

Ascott Village Shop Newsletter - Spring 2016

Maybe this is being a bit over-optimistic but with May upon us, I was expecting some warmth in the air. And yes ... it has finally arrived! Let's hope an upturn in the weather is a sure sign for a wonderful summer's trading at the Village Shop.

Finances

As you know from our regular communication, the shop is 'holding its own' albeit we are trading nearly 10% down on sales compared with 2015. Even so, we are in a stronger position for the first four months of this year compared with the corresponding period last year. Again, this is because of the amazing support and commitment of our volunteers. We have around £27,000 in cash reserves, which in a very challenging and competitive environment, is good news! Our major objective is to grow sales and very simply, we will be looking to achieve £2,500 each week. If we can do this, we will protect our cash position and this allows us to build our stock and make improvements, as we need to do so.

Sales promotions

At our last management meeting, we agreed to run a flyer advertising the shop, which will go into each Grapevine edition. We want to take advantage of new season fruit and vegetables, as this will be our main promotion. We need to make the Village Shop a destination shop, in other words give our customers a reason to come to us because being where we are; passing trade is not an option! Now we have our new canopy, we have asked Pete Moss to build a folding shelf where we can display fruit, vegetables and possible plants too. The fresh flowers have been going down a storm and we will look for local, interesting produce that will excite our regulars. Bridgette is also trying some new local suppliers and you will see regional food from Cotswold Traiteur. This will include fresh soups, picnic sausage rolls & tray bakes amongst lots of other goodies.

Volunteer update

We are pleased to welcome Rowena Gulland to our team. This is in addition to Anne Askwith from Wootton and Bel Lovel, our newest, youngest volunteer who has joined the Saturday team. Welcome to you all, we really appreciate having you with us! I would also like to say a big 'thank you' to Kathy and Rosemary who have been doing a wonderful job as our trainers. I certainly learned a lot and had some of my bad habits corrected! If you haven't booked a slot, it is not too late and even the most experienced of our volunteers said it was definitely worthwhile. Finally the rota; we are so lucky to have had Jane taking care of the rota and she has now passed the baton to Gaynor. I love the way the communication works and the positive responses that results from it. We are indebted to you both!

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Ascott Village Shop, Cooks Row, High Street, Ascott Under Wychwood, OX7 6FY
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Shop AGM

This will be held on Tuesday **June 21st at the Swan**. We would like to offer everyone a glass of beer or wine from 7pm and the AGM will start at 7.30pm. Sally Jordan has organised the paperwork and this will be with you shortly. As with previous AGM's we will need nominations in advance and once the committee have been elected they, in turn, will vote in officers to include, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. For those of you that attended our last volunteer evening at the end of October, I said I would not be standing for re-election. After three truly enjoyable years, first as a committee member and then as Chair of the management committee, it is now time to move on and fully engage with my day job!

Spotlight on a Volunteer

One of our latest recruits is Anne Askwith, who joined the team at the beginning of the year. Anne is a member of Mark Tribe's Saturday team and volunteers after working all week at Oxford's Balliol College, where she is responsible for the alumni magazines and website. She is impressed that the shop has been going for such a long time and that we never close! Having previously volunteered at the village shop in Wootton since its opening, Anne is well placed to make a comparison and she notes many similarities such as shop attractiveness, favourite products including Woodland yoghurt and Upton Smokery, and fresh fruit and vegetables delivered daily. Anne also commented that she is very impressed with the years of commitment given by our team and had a special word for Bridgette for her all-round organisation and a warm welcome!



And its goodbye from me ...

As this is my last newsletter, it just remains for me to say thank you. Thank you to Bridgette who has transformed and streamlined back office support. Thank you to my management committee (past & present) for your hard work and unstinting support and finally, **THANK YOU** to all of you who make the shop what it is – a special place we can be proud of!

I look forward to serving in the shop for many years to come.

John Cull

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