# Social media use helps Newport independent shops build community and boost business



Since its establishment in 2021, New Pastures Home, a candle shop located on Commercial Street in Newport, has distinguished itself through a distinctive marketing strategy that skilfully blends humour with social media engagement. The business owner, 32-year-old Hywel Jones, has taken centre stage in a series of short videos that not only entertain but also invite potential customers to visit the shop.

A notable example includes a humorous stunt where unsuspecting shoppers were playfully "kidnapped" off the street as an alternative way to attract more visitors, alongside sketches reflecting the local trading scene. Mr Jones remarked on this approach, saying, "People might see our shop from the outside and be scared to come in as they don’t know what to expect. But if they know we are nice humans, they are more likely to come through the door." He emphasised the importance of the human element in business, stating, "People trust us more once they know who’s behind the business. They like the human element."

Many customers have communicated that they discovered New Pastures Home after watching its online videos, which sometimes achieve viewer counts in the six figures. The shop has accrued over 4,000 followers across platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook, which serve differing roles: Instagram and Facebook effectively engage local audiences, while TikTok helps reach a broader UK-wide customer base. The videos also highlight specific offerings, such as a scent discovery box subscription scheme. Mr Jones acknowledged some challenges with online exposure, noting, "You have to just be prepared for the negative comment. Some people don’t understand that some things are a joke."

New Pastures Home is not alone in leveraging social media for business success in Newport. The Rogue Fox, a coffee shop on Clytha Park Road which has been operating for eight years, also credits its quirky branding and regular social media activity as key factors in its growth. Owner William Green, aged 34, explained, "We’ve always used social media. In the last six years, we’ve learned to use it as a business tool." He further described how Instagram's business features help understand follower demographics and engagement, allowing the café to convey personality and important information to customers.

The local Instagram account The Newport Guide, managed by friends Lauren and Paris, recognised The Rogue Fox as a "hidden gem" in October, encouraging support for independent businesses. They commented on the strong public interest: "Engagement on the page shows there’s a genuine appetite for something like this. One post can help a business reach thousands of people."

Despite the occasional negative feedback encountered online, both New Pastures Home and The Rogue Fox agree that the benefits of social media use far surpass the disadvantages. For these independent businesses in Newport, creativity and authentic connection with customers via social media not only extend their reach but also help build communities, making social media an essential aspect of the customer experience rather than just a promotional tool.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.newpastureshome.co.uk> - This website confirms that New Pastures Home is a candle shop located in Newport offering a variety of candles and gifts, supporting the claim about the shop's products and physical presence on Commercial Street in Newport.
2. <https://www.newpastureshome.co.uk/workshops> - This page details the candle-making workshops hosted by Hywel and Dean at New Pastures Home on Commercial Street, supporting the involvement of the business owner in interactive and community-focused activities.
3. <https://www.instagram.com/newpastureshome/> - The Instagram profile of New Pastures Home shows active social media engagement and highlights the shop’s location and events, corroborating the use of social media platforms like Instagram to engage local audiences.
4. <https://www.tripadvisor.com/ShowUserReviews-g186463-d24004965-r938909803-New_Pastures_Home-Newport_South_Wales_Wales.html> - User reviews on TripAdvisor praise the friendly owners and the enjoyable candle-making workshop experience at New Pastures Home, supporting the personal and human element emphasized by Hywel Jones.
5. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/small-businesses-social-media-marketing-success-b2328499.html> - This article discusses how small businesses like cafés and shops in local areas use social media platforms effectively for marketing and building customer relationships, supporting the success stories of New Pastures Home and The Rogue Fox in leveraging social media.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/oct/10/social-media-small-businesses-uk-growth> - The Guardian highlights how UK small businesses, including those in the hospitality and retail sectors, use social media to boost engagement and growth, as exemplified by The Rogue Fox’s use of Instagram business features to understand followers and engage customers.
7. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25122054.newport-businesses-thrive-thanks-social-media-presence/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data