



### **A chance opportunity, a great idea and sound business advice creates a truly unique business**

Shaun Crowther was happily working in a St Peter bike shop when the rug was suddenly pulled out from under him. The shop had to close, and he was faced with redundancy. Immediately, Shaun knew he wanted to put his 10 years of experience as a qualified bike mechanic to good use and set up his own family focused bike shop. But he was clear that he wanted to do something fresh and different.

### **A worker's cooperative, where all staff are part owners of the business**

Shaun explains: "I started talking to the Channel Islands Co-operative Society about how to structure a worker's co-operative. As well as offering advice on how to set-up a co-operative, they took an interest in our idea and were keen to find ways to offer their help, including providing premises and some of the old equipment left behind by Total Sports when it closed down. However, this meant we needed to pull together a business plan. I was confident in my knowledge and expertise about bikes, but creating a serious business plan was something else altogether. That's when Jersey Business became an important part of the mix."

Shaun met with Nick Steel and June Stead from the Jersey Business advisory team about getting his new venture off the ground.

**“Jersey Business helped us put together a thorough business plan which helped us secure funding and premises.”**

Said Shaun: “Co-ops are not as popular in Jersey as they are in other parts of the UK and so there was no mechanism in place to set one up from scratch on the Island. June was very helpful in helping us work out the best way to go about that, particularly on the legal side of things. Nick helped us with putting together a robust and thorough 3-year business plan, including a fantastic financial section. Frankly, we couldn’t have got the business up and running without their help.

We forwarded our business plan to the Channel Islands Co-operative Society and then the wheels started turning. I’d like to say it was easy, but it was the knowledge and expertise from the team at Jersey Business that made the end of end process of getting our initial idea up and running relatively smooth. As well as helping us get started, Jersey Business, and indeed the Co-operative Society have been excellent sounding boards for us throughout our first year of trading. We also received support and guidance from the Contributions Team at Social Security ensuring that everything was in place prior to trading.”

### **Partnerships with leading brands such as Raleigh**

Since opening its doors on the 30 October 2015, Coop Bikes has gone from strength to strength. Their reputation has grown, and they have secured relationships with big brand bike manufacturers such as Raleigh and Frog. They also stock electric assisted bikes.

Coop Bikes will move to larger 2-story premises soon and the new location sits alongside one of the biggest Co-operative supermarkets on the Island, which has a footfall of around 10,000 people a week.

### **Larger premises for the future**

Says Shaun: “It’s my ambition to work in a bike shop that is a great experience for our customers and our staff! Our existing premises have been fantastic, but the new building will have better facilities, which will feel like total luxury. We can’t wait to move in and grow our team.

“The location couldn’t be better in respect of footfall, and we’re hoping to reach more people to help them get the cycling bug. Once again it’s thanks to the Channel Islands Cooperative Society and Jersey Business that we are in the fortunate position to take advantage of this opportunity.”

**“I think anyone either starting a new venture or who want to grow an existing business should reach out to Jersey Business. They are friendly, helpful and they know how the island works.”**

"I think one of the most important lessons we've learned from this process is that while the idea of setting up a business is daunting, there are people with expertise that are willing to help. We think we're incredibly lucky to have had such fantastic support from Jersey Business and the Cooperative Society.

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