

Community Business re COVID-19, Mutual Aid

Theme – **Managing food preparation, delivery and/or distribution**

Host – **Sally-Anne Watkiss, Homebaked Cooperative Bakery Anfield**

14th April 2020

Background

Homebaked cooperative is a community owned bakery based in Anfield opposite LFC. It has three main objectives:

- To provide good quality affordable food to the local community
- To provide good quality jobs for the local community
- To provide training for the local community

It employs 20 people on fixed hour contracts that suit their personal circumstances, over 70% of the team live within walking distance of the bakery & the majority joined from volunteering. Fresh bread is baked daily and sold at supermarket prices, shop prices are affordable for the community and below market prices for the quality of food, the local supply chain is used for all key purchases.

The business model is 90% trading with match day sales and wholesale contracts subsidising bakery sales, training & jobs.

COVID 19 Response

As soon as it became obvious that football matches were going to be cancelled the bakery enacted its contingency plan, which included the following actions in chronological order. It was not an option to close and discontinue providing food for our community and with limited reserves we needed to secure cashflow to pay wages:

- Implemented strict social distancing protocols to enable us to continue trading
- Using social media sold our stock of frozen pies
- Started talking to our local partners at foodbanks, churches, community organisations, childrens centres and charities to understand their needs and how we could support existing projects and infra structure
- Identified that there was a need for fresh bread daily, so submitted a Steve Morgan Foundation bid to enable us to bake daily and gift up to 70 loaves a day
- Invested time in ensuring all customer invoices were paid, all service contracts were renegotiated and our social investors were on board
- Once the Steve Morgan grant was approved we knew we could keep some commercial operations open alongside our grant funded bread
- Secured a contract with the local Asda to provide their staff lunches enabling us to pay the wages of 1 FTE
- Started baking 50-70 loaves daily and donating to the local foodbank, were able to respond to a local community centre and provide them fresh bread out of their grant and have just started providing bread rolls for another funded CIC
- Developed a frozen pie delivery service and new website, this meets a community need and pay the wages of another FTE and potentially grow to pay another
- Furlough 15 of the team and applied for small business grant
- Providing support to other community businesses with cashflow, grant application, impact measurement and HR support
- Introduced a pay it forward/donation option to provide pies for foodbank volunteers & local NHS operations. Over £300 has been gifted this way

<https://cbmutualaid.co.uk>

Lessons Learnt

- Don't try and reinvent the wheel, its quicker, easier to link in with existing networks and create stronger partnerships
- Take time to focus on getting cash in and stop cash going out, it won't happen by itself and keep revisiting your cashflow
- Keep true to your objectives when pivoting your business model, it will help you make the right decisions
- Barriers to change have been removed as people respond quickly, take that opportunity
- Work with your networks and partnerships including commercial ones. Don't underestimate the impact of supporting each other
- Build in small steps, testing and learning, don't try and boil the ocean on day 1
- Don't compromise on health and safety, if it risks your staff and customers at all, don't do it

Media

<https://ftalphaville.ft.com/2020/04/01/1585737203000/Why-an-Anfield-bakery-thinks-they-can-emerge-stronger/#comments>

<https://www.cultureliverpool.co.uk/business-heroes-homebaked/>

Contacts

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