

Whiteparish Store & Post Office

We did it... We got planning approval to save the shop!

Newsletter No: 15



DEVELOPING THE SITE...

So how could we raise the cash...? Well we could have started to ask for donations, raised loans on the business or bought hundreds of lotto tickets!

The only sensible way was to share the costs, so we approached two housing associations to see if they would develop the site and help with the build, unfortunately the figures didn't stack up for them and they came to the conclusion that only a private development could work.

We then brought in an Architect 'Steven Sherlock' to help design a possible three house development at the rear and to build a new shop with two flats above.

We wanted to make these 'starter homes' as we also recognise the need to give youngsters in the village a chance to buy and stay in the Village.

We had to jump through many hoops to ensure we had the best possible submission to planning, some of which we would have done anyway such as the design of the shop to 'fit in' with the centre of the Village. We also had to ensure we came inside the planning envelope, and the design didn't impact adversely on surrounding residents.

We had already proved that the shop is both necessary and viable and will be able to support the business loans it will need to bridge the funding gap.

The greatest response to our submission was from a Councilor on the Planning Committee who, to quote said...

"Lets be bold and let the Village do what it wants to do to keep its Shop and not have the general mistrust we normally have"

OLD NEWS BUT GOOD NEWS

Well unless you... a) never go into the shop or b) don't buy the Salisbury Journal you won't have heard that we did what some were claiming was the impossible... we received the full and unconditional support of Salisbury Council Planning Committee to develop the shop site and thus create a long term future for both the Shop and Post Office.

It's great result from very hard work to ensure that our submission was the best we could achieve. **And on the fantastic turnout of many of our customers at the Planning meeting.**

To put it in basic terms we have agreement to build three starter homes at the rear of the shop and use the gains together with additional business loans to buy the shop and accommodation, thereby securing the long term future of the shop for the Village.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The biggest concern we have had is in not having long term security of tenure, we have been fortunate in that Julie Barnes has been incredibly tolerant in allowing us the benefit of a rolling lease without the need to fix a term which may well have only been for five years. The key, we have always felt, for the sustainability of the shop was to either secure new premises or 'buy out' Julie and keep the shop in the centre of the Village.

We took some time in looking at other options, from sites on the edge of the village, the Village Hall site and even at a mobile shop service! But we always came back to the existing site.

We needed to raise a large sum of money to secure the site and develop the shop that also met the demands of health and safety, disabled access and our expansion plans.

SO WHATS NEXT?

There is still a long way to go; we have to ensure side access issues are agreed and amicable settled, agree building contracts, and carefully plan out each stage of the process.

We have decided to take the work in three stages; the first is to get the final details of the houses cleared. Setting up a separate company to manage the build, issue contracts to construct and subsequently sell the houses.

The second stage will be to secure the current shop site, raising either Bank funded business loans or seek bond issues from villagers at a reasonable interest rate.

Then once the dust has settled the final stage will be to replace the existing shop with a purpose built unit.



Simple ehhh!

So if your wondering what we are doing now... well its lots of background work, legal and practical to achieve the above.

WHAT ABOUT THE TRUST?

When we told you of our ideas for a Village Trust we were overwhelmed with the number of you wanting to give us £5 notes!

Please bear with us, we must get any Trust right, but I can explain a few basic principles...

The £5 will be a donation, you don't get a share certificate or any dividends, it will be basically a gift to the Trust which will amalgamate the donations and buy out existing shares (valued at £1,000 each) in the shop.

Once the shop moves into profit (and at this stage quite some way off!), i.e. that is after loans are paid off, it will then be in a position to pay dividends or give charitable donations as it deems appropriate.

We will have more information once we have sought out legal advice.

HOT CHOCOLATE ANYONE?



Yes it happened again!

Yours truly did a stint in the shop early one Monday morning to find that the external air vent from the mobile air conditioning unit had fallen off and was pumping hot air into the shop...

Sadly we lost another £500 worth of chocolate which we ended up giving away to some of our lucky customers. It was the final straw and we have now secured a professional split unit which has three internal wall mounted coolers and a large external fan unit.

It's supposed to be a DIY system which we will transfer into the new shop... the trouble is when we saw it and then read the instructions... well...we got in the professionals!!!

NEW OPENING TIMES

Mandy has at last agreed to trial some new later opening times. We know stay open till.

**7:00 pm on Thursday and Friday,
6:00 pm on Saturday and up until
4:00 pm on Sunday!**

So no more excuses about us being closed when you drive home!

One reminder our **opening times** are set both for staff safety, our ability to get organized early in the morning, and our liability insurance. Please don't try to get in earlier each morning. Thanks.

OTHER RATHER OLD NEWS...

Thanks to everyone who came along to the Village Fete and enjoyed Carlo's Ices on the Village Shop stand.

Talking of ices we now have a new ice cream freezer in place, stuffed with the usual favorites and a few new ones as well.

We also have a new chiller cabinet for the milk; it should save on electricity costs as long as you all please remember to shut the door!!!

And, after typing this one of our freezers has just packed up... doh!

CHRISTMAS IS A COMING

So we will again be supplying turkeys, geese and cockerels as well as smoked fish. And again cheaper than a well know local quality supermarket! Order forms and details will be sent out soon.

Our special late night Christmas opening will be on the Friday 17th December, with carols, mince pies mulled wine and Santa!

HERO OF THE MONTH



Not actually one of our shop team!

Politicians usually get a bad press but I have to say that Councilor Richard Britton has been fantastic in his support and encouragement in helping get the shop planning through.

Always willing to come along to discuss issues and making a great speech to the Planning Committee on behalf of Whiteparish residents!

Thanks Richard.

AND FINALLY



A **big thank you** to our loyal and hardworking staff, the dedicated group of volunteers who cover Monday mornings and when the occasional emergency calls! (Are you interested in joining them?), also our back management support team who look after our accounts **and finally of course you... our fantastic customers!**