community or elsewhere?**

We are an Artisan Bakery with a café. We provide our local community with a choice of excellently made real breads on a daily basis. Our range includes sourdoughs, yeasted breads and specialty loaves. All of our bread is slowly fermented which develops its flavour, nutritional and digestive qualities.

We are also a community supported bakery. From the outset, we have sought a trusting connection with our consumer base. This has been embraced in the form of a subscription service, where customers pay monthly for a loaf of their choice. This was important in our early development as we had visible commitment and support along with a monetary income that we could rely and build upon. When moving to larger premises, we sought financial investment from the local community who have lent us money for a fixed period and have their interest paid in bread.

Education is also important to us. We run courses on a monthly basis which helps to spread knowledge and interest in artisan production methods and the benefit of slow fermentation processes.

## **Employees**

We employ eight worker directors. These members work across bakery and café and are responsible for the running of the business. We work a maximum of four days a week. We have 6 co-op members who each work a 32hr week, plus 14 casual workers who work in the cafe, clean, do markets, etc.

## **Are you in profit? If not, when do you anticipate being so? How long have you been trading?**

Our turnover was approximately £250k last year. This was a break even position. This year we are looking to turn a small profit as we further develop the business. We have been trading for 4 years.

## **What is your company structure and why did you choose it?**

We are a workers co-operative, not for profit and limited by guarantee. We believe in the values of shared working and shared profits. The non-hierarchical structure of a co-op means that we all have equal control and responsibility that develops a sense of mutual trust and commitment to the business amongst its worker members. As co-op, we also act with concern for our wider community.



**What about financial sustainability? Are you trading or part-trading without money?**

We raised some of our initial start up from small social enterprise funding (UnLTD) and the rest from loans from founder members. This amounted to about £30,000 -- the majority of which was loans from founder members. When we moved to larger premises we raised £40,000 from individual community loans. These bread bondholders lent small amounts (£500-4000) and receive bread as interest.

**Are you looking to build more common wealth & ownership and is priority your profit sharing and/or community benefits versus more traditional investor returns?**

We are committed to our co-operative values that embrace ideas of commonwealth and ownership.

**Localisation – are you sourcing, distributing and interacting locally?**

We have a policy to source food ingredients as locally as possible. All of our flour is organic, some of this is from Yorkshire Organic Millers, the rest is from Shiptons Mill in Gloucestershire (a well respected source of organic flour for British Artisan bakers.) Food for the café is sourced as locally as possible and we seek to nurture relationships that we can trust and that have a high degree of transparency. We have a garden outside the bakery where we grow as much as possible for seasonal café food.

**Climate impacts – negative, beneficial or neutral?**

Where possible we seek to save energy and limit the climate impact of our business. Phone and utility companies when in our control are ethically chosen. We recycle and compost as much as possible. Compost is used on our garden outside the bakery where we grow some food for the café.

