

The Story of RefillAbell

It's not a typo; it actually is spelt Refill - Abell, a play on words of course, up-cycling to be precise, but why you may ask?

It's Watford's first refill store, a new concept whereby you can bring your own containers, tupperware, empty bottles, jars, tins and more, to fill with just what you need. Here, you can refill all your kitchen and household essentials such as nuts, seeds, beans, pulses, rice, pasta, baking products, washing up liquid, laundry liquid, shampoos, conditioners and more. We also have a nut grinding machine to produce fresh peanut butter!

Our aim is to eradicate single use plastic packaging, reduce our carbon footprint by sourcing as locally and sustainably as possible, and to provide high quality products at the same time as a personalised shopping experience!

Our History

RefillAbell is located on 4 Haydon Road, Oxhey Village, which was the original location of Abell Chemist, a family-owned Pharmacy serving the community of Bushey and Oxhey for over 30 years. In 2017 Abell Chemist was selected to move into the newly built Bushey Medical Centre, thus the premises at 4 Haydon Road remained empty, but the iconic, bold-green Abell sign, was still up. When the crucial decision came to decide the name, we felt that this had to be maintained, re-used, repurposed and ultimately, upcycled, in keeping with our ethos. Refill was added to the name, and RefillAbell was formed.

How RefillAbell came about.

The team came together as lock-down restrictions began. How you may ask?

Let me explain, I manage Abell Chemist and as people were being asked to self isolate, the number of deliveries of medication skyrocketed. We reached out to the community for volunteers to help with delivering medication. Enter Jane Hopkins! Jane (and Rob) volunteered for Abell Chemist, helping with NHS deliveries and more, and this is where I shared my idea of a Zero Waste Shop with her. This conversation started us on the journey to open RefillAbell, Watfords' first Zero Waste Store.

With help from professionals in the community, the concept of the shop steadily gathered momentum. Over the last year we have transformed the shop by making it as energy efficient as possible by adding a heat recovery system, electrical air conditioning, LED lighting and double glazed windows to improve insulation.

We have also held 3 pop stalls, crowdfunded for essential equipment (peanut butter machine), engaged with the community by sending out surveys and questionnaires, begun a mailing list and created our social media presence to find out what people really want.

The response has been fantastic.

We've spoken on the radio and to other local groups about our aim of making Watford a Zero Waste Town. Something to aim for!

It is all about sustainability, reducing waste, repurposing, reusing, upcycling and ultimately eliminating plastic waste from our lives, one small step at a time.

Where are we now?

After a slow and steady start this time last year, we can confidently say that we aim to be open by the end of June! Yes, at last!

We will open Tuesday to Saturday initially, with a late night on Thursday. The exact opening hours will be announced soon.

Sourcing products

We have been spending a lot of time developing our product list, contacting suppliers and finding those wonderful niche products that are plastic-free, sustainable, fair-trade, organic, vegan, gluten free and ideally made in UK-often by small businesses.

For example, we have recently sourced homemade soaps, deodorants, toothpaste, reusable period products, granola, toilet paper and coffee. We have also chosen SESI (from Oxford) as the main supplier of

our household cleaning liquids such as shampoo, conditioner, laundry liquid etc. The fact that they are relatively close by, use a 'loop' system to collect and reuse empty containers and have great products, thus influenced our decision making procedure.

We have really enjoyed sampling the new products too - absolutely essential if we are going to stock them in RefillAbell!

Get in touch

It's been great to hear your recommendations for products that you would like to see in our shop, and we will do our best to source and supply what you have asked for.

If you would like to get in touch with us, please visit us:

Facebook: RefillabellWatford

Instagram: @Refillabell_Watford

[Email: refillabell@gmail.com](mailto:refillabell@gmail.com)

Or drop us a note through the door of
4 Haydon Road, WD19 4DD

We are so grateful for all of the support that we have received over the past year, and can't wait to open and welcome you into our store! Not long to go now...

Together, we are Abell

With excited anticipation,
Sameer and Jane

Team RefillAbell