

Cotswold business with NICKY GODDING



BUSINESS OF THE MONTH

Welcome to a new section on the business pages. Have you got what it takes to be our 'Business of the month'? Are you hiding your light under a bushel? Is your business quirky, different, exciting or just unusual? We'd love to hear from you. Our first Business of the Month is The Sewing Box in Cheltenham run by sister act Debbie Denning-Price and Jayne Denning-Jones. Here's their story:

What's the name of your business?
The Sewing Box.

Where is it based in the Cotswolds?
250 High Street, Cheltenham, tel: 01242 245556.

Why did you decide to set up there?
With us both living in the area, and with Gloucester well catered for by The Sewing Shop in the market, Cheltenham was the obvious choice. Our regulars come to the High Street for their weekly shop and pick up their wool order or other essentials. We are also close enough to the town centre to catch any passing tourist trade that may be looking for something a little bit special or harder to come by.

What do you sell?
Far too much to list but it includes haberdashery, knitting wools, cross stitch, tapestry, children's and jewellery kits, and according to Jayne's husband, loads of other stuff you never knew you needed let alone thought you could buy!

How long have you been trading?
We followed in our mothers footsteps and opened The Sewing Box in September 1997 after working from an early age in the Gloucester market stall.



Debbie Denning-Price and Jayne Denning-Jones.

What is the most interesting thing about your business?
As well as stocking the basics, life is kept interesting keeping up with new trends and introducing them to the shop. It's very satisfying seeing great new wools, patterns, buttons, tapestries, or products found at shows being used by our customers.

How many hours a week do you work?
You will find Debbie in the shop five days a week come rain or shine, whereas I work three days behind the counter and look after the paper work from home.

How many staff do you employ?

We employ a number of part time staff including my mother in law Pam who helps out in the shop. We have ladies that hand knit to order items such as special matinee coats or children's cardigans as well as ladies that will repair, replace or alter a favourite item of clothing.

Where do you think your business will be in five years' time?

We have pretty much reached the limits of our current shop so may well need to move in the future. However, our main plan is to try to deliver the personal service we offer today through our new internet site which we will launch in the near future

Why run a business in the Cotswolds?

It's a great location and a vibrant and prosperous economy, full of people that whilst having an eye on saving money also take pleasure and enjoy the special satisfaction that comes from making something with your own hands.

Is this your life's ambition?

We want to find a happy work- life balance and to keep life in perspective. The Sewing Box is part of that ambition, bringing fulfilment, whilst also giving us the flexibility to keep family life on track.