



## Friars



Friars specialise in luxurious chocolates, gifts and treats online and in store. The company was established in 1927 as a family business and remains in the same family to this day.

They have high street shores located in Keswick and Ambleside and an e-commerce website specialising in fulfilling corporate orders for businesses ranging from small hotels through to multi-national corporations.

Michael Webster, Director of Friars, explains the difference the availability of fibre broadband has made to his business. "We were struggling with communication between our two stores prior to the arrival of superfast broadband in the local area. Improved speeds have enabled the implementation of Voice over IP technology which has vastly improved communication between the two stores, making it feel as though you are 'in the same room' and allowing for remote desk top activity and the sending of large files for bespoke packaging at a significantly faster speed."

"Now we have upgraded to superfast broadband, the basic maintenance of our website is much less time consuming and is now mobile friendly. Our ability to carry out e-commerce work has improved, as has the browsing of supplier catalogues online." Friars' customer base is described as 20% from within Cumbria, and 80% from outside the County. Internet market sales make up 15% of their business with the remainder being retail associated.

Staffing wise, the company workforce includes 19 full time staff and 5 part time staff across the two stores. Michael believes that improved broadband services can only support the company in reaching its full potential.

Michael said, "with regard to our upgrade, we found this to be a very positive experience; we remained with our existing provider and found the upgrade cost to be minimal to that of our previous service."

Michael would urge other businesses to look into the possibility of upgrading in order to reap the benefits a faster service can offer.

Website: [www.friars.co.uk](http://www.friars.co.uk)  
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