

Bristol opticians relocates after nearly 30 years in old city

An independent Bristol opticians has relocated to new premises after nearly 30 years in the old city centre. Bramley Pope opened on St Stephens Street in 1997, catering for people working in central Bristol or in nearby offices.

The company was established by Philippa Bramley and her friend Roger Pope, whose London-based optician was granted two Royal Warrants and supplied glasses to Queen Elizabeth II and to King Charles III when he was Prince of Wales.

Despite a host of challenges following the Covid pandemic, including a reduction of office workers to the old city, the business “weathered the storm” and has now moved to North Street in Bedminster.

Dispensing optician Mark Ilett, who joined Bramley Pope 10 years ago and has taken over the running of the business, said: “[It’s] an environment that I think this little business will do very well in and hopefully we will add something to the area.

“For years we looked after people that worked in the centre and in nearby offices and people that were happy to travel to us for the service and the specs we offer.

“Unfortunately, fewer people come to the offices now and the changes to the local area have meant that travelling to us has become very difficult for a lot of people and impossible for people that needed to get door to door and we got to a point where it really looked like our time was up.”

Mr Ilett said he had “thought for a while” about moving the

practice somewhere else, but when the North Street site became available he decided to take the “massive risk” and relocate. He has signed a seven-year lease on the new premises.

He added: “I used to live down here so I have a bit of an affinity for the area and I like the feel of this end of North Street, particularly. It’s amazing for me to see the difference down here since I lived here about nine or 10 years ago. Some of the same places I used to use and a load of really cool little indies doing things ethically and with pride in their work.

“It feels like a really nice place to be doing business and if the reception and interest we’ve had in the couple of weeks since we opened is anything to go by, then our little business will be a fine addition to the community and look after people’s eyes for another 20 odd years.”

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