

Villagers celebrate a first-class venture



SHOP TALK: Carol and Nigel Robinson outside Monks Eleigh's Community Shop.

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When publican Nigel Robson arrived in Monks Eleigh 14 years ago, the post office was in the process of closing and its future looked bleak.

But after villagers got together, set up a committee and made a list of volunteers willing and able to help, a community post office and village shop got off the ground.

With some financial backing, a barn in the grounds of The Swan pub – run by Nigel and his wife Carol – was converted and the business began trading.

Now, 10 years after it opened, Monks Eleigh Community Shop is holding a party next month to celebrate its success.

Nigel, who moved to the area from Wales, said the shop had survived against all the odds.

“Considering the recession we’ve had, it’s been a major success story,” he said.

“It’s run by a committee and about 30 volunteers, but I think the fact that the village has rallied round to support it is the reason that it’s been so successful.

“We are quite a small village really, just 500 people, and quite a few are elderly.

“It is important that people have somewhere local they can go to get a paper and a pint of milk.”

The shop specialises in local produce and sells food made in the pub kitchen.