

High-street heroes: use them or lose them

Help to save independent shops with recommendations from Which? Local

A Which? survey has revealed that three quarters of you would like to see more independent shops on your high street. Fishmongers, greengrocers and ironmongers top your wish list, closely followed by independent bakers, electrical stores and bookshops.

Unfortunately, most of you also say there are fewer independent shops near you than there used to be. However, you can help to save your high-street heroes by using the exclusive Which? members' website Which? Local (www.which-local.co.uk) to recommend or track down the best local independents.

Harold Stern recommended his local fishmonger, TH Carr in Ealing, on the site, saying: 'He prides himself on the quality of the fish he sells, and rightly so. My partner and I, and especially my cat, approve of his produce. I have been buying my fish there for 30 years.'

Paul Clinch says of his local ironmonger in Hampshire, WC Baker and Sons: 'Just when you thought all those shops selling imperial-sized bits and bobs had gone, you find one on your doorstep. Great old-fashioned service and you don't have to buy 10 of something when you only need one.'

TAKE ACTION

Help to save the best of the high street. If you don't use your independent shops, you'll lose them. If you know a high-street hero, recommend it to other Which? members on Which? Local. You can also find shops to support in your area by searching on the site (see p26 for details).

THE TOP THREE INDEPENDENT SHOPS YOU'D LIKE TO SEE ON YOUR HIGH STREET



Source: In September 2009, we asked 2,177 Which? online panel members about high-street shops.



Traditional bulbs shelved

We checked 15 supermarkets and high-street stores to see whether we could get our hands on any of the incandescent light bulbs (the ones with filaments in) included in the recent EU ban on imports – namely, any wattage of frosted and pearl, and 100W clear bulbs.

Stocks of 100W clear traditional-shaped bulbs had been completely cleared out, but 10 stores still had pearlescent or frosted bulbs in stock – although some shelves were looking pretty empty. Shops won't be restocking once they've all gone.

The phase-out won't leave you in the dark, though. You can save money on your electricity bill by using energy-saving bulbs instead of the old incandescent ones. To find the Best Buy energy-saving bulbs, see our report on page 28.

Price ads 'biased'

Only 2% of Which? members think that the claims of supermarket price comparison TV adverts, run by the likes of Asda and Tesco, are honest.

Tesco and Asda have been rapped by the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) in the past year for versions of these adverts. In July, the ASA upheld complaints that Tesco TV adverts comparing prices at Tesco with ASDA and discounter Aldi were misleading.

Asda told us that it uses trade publication *The Grocer* and price comparison website MySupermarket.com for its adverts, and 'an army of price checkers' visits its rivals each week.

Tesco's 'real baskets' price check compares all Clubcard transactions bought on a particular day. It says that it 'always aims to make a fair comparison between products'.

WHAT YOU THINK OF SUPERMARKET PRICE COMPARISON ADS



Source: In June 2009, we asked 2,469 Which? members about supermarket price comparison TV adverts.