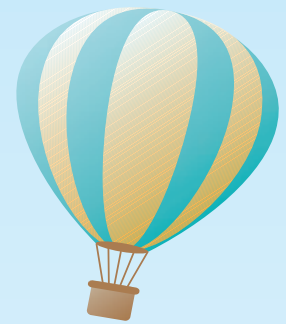


# the Connection

newsletter of **thePhoneCo-op**

Autumn 2010



## Warm welcome for Saga phone customers

**Customers of Saga Telephone Service customers transferred to The Phone Co-op in September as part of a new partnership between the co-operative and Saga.**

Some 8,300 Saga customers will continue to benefit from their current low cost call services and high standard of customer service, but will now also have the opportunity to take up a wider range of services including line rental, mobile services and combined phone and broadband packages.

Vivian Woodell, chief executive of The Phone Co-op, comments, "Saga customers will find a warm welcome at The Phone Co-op where we hope they will also take up the chance to become members, and therefore co-owners of the business, sharing in our success."

The deal forms part of a wider partnership under which Saga, which specialises in providing services such as holidays and insurance to the over-50s, will promote The Phone Co-op's phone and broadband services to its customer base of several million people. Under the agreement the services will be co-branded.

"The addition of Saga's customers to our business is an important step in our development," adds Vivian. "In pursuing this opportunity it was clear that there was a good match between our two organisations: we share many of the same values including a strong customer focus and we both have a good track record of providing excellent service. We look forward also to welcoming many more Saga customers to The Phone Co-op through our new relationship."



## A bright new mobile service for everyone

**The Phone Co-op has been providing mobile services to residential customers for over two years, but until now they were only available to customers who had chosen to become members.**

Now The Phone Co-op has signed a new agreement which makes it a Mobile Virtual Network Operator, benefiting from the coverage of the UK's largest network, Everything Everywhere (formerly Orange).

The new agreement means we can offer some of the keenest available mobile rates to everyone, whether you use a mobile frequently or just occasionally, and, for the first time ever, a free phone for anyone who signs up to a 24 month contract. Starting at just £10 a month, our bundles include a generous allowance of calls to UK local and national numbers, and other mobiles, along with an unlimited number of texts, and data at attractive rates.

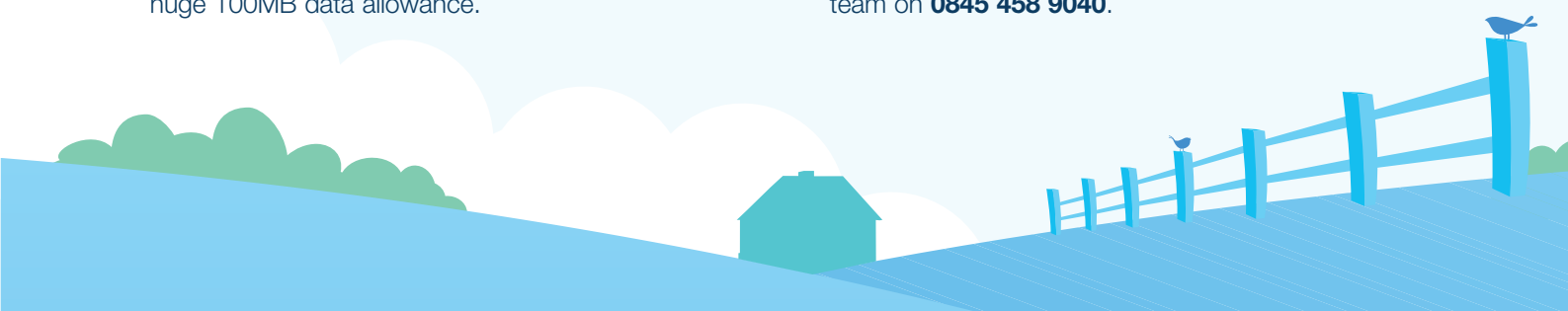
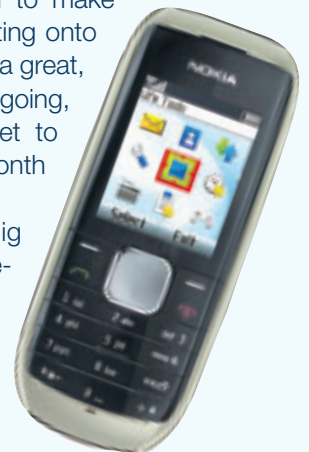
A 100-minute bundle costs just £10, or you can get 300 minutes for £15 or 600 minutes for £25, along with all the texts you could want. And, if you're constantly e-mailing from your phone, updating your Tweets, or checking your favourite websites, then £5 will get you a huge 100MB data allowance.

We know people don't like having to sign up to long contracts, which is why all of these bundles are available on nothing more than a 30 day contract. We'll send you a SIM card, you pop it in your phone, and you're good to go. Keep your current number, and keep using your own phone.

However, for those prepared to make the commitment, or if you're getting onto mobile for the first time and want a great, easy to use phone to get you going, we'll give a Nokia 1800 handset to anyone who signs up to a 24 month contract.

For occasional users, big savings are available against pre-pay rates by switching to our Pay As You Use tariff with calls charged at just 7p a minute and itemised on your Phone Co-op bill.

For more details please see [www.thephone.coop/residential/mobile](http://www.thephone.coop/residential/mobile), or call our team on **0845 458 9040**.



## Green Award double success

**For the second year running, The Phone Co-op has won the Federation of Communications Services Green Award. This year, as we now have over 50 employees, we moved up into the Large Business category, having won in the Small Business category last year.**

Vivian Woodell, The Phone Co-op's Chief Executive commented: "Some of the biggest names in Britain's telecoms industry enter these awards, and we are delighted to have been recognised two years in succession. I would like to thank everyone whose commitment has made this possible."



*Vivian Woodell (centre) received the FCS Green Award from Vic Clements, chair of the judging panel, and Martin Giddens of Inturn Trading, sponsors of the award.*

## Keeping your business connected

**A new initiative to simplify and improve response times in dealing with faults on business lines means we can now offer our business customers even higher standards of care, leading to earlier fault resolution.**

Business customers, whether large or small, now automatically benefit from a care package

which ensures that BT Openreach will respond by the end of the next working day. For those customers who wish to upgrade, a same-day response service for faults reported before 1pm is also available. To talk through the best option for your business, contact our Business Sales team on **0845 458 9070**.

## Customer Profile: St Dunstan's

**For nearly a century St Dunstan's has given invaluable physical and emotional support to blind and visually impaired ex-Service men and women. Today the charity works with almost 5,000 beneficiaries across the UK who have lost their eyesight as a result of war, age, accident, or illness.**

Through one-to-one rehabilitation and training at dedicated Centres in east Sussex and Sheffield they learn the skills to once again lead independent lives. St Dunstan's support doesn't stop when people leave the Centres as the support is for life for each individual. That means St Dunstan's is there to support those who were wounded during World War II, to soldiers blinded in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan and older people who have lost their eyesight through age related conditions such as Macular Degeneration. With a growing demand for its services St Dunstan's will open a third Centre in Llandudno in North Wales in the autumn of 2011.

St Dunstan's is a very recent Phone Co-op customer and is currently in the process of switching over to us. Already its national Centre in Brighton and its head offices in London are using Phone Co-op call services, along with another Centre in Sheffield. Other Centres, including a new facility in Llandudno in Wales, will follow soon.

The charity first made contact with The Phone Co-op at a specialist charity exhibition and invited

us to tender for its voice services. Dan Hall, Head of Information Systems at St Dunstan's, explains, "We looked at our short-listed suppliers in two stages. First we asked whether they could deliver the services we needed and then, having got down to five possible suppliers, we did a cost analysis.

The Phone Co-op's pricing, whilst not the absolute cheapest, was very competitive. Having had a bad experience with another supplier, we are also appreciative of the level of service we received as Phone Co-op customers."

You can find out more about the work of St Dunstan's at [www.st-dunstons.org.uk](http://www.st-dunstons.org.uk) or to make a donation call **0300 111 2233**



# Members go greener – together

**The Greener Together initiative reported in the June issue of The Connection brought together nearly 150 Phone Co-op members who collectively pledged to make lifestyle changes that will result in reductions of 50 tonnes in CO2 emissions and 2 tonnes in waste.**

One of our most dedicated participants was Helen Ramsay de Castres who lives in a small village near Okehampton in Devon. "I'd received a postcard about Greener Together from The Phone Co-op" says Helen. "I've already been a greenie for a long time, but I thought I could pick up things that I could do better and have a bit of support. I also thought I might be able to offer something to others."

Green living isn't new to Helen – many practices such as recycling and composting have been part of her life since childhood. She already had energy efficient light bulbs in her house and had bought herself a greener car.

Nonetheless, Helen found that there were still some pledges that she could adopt. "One suggested that you lobby your landlord to replace the boiler with an A grade model" she says. This simple pledge started Helen off on an investigation about her rented property that had far-reaching implications for energy reduction.

Using information from her electricity supplier and a carbon calculator, Helen has succeeded in persuading her housing association to install air source heat



pumps as well as replacing her boiler. "It looks like I'll have a hugely reduced carbon footprint as a result of this. And it all started from my pledge to look at changing the boiler."

Helen's other pledges included turning off appliances at the wall and air drying her washing whenever possible. Her rural location means that some of her pledges require a lot more effort to implement. She now dons a backpack and walks to collect her weekly vegetable box, takes the bus to do the rest of her shopping and has cut down on other car journeys. When she's been driving, she's also ensuring that she drives with the environment in mind, getting 110 miles to the gallon on a recent trip.

Helen is motivated to keep to her pledges by a love for the planet and a general world view that everything is connected. "Greener Together has helped me to do some things that I've been meaning to do for ages." Helen made her pledges in late May but won't be stopping them any time soon. "Everything I'm doing, apart from walking to get my veggie box in the winter, I'll keep doing. It'll only get better. My aim is to get my carbon footprint down to the recommended Fair Share Fair Choice level for next year."

Amanda Beard, who has co-ordinated The Phone Co-op's participation in Greener Together, is keen to hear from any other members who have taken part and wish to share their experience – you can contact her at [amanda@thephone.coop](mailto:amanda@thephone.coop)

There is still time to get involved – to find out more and register, visit [www.greenertogether.coop](http://www.greenertogether.coop)

# Could you be a Director?

**The terms of office of three of the eight Directors of The Phone Co-op will come to an end at our AGM in early February and all members should already have received details of the Board elections.**

If you think you have skills and/or experience to offer The Phone Co-op as it grows and develops, please do consider standing for election. The Board is always keen to see well-contested elections, which are a sign of a thriving democracy. Briefing sessions for people who are thinking about standing are being held during October. If you are interested in being a candidate please call Amanda Beard on **0845 458 9012** for more details.

If you're not already a member, do consider joining. Having a voice in the way our co-operative is run is just one of the benefits. All you need to do is invest a minimum of £1 in a Phone Co-op share account – to find out more visit [www.thephone.coop/members](http://www.thephone.coop/members), email [enquiries@thephone.coop](mailto:enquiries@thephone.coop) or call Amanda Beard on **0845 458 9012** and ask for a copy of our membership leaflet.

New members who join before 22 November will be eligible to vote in these elections.

# Take advantage of our free broadband upgrade

**If you are currently on a Home 0, Home 1, Home 5 or Home 10 broadband service with us, you can choose to upgrade to a bigger broadband allowance at no extra cost.**

- Customers on Home 0 can upgrade to a 1GB service
- Customers on Home 1 can upgrade to a 5GB service
- Customers on Home 5 can upgrade to a 10GB service
- Customers on Home 10 can upgrade to a 20GB service

The upgrade itself is free, you won't pay any extra on your monthly bill and your contract will be unaffected.

Register for the upgrade at [www.thephone.coop/upgrade](http://www.thephone.coop/upgrade)



Phone Co-op staff prepare to send out voting papers in last year's elections.

## thePhoneCo-op

5 Millhouse  
Elmsfield Business Centre  
Worcester Road  
Chipping Norton  
OX7 5XL

### Customer service

0845 458 9000  
Monday – Friday: 9am – 7pm  
Saturday: 9am – 3pm

### Residential sales

0845 458 9040

### Business sales

0845 458 9070

### Fax

0845 458 9001

### Email - General enquiries

enquiries@thephone.coop

### Internet & broadband

internetsupport@thephone.coop

### Billing

bills@thephone.coop

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

# Affinity Partner Profile: Social Firms UK

**Social Firms UK is the national support organisation for the development of Social Firms in the UK, representing over 300 social businesses throughout the country.**

A 'Social Firm' is a market-led enterprise set up specifically to create good quality jobs for people suffering disadvantage in the labour market.

Matt Lane, responsible for partnerships at The Phone Co-op, stated "We're delighted to be working in together with Social Firms UK, to promote our business services to their member businesses. Like them, we are striving to create social change through our work and I would hope and expect that the way we operate and our values will resonate with this audience".

Social Firms UK are currently running a 'Just Buy' campaign, which is a directory of Social Firms offering a wide range of services. Sara McGinley from Social Firms

UK said "If we all took the time to choose the type of businesses we buy from – without having to compromise on quality or service – more small businesses would become sustainable, creating more jobs and strengthening communities without sacrificing both vulnerable people and the planet."

To find out more please visit [www.justbuy.org.uk](http://www.justbuy.org.uk)



Pembrokeshire FRAME is a Social Firm in Haverfordwest that provides a community re-use service to individuals or families in need. The business employs 26 people.

## Meet the Employee Council

**Although it is a consumer co-operative (owned by its customers), The Phone Co-op has always viewed its employees as key stakeholders in the business, a view which surveys show is supported by our customers.**

Our Employee Council, elected by employees, plays an active role in involving staff in the business. Recent elections have brought a new line-up of Council members, chaired by Matt Lane. Here Matt describes some of the key aspects of the Council's mandate.

*"Overall our goal is to ensure that employees are happy, empowered and motivated. We work alongside the Board of Directors and management team with the specific aim of improving*

*communications with staff, for instance in the form of regular staff meetings in which employees from all areas of the business come together to hear about the direction the business is heading and to pitch questions to senior managers.*

*We are also actively involved in working alongside the personnel function to produce new personal development plans for each employee so that they can map their professional development while at The Phone Co-op.*

*In practical ways, we make recommendations about ways in which working conditions can be improved and we're planning a series of future events to help foster and strengthen links between colleagues in different locations".*

