

Beat: Local

Bookshop Got More Than Help When They Asked for Assistance in Their Move

2,000 books carried by volunteers

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USPA NEWS - About 250 people formed a human chain to help a community bookshop in Southampton move to a new store after a rent increase left them unable to afford their old premises.

Volunteers gathered to carry more than 2,000 books the 150 meters to the new location, a former bank building that October Books managed to buy with funds raised from donations and loans, where the stock will be kept in the old vault.

“It was a tremendous show of support and community and we’re moved and incredibly touched by it. We are of, and for, our community and it is truly heartening to see that reciprocated,” said Clare Diaper, who works at the bookshop.

Jani Franck, who took part in the human chain, told the Southern Daily Echo: “It’s amazing. The power of community coming together and achieving something like this. October Books have done really well. I’m in awe.”

A bookshop volunteer said she was ‘incredibly touched’ by the show of support.

October Books was founded in 1977 and the people behind it describe it as a “radical bookshop cooperative named after the Russian Revolution”. It had been based at the previous premises for 15 years before the move.

They said that changing the site became necessary because the rising rent was becoming unaffordable. The team announced a funding drive and asked for donations, as well as for repayable loans from the community and from financial institutions. They ended up raising £487,800 to buy a former NatWest building and later called for volunteers to help transport its stock.

“There is something about radical bookshops, especially long-established ones like October Books,” said Ian Rothwell, the investment manager at Cooperative and Community Finance, which provided money for the project, said at the time. “They have a special place in the hearts of local people and now, by opening up the old bank to community use, that bond will become even stronger.”

This move actually took place more than three years ago. I decided to share the story because help and kindness are always relevant. It is amazing how much we can accomplish when a few people can spare just a few minutes of their time.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

Source: The Guardian

Article online:

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