

Blockley Co-operative Association

January 2008 Newsletter

FUND RAISING SUCCESS

Thanks to enthusiastic support from the village and a generous gift of £2000 from Per Una **we have already reached our minimum target of £30,000** and our plan to open a community owned Shop/Café/Post Office has been activated! We aim to start trading in mid-April with the Grand Opening on May 3rd as planned.

Latest figures show a total of over £36,000 in donations and membership fees but **there is still some way to go so to reach the £50,000**, which would avoid us having to take out a significant loan.

GOOD NEWS ON GRANTS

Our application for a **£20,000 grant from the Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA) has been approved**, subject to satisfying Cooperative & Community Finance that we will also qualify for a £20,000 loan. Many thanks to the team who worked so hard on a comprehensive and well thought out business plan

CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

The Co-op now has 274 members (share certificates included in this mail out), including representatives of all parts of the parish and a number of weekenders. Nonetheless we would like to see a membership in excess of 500 so that there is a strong participation from residents in every corner of the parish

Please **encourage all your friends and neighbours to join the BCA** and make a donation. If you have been waiting to see the response from the community, you can now be confident that this thing is going to happen - so now is the time to write that cheque.

THE POST OFFICE

We are optimistic that **a range of Post Office services will continue to be provided in Blockley** from our new premises; however the exact nature of these services and the hours of opening have yet to be decided by PO Ltd. The official proposals for Blockley Post Office will be published on February 5th. (There will then be a six-week consultation period leading to a final decision on or about May 8th.) We expect to be involved in the detailed planning of our future PO services in due course.

CURRENT SHOP TO CLOSE ON FEB 2ND

The sale of Ben Coley's shop has unfortunately fallen through and the **general store/grocery part of his business will close on Saturday February 2nd**. The Post

Office section will remain open until May/June - or until the services are transferred over to our new venture.

INTERREGNUM NEWSPAPER SERVICE

Andy & Sharon at the Great Western have kindly agreed to give us some space to sell newspapers during the Interregnum. There are a number of contractual issues to sort out but we are hopeful that this service will be available in the near future. The Coffee Shop at The Western opens at 09.30 and newspapers will be on sale from that time.

INTERREGNUM HEDGEHOG SERVICE

Due to the closure of the shop, from the week beginning Monday February 4th, until our new shop starts trading in mid-April, the Blockley Cooperative Association will be providing **two additional free Hedgehog bus services to Budgens in Moreton on a Monday and a Wednesday** for anyone in the village who needs it. The existing scheduled service on Friday will be free to people who have either a bus pass or travel tokens supplied by Gloucester cc. The Schedule for each day will continue as follows:

Outward

Stop	Time
Paxford	9.17 am
Blockley Station Rd.	9.23
Blockley War Memorial	9.24
Draycott	9.30
Aston Magna	9.35
Moreton (Budgens)	9.43

(If necessary return to Aston Magna to collect additional passengers if they can't all fit on the initial run)

Return

Stop	Time
Moreton (Budgens)	12.03pm (or 11.47 if excess numbers)
Aston Magna	12.08
Draycott	12.13
Blockley War Memorial	12.19
Blockley Station Rd	12.20
Paxford	12.26

Please pass this information on to anyone in the community who you think may benefit from this service.

Many thanks to a BCA member for funding this service.

RE-FIT PROGRESS

We are in the process of applying for the necessary planning and Listed Building approvals for the exterior signage and interior alterations to the Coach house needed to convert the premises into our shop/café/PO. We are also applying for our alcohol licence and negotiating contracts with suppliers and organisations such as PayPoint and The National Lottery.

CONSULTATION MEETING

We are planning a public consultation meeting at the Sports & Social Club on Wed 30th January so that people can meet some of the management committee and tell us what they would like to see in the shop. Watch out for flyers with the details. Keep sending your ideas to Pam Merritt 01386 700199 or email pam.merritt@dial.appleinter.net or via the website at www.keepblockleyshop.co.uk/

VOLUNTEERS

Building work will begin in February and our business plan assumed a considerable amount of the refitting work would be completed by community volunteers.

Our project manager Toby Jones, tel: 07990575262 email: tobyjones@btconnect.com is now actively looking for people who are willing to give of their time and expertise between mid-February and mid-April. So please **if you can help, fill in the attached form** and post it to: Toby Jones, C/O Fulbrook Cottage, Brook Lane, Blockley, Glos. GL56 9HR.

FUND-RAISING EVENT

Don't miss **Richard Derrington's new show, "And now ...Ezekiel Taylor"**, at St George's Hall on January 26th at 7.30 pm. Tickets from: The Great Western, The Crown and 700405. **The proceeds of the bar and the raffle will go to the Save Our Shop campaign.** We hope that you will come up with more ideas for events to bring in a few more pounds. Every little counts.

BCA Management Committee Members

Chair: Chris Jury 01386 700468 chrisjury@btinternet.com

Deputy Chair: James Hunt 01386 701472 james.hunt@everymanlegal.com

Treasurer: Rob Willott 01386 700677 rgwillott@hotmail.com

Communications: Pam Merritt 01386 700199 pam.merritt@dial.appleinter.net

Post Office Liaison: Chris Walters 01386 700455 cdwalters1945@yahoo.co.uk

Staff Liaison: Margaret Bryan 01386 700500 mbryan@btinternet.com

Manager: Chris Grimes 01386 701719 cashtongrimes@aol.com

Retail Working Party:

Alan Thornton 01386 700387 post@alanthornton.co.uk

Tim Boddington 01386 701666 timboddington@aol.com

Dave Brown 01386 700043 davebrown2@aol.com

Mary Graham 01386 700320

John Baldwyn 01386 701198 john@baldwyn43.wanadoo.co.uk

Sharon Miles 01386 701374

[Note: The current Management Committee has been provisionally appointed to get the new venture up and running. We hope to expand and augment the committee between now and opening day on May 3rd 2008. In June a new committee will be subject to election by the entire membership.]

Some recent Press Coverage

£2,000 donation towards new shop

By MARK JESSOP

journal@midlands.newsquest.co.uk

FUNDRAISING for a new shop in Blockley was boosted last week by a £2,000 donation from a high profile local business.

The cash was presented to members of Blockley Co-operative (BCA) Association by Chris Markham, commercial director of Per Una at its offices in Draycott Business Village.

Chris Jury, chairman of the BCA, said: "We are delighted with this generous donation, which means that we have reached our minimum target of £30,000 in the first four weeks of the campaign."

But TV director Mr Jury, who played Ian McShane's sidekick Eric Catchpole in the hit TV series *Lovejoy*, added: "We need to keep the money flowing in so that any loans can be kept to a minimum."

More than 260 local people have already joined the co-op and individual donations from weekenders as well as full-time residents have enabled the committee to forge ahead with plans to open a combined general store and coffee shop in the spring. An official opening and village festival is due to take place on May 3.

The present shop and post office in Blockley is currently for sale and is expected to close soon.

The new co-op needs to raise £70,000 start-up costs to allow it to purchase a lease on the Old Coach



▲ Per Una executives handing over £2,000 in £20 notes. (L to R) Brendan Byrne (Per Una), Chris Jury, (BCA chair), Chris Markham (Per Una), Pam Merritt and Rob Willott (BCA committee members).

House in the village. The response from the community has paved the way for the co-op to apply for a £20,000 grant from the Village Retail Services Association (ViRSA) and a further £20,000 loan.

Proceeds from some local events, including a new show by Blockley actor Richard Derrington, to be held at St George's Hall on January 26, will be also go to the shop fund.

Per Una is the first local business to support the Blockley shop cam-

paign. Mr Markham said: "All the money raised by our regular Per Una sales goes to good causes where it will provide tangible long-term benefits for the community."

"The business plan for the Blockley shop is very impressive and we believe it will contribute to bringing the community together."

"Per Una staff are already regular patrons of the Great Western and The Crown and we fully intend to come and eat at the new café."



GURU: George Davies

Fashion guru backs store

FASHION guru George Davies has put his money behind a new shop in Blockley.

The designer has given £2,000 from his firm Per Una towards a shop, cafe and post office in the village.

Mr Davies, who runs the Marks & Spencer design label at Draycott Business Village near Blockley, is the first local businessman to support the community initiative.

The cash means the Blockley Co-operative Association has reached its £30,000 target in four weeks.

It can now forge ahead to open in April with a formal launch and celebration on May 3.

The association needs to raise £70,000 for a three-year lease on the Old Coach House.

Former *Lovejoy* actor Chris Jury galvanised the community into action with a public meeting.

He is determined to keep a village facility as the current post office and shop are closing.

Mr Jury, BCA chairman, hoped that other businesses would follow Per Una's lead.

He said: "We're delighted with this generous donation, but we need to keep the money flowing in so that any loans can be kept to a minimum."