

BEN Newsletter - 18 November 2020

Shop local!

Crises have a way of creating winners and losers. Procter & Gamble thrived in the Great Depression. This crisis has been especially good for Amazon, with its UK sales (sadly, not its tax payments!) surging 26%, to over £13 billion, as every lockdown 'click to purchase' nudges the company a little further toward its domination of our online baskets.

Equally remarkable has been the speed at which small businesses have adapted. In our area we're lucky to have some fabulous independent retailers and makers, which now have excellent online sites, and often offer home delivery too. Perfect for Christmas!

We're celebrating small businesses in this newsletter because they especially need our support during this lockdown. It's always hard for small businesses and creatives to be visible amidst the Christmas advertising of the big online sites. Below, I've picked out ten businesses, as a sample of the many great family-run businesses that have fabulous products *and* a green heart. They're doing superbly well at that difficult balancing act of being both ethical and affordable; such as trying to use local artisan suppliers even when it might be cheaper to buy from the big suppliers. To me, our lovely independents are one of the reasons that our area's so special: but, we're at a '*use them or lose them*' moment.

So let's support them, and all the other local businesses you know and love, to help ensure we still have a thriving community of local independents this time next year.

[Note: To connect to the websites/online shops of businesses listed below, just click underlined names.]



[The Farnham Pottery](#) in Wrecclesham recently set up an online shop, from which you can buy a range of beautiful ceramics hand-crafted by the pottery's community of makers. The works are keenly priced, and all have an individuality that sets them apart. Items ordered online can be packed for delivery anywhere across the UK.



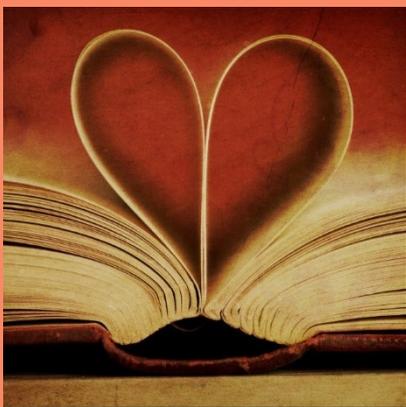
[The Gilded Cabinet](#) in Alton is an interior design shop that's also a treasure trove of unique and eclectic homewares, lighting, vintage furniture, gifts, chic accessories and rather special Christmas decorations. Many are sourced from small scale manufacturers, who combine tradition and innovation. The shop has set up a Click and Collect facility on its online shop.



[The Gorilla Sprints Company](#) in Upton Grey makes award-winning small batch gins and also, Covid permitting, hosts tours and tastings, cocktail masterclasses or, for the ultimate gin lover, the opportunity to distil your own creation at its gin school. For every bottle sold, £1 is donated to gorilla conservation, for projects working to save mountain gorillas in Rwanda, Uganda and DR Congo.



[Naomi's Preserves](#) are made in Four Marks, from local ingredients with no 'nasties' and as little plastic as possible. Perfect for the foodie in your life, the range includes award-winning Watercress Pesto, as well as Chilli Jam and many other jams, chutneys and jellies. Buy online or through outlets listed on the website, which include Froyle's West End Flower Farm and Isington's Mill Farm Organic Farm Shop.



[Oxfam Books and Records](#) Oxfam's shops in Farnham and elsewhere are currently closed, but Oxfam's online shop has over 60,000 book titles, fact and fiction, including an extensive selection of antiquarian, rare and collectable books that can make great presents - for yourself, and others! The online shop also sells music of all genres, clothing (vintage and otherwise), toys and other collectables.



[Puremess](#) sells a wide range of skincare products, all handmade in Guildford. The products smell fantastic and are based on natural ingredients such as oils and botanicals that are sourced from trusted local suppliers. They avoid chemical nasties like SLS and parabens, and use only refillable, reusable, recyclable or biodegradable packaging. Buy online or through various local zero-waste stores.



[Resurrection Furniture](#) in Alton is a furniture shop with a difference. Run by volunteers, this charity shop sells second-hand furniture, antique to modern, plus other interesting bric-a-brac. Buying second hand saves good-quality items becoming landfill and it's a fertile hunting ground for upcyclers. In normal times it's fun to explore the shop in person, but you can still buy online, and they can arrange delivery.



[Simply Hide](#) is a local company which makes beautiful hand made leather goods using traditional techniques and the finest vegetable-tanned leather. As well as amazing totes and toilet bags, there are other imaginative products, including hand-stitched notebook covers in lovely colours, jewellery trays, exercise mat straps and key tassels. Katrina also accepts commissions for bespoke items.



[Vital Seeds](#) sells open-pollinated, organic vegetable, herb and flower seeds. This means you can save seed from your own plants, year after year. Their Seed Collections, in particular, make great gifts and all products are plastic-free. Seeds are UK-grown, in contrast to many other seed companies which rely on production thousands of miles away, in countries with drier climates and cheaper labour.



[The West End Flower Farm](#) in Froyle not only grows fabulous flowers and has a great restaurant, it also has a shop packed full of locally made and ethically sourced products - from their home-grown dried flower collections to garden tools, dog leads, housewares and, from late November, lovely British-grown Christmas trees and wreaths. Orders over £40 can be delivered locally for a small fee.

Support performing arts professionals who're diversifying very creatively. Many artists and performers are using the time they've unexpectedly had on their hands to make amazing artwork and other creative products. Two new showcases have been set up to help bring their amazing products to market:

The website [NotOnTheWestEnd](#) is a curated directory of small businesses, each helmed by someone who usually makes their living from working in UK theatre, who's been forced to use their talents in other ways whilst theatres are closed.

A new Facebook group [Artists Creative Christmas Catalogue](#) is also bringing together great handmade artwork and gifts, made by dancers and other performing artists who are currently ... well, not performing. Within two days of setting up the site, it already had over 60 shop windows. So many beautiful gifts on display in one place! What's not to love?!

Anyway, take a peak, because there are some amazing products, and their creators could really use the support in these unprecedented and unpredictable times.

I need your views! Should we all pool our info about eco-friendly local businesses? What are your favourites? If we could gather this information, do you think it would be worth developing an online 'Green Directory' of the sellers and shops in our area that actively consider the environment? Or is there such a directory already?! If you have any thoughts on this, why not drop your ideas in an email to binstedeconetwork@gmail.com, or comment on Instagram [@binstedeconetwork](https://www.instagram.com/binstedeconetwork).

IKEA's new Buy Back initiative, scheduled to be launched in UK stores on 27 November, means that IKEA will buy back unwanted furniture from customers, for up to half original price, to resell as secondhand. It's part of IKEA's initiative to become a fully circular and climate positive business by 2030. Under the Buy Back scheme sideboards, bookcases,

shelving, small tables, dining tables, office drawers, desks, chairs and stools without upholstery, if previously bought from IKEA, can be taken back after customers register a request online. Some children's products will also qualify for the scheme. Customers will receive vouchers to spend in store, with their value calculated according to the condition of the items returned. 'As new' pieces can be exchanged for up to half their original value; pieces with some scratches will get 30% of the item's value. The items will be put on sale in stores and anything that cannot be resold will be recycled.

Link for the map showing details of sewage pollution incidents. Discharges of untreated sewage into the Wey and Mole river catchments were identified as concerns in our last newsletter. If you want to see exactly where the problems are, there's a really useful (and simple) map you can use to check for untreated releases in your local area, at <https://arcgis/1He0Xl>.

The Second Reading of the Private Members' Bill that's seeking to place a duty on water companies to tackle such pollution has been delayed until 15 January. So you still **have time to email your local MP to ask him to support this Bill. This is easy to do, through the webpage** <https://www.sas.org.uk/EndSewagePollution-SewageBill>.

Have you got any unwanted warm winter coats going spare? The Farnham Maltings has launched WrapUpFarnham - a campaign to collect unwanted or unused winter coats (mens', womens' or childrens', of any size), and distribute them to charities and organisations which need them. From 10:00 to 16:00, on 25, 26 and 27 November, Farnham Maltings will partially open its doors as a donation point for the coats. They're also looking for volunteers to help sort and check the incoming donations, for 2 hour shifts over the 3-day donation period. Full details: see [the Farnham Maltings website](#).

Upcoming events

We're looking forward to some 'real' Christmas fairs at the end of this lockdown! In the meanwhile, there's plenty of Zoomy fun. Here's our roundup of upcoming events ...



Friday 20 November, 19:30, Froyle Wildlife is hosting a Zoom talk by Mike Read, a freelance nature photographer specialising in birds, flowers, mammals and other wildlife as well as landscapes. Living near the New Forest, he's visited one Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) reserve each month through the year, to capture the scenery and wildlife of each reserve. The wide spread of locations produced a broad variety of habitats and showcases the great work that the HIWWT is doing.

<http://froylewildlife.co.uk/hampshire-nature-in-trust-talk-20th-nov-2020/>

Anyone who would like to join the meeting can request a zoom invitation by emailing info@froylewildlife.co.uk



Over the 21 and 22 November weekend, 'Not On The West End' will host a virtual Christmas Market. As mentioned earlier in this newsletter, Not On The West End was set up to support theatre pros who've had to 'diversify' because of the pandemic. Full details of the Christmas Market are on [their website](#). On offer will be: discounts; a charity competition with great prizes; and live streams to introduce many of the amazing businesses that have been set up - these start from 09:00 on the Saturday, and will culminate, at 18:00 on the Sunday, with the 'Cabaret in a Caravan' Live Stream, a fun closing concert broadcast from Winnie, the pink caravan!

Thursday 26 November, 18:30 - 20:30: The Gilbert White Museum is hosting a Zoom talk, 'Annotating Nature.' Books were central to Gilbert White's interests in natural history.

This talk will examine several books annotated by White and discuss how these were used when collecting information on the natural world. The talk will be given by Edwin Rose, who's currently Munby Fellow in Bibliography at Cambridge University, and will be followed by a Q & A session. To join, simply purchase a ticket (£5) from [the Gilbert White Museum website](#) and a Zoom link will be sent to you before the talk begins.

28 November, 12:30 - 17:00, Woodland Trust's online 'Tree Charter Day Festival'. Join this big, free, virtual celebration of woods and trees, being held to celebrate the 3rd anniversary of the UK Tree Charter. As well as fantastic artwork, music, dance and a circus performance in the woods, there will also be live talks, on topics such as the impact of Climate Change and working with your local tree officer. Plus Zoom 'meet and greets' for each region, to help you connect with others locally.

This is a free event but you need to book, via [the Woodland Trust website](#), to obtain a password to access the festival site. The full programme will be online nearer to the event, so you can dip in and out of the sessions you want.

1 December, 19:30, Zoom talk: 'Taking forward community-led housing in Farnham'. Rob Simpson, Chair of Transition Town Farnham, will give a presentation about the new [Homes For Farnham Housing Hub](#) and the concept of Mutual Home Ownership. Farnham has a chronic shortage of genuinely affordable homes: so-called 'affordable' homes, at 80% market valuation, don't cut it for Generation Rent and key workers looking to live in Farnham. Transition Town Farnham has been quietly setting up a new initiative, called 'Homes for Farnham Housing Hub', which it thinks can help deliver cheaper and more sustainable homes in lively, flourishing neighbourhoods. Anyone who would like to join the meeting can request a Zoom invitation by emailing rf.simpson.t21@btinternet.com.

5 December, 10:00 - 16:00, Alton's Open Air Yuletide Markets. We believe the first of this year's yuletide markets will be held on 5 December, in Alton's Market Square, with further markets to follow on 12 and 19 December. Watch the press for further details.



11 and 12 December, 10:00 - 21:00: Farnham Maltings Christmas Fair (originally scheduled for 25 & 26 November) will have 75 different stalls on each day, all from independent makers and small businesses, selling jewellery, ceramics, accessories, textiles, stocking fillers, decorations and seasonal foods. You need to buy a timed ticket ahead of time, from the [Maltings website](#), but you can stay as long as you like. There's a £1 entry charge (under 5s are free and don't need tickets.) Late night shopping is available both days, until 9pm, with different exhibitors on each day of the fair.

13 December, 10:00 - 18:00, The 'White Christmas' outdoor Christmas market is taking place in the stable-yard and gardens of Gilbert White's House in Selborne. Explore a varied collection of local stallholders, selling food, drink, eco items and clothing. There will be music, Christmas decorations, and festive food from the White's cafe. Their brewery will also be open, so you can learn a bit more about brewing and buy some craft ale. Because of Covid, you need to pre-book a timed ticket, through [their website](#). Tickets cost £2 and include entrance to the outdoor market, museum and grounds. Park in the Gilbert White Museum Car Park, behind the Selborne Arms.



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