

July Newsletter 2008

WEEKLY SALES GOING UP

The sales figures for the shop and café up to June 29 are very encouraging. We have reached close to £9000 a week – including PayPoint transactions – for the past three weeks, over 70% above the sales of the old shop and well above our forecast figures. Our day-to-day operating costs are close to budget and our trading loss is therefore less than forecast. Naturally we can't assume that this volume of sales will continue all year round, but it is a very good start, thanks to your support and enthusiasm. The café is very busy and our energetic and hard-working staff have already put on two lunches for larger groups. The menu will be expanded slowly over the next few months.

TRYING TO PLEASE EVERYONE

The shop now stocks over 750 lines and 50 new items are on order from 12 suppliers. Because storage is tight we have to order small quantities on a weekly basis which is why there are gaps on the shelves on some days. Calculating exact quantities of milk is particularly challenging, but so far very little has been thrown away. Popular lines include fig rolls, which are jumping off the shelves, fresh fruit and veg – the entire fridge-full is sold every day – Dorn Farm eggs and meats, high-priced wines, frozen fish from Tewkesbury and packs of Cheddar cheese. There is an enormous demand for sweets and snacks as well as cold drinks.

Some people have allegedly made comments about the choice and “balance” of stock in the shop. However, there have been only 100 or so written suggestions since the shop opened on May 3. Chris points out that it is easy to forget verbal suggestions made while he is cooking bacon so, PLEASE write down what you would like and he will do his best to find it. He is really keen to satisfy everyone if humanly possible. Alternatively, please contact Tim Boddington, who will pass on your comments.

So far, new items requested include bread sauce mix, fresh soups, decaff

ground coffee, dry yeast and frozen pastry and these will soon be on the shelves. Kippers, olive oil spread and some lines of Ecover products are now available and Heinz tinned sponge puddings are waiting for the customer who asked for them. However, a pâtisserie for small chickens would be too expensive to buy and far too hot to use in the already warm kitchen. And unfortunately white spirit can't be sold without a special licence!

NEW MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE ELECTED

All the candidates standing for election to the BCA management committee were elected at the AGM on June 15. The new members are Jenny Bruce, Martin Deacon and Rob Greenstock. Many thanks for the tireless efforts, stamina and enthusiasm of retiring committee members Chris Jury, Dave Brown, and latterly John Baldwyn, to whom we owe an enormous debt. They have all said they will carry on helping the shop in the background and John continues to handle the newspapers every day. Chris Jury's presentation to the AGM is available to download at www.blockleyshop.com

At the first meeting of the new committee Margaret Bryan was elected as Chair, James Hunt as Vice-Chair and Secretary and Rob Willott as Treasurer.

PROMOTING LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS

We have perfumes from Bella Scott, paperbacks from Chipping Campden bookshop, Gay Thompson's cards, Daisy Dix accessories and fresh flowers from Wild (Fridays and Saturdays). Please contact Chris Grimes if you have anything you would like to sell or display.

FREE SURFING IN THE CAFE

Free broadband access is available in the café and we have also been given two computers for general use.

MORE NEW STAFF

We now have a brilliant staff of 17 working on a rota system. Training everyone to deal with all the jobs, from baking bread and making coffee to handling PayPoint transactions is quite a task for Chris and his deputies, so please be patient with the staff while they are learning.

POST OFFICE UPDATE

Chris Walters is in constant contact with Post Office Ltd pushing for a firm date for starting our outreach service. We hope this will begin at the end of July, but we are waiting for the lawyers on both sides to agree the finer points of our contract. For instance, we want to be absolutely sure that the shop can offer services such as selling stamps and PayPoint when the outreach service is closed. Unfortunately the timeframe for that process is not within our control.

Don't forget that until the outreach is up and running the mobile post office will be outside the shop from 9-5 on Tuesdays. The van offers all the services of a main post office including pensions, currency, parcels, road tax and so on. Please make full use of this service to underline the need for the PO to get its act together quickly.

THE LOTTERY

We are continuing to put pressure on Camelot to obtain a lottery service, (which they are under no legal obligation to provide). We hope that our encouraging volume of trade will persuade them to supply us with a terminal under the terms of the company's community outlets policy.

MEMBER BENEFITS COMING SOON

The membership cards are being made and the staff are already trying the prototypes to make sure they work. The loyalty bonus point scheme will begin as soon as the cards are ready.

The bar and raffle at the September film night will be in aid of the shop and we are looking for ideas for membership events, like wine tasting or promotional parties. Jenny Bruce is co-ordinating the film night - and needs volunteers to help with the bar (phone 701357) but we would like to find someone to take on generating and organising a programme of regular events. One idea is to run an evening where people would bring their photos of Blockley so we can turn them into postcards and sell them in the shop. We need someone to mastermind this so, if you're interested, please contact Chris.

CO-OP MEMBERSHIP

The Co-op now has over 480 members including representatives of all parts of the parish and many weekenders. Some people thought they had

to join before the shop opened, so please tell your friends and neighbours that they can still become members. We would like to reach 500 members this summer. Forms are available in the shop or may be downloaded from the website at www.blockleyshop.com

SHOP OPENING BALLOON RACE

The winner was three-year-old William Dutton from Blockley whose balloon was found near Northampton.

Keeping the BCA membership list up-to-date

Would all members please keep us informed of any change of address, email address or other relevant details so we can keep our records up to date. Please drop a note or email to David Brown at Oates End, High Street, Blockley (davebrown2@aol.com) making clear what has changed.

BCA Management Committee Members

Chair: Margaret Bryan 01386 700500 mbryan@btinternet.com

Secretary: 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

Jenny Bruce: 01386 701357 jenny@jennybruce.co.uk

Martin Deacon: 01386 701970 martin.deacon@bt.com

Rob Greenstock: 01386 700410 dovedale.rg@virgin.net

Retail Working Party

Alan Thornton: 01386 700387 post@alanthornton.co.uk

Tim Boddington: 01386 701666 timboddington@aol.com

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(SCREEN READING VERSION)