

July Newsletter 2010

Planning for the future

We are delighted that the shop's lease on the Old Coach House has been extended to August 2013, but we naturally can't assume that the building will be available indefinitely.

At the moment the shop is breaking even and the café continues to contribute significantly to our modest income. This is in line with our original objective and enables us to be one of the few community-owned village shops in the country that is able to pay all its staff, rather than relying on volunteer labour. However, the management committee has come to the conclusion that we have to build our turnover so that we can invest in the future and secure our long-term viability. This may not be possible in the present building, as it is currently laid out.

At the AGM in May it was announced that the management committee had been looking at every possible option to secure premises for our long-term future. These options include working with the existing premises, adapting other premises, or building a new, designed-for-purpose shop and café on a number of possible sites. All these options are complicated and we will be seeking input from the BCA members and the village when we know more...

Staff changes

We are very sorry to lose Nicola, one of our popular assistant managers, who received an offer she couldn't refuse and has returned to teaching. Happily, Nicola will continue to help out now and then. Good luck Nick! Our new assistant manager will start work in August. As usual, our stalwart team of holiday helpers, Maisie and Annie, are back from uni and working hard at weekends.

Our New Honorary Treasurer

Oliver Lincoln is our new honorary treasurer. Ollie and his family came to Blockley from Hertfordshire last autumn and are staying in Northwick Park until they move into their new home on Greenway in August. Both the girls are doing well at Blockley school.



Ollie is a chartered accountant and worked for a listed company until two years ago when he decided to take a career break to support his wife's business and be more involved with the girls' upbringing.

We owe an enormous debt of thanks to Rob Willott, who has been a tower of strength and source of wisdom since the very early days of the community shop project. We are glad to say that Rob will continue as a

member of the management committee after taking a short sabbatical while his successor settles in.

Financial update

We haven't received the second quarter management accounts yet, but weekly trading figures indicate that the shop's financial performance has continued in line with budget and at a similar level to last year and our balance sheet remains strong. We expect the shop to break even this year but it is unlikely we will be generating surpluses to re-invest in the business.

Members' barbecue

We are planning a Members' Evening for all the family on Friday, Sept 10, 6-8 pm. There will be a barbecue with Old Farm meat and a veggie option and music by by Bill Castle and his band.

Tickets (£2) on sale at the shop soon. (First drink free)

News from the shelves

We have a new range of frozen ready meals using meat from Old Farm, Dorn, and cooked by Francis Green, who lives in Blockley. The first dishes include beef and sweet potato tagine and a beef and spinach balti. Francis will soon be extending his range so let us know if you have any requests.

Fruit and veg sales have been going through the roof. As usual the local asparagus was very popular and we now have more seasonal favourites including strawberries, raspberries and cherries. Harry has been bringing us a weird and wonderful collection of lettuces from his allotment.

Yvonne's scones with strawberry jam and clotted cream have been much appreciated in the café. The menu features Ploughman's lunch with Willersey cheeses and a delicious Patchwork chicken liver pate. New sandwich fillings include mozzarella, tomato and pesto.

We also have a new shelving unit to display gifts, which was made by Jeff Harwood from Greenway. Chris says they were so well made that he didn't want to paint them.

We have finally received a new council waste bin which stands next to the phone box. By the way, does anyone know who filled the phone box with large pieces of stone? And why did they do it?

A country shop-keeper's life

A newcomer to Blockley comes in quite often for a mobile phone top up. Her English is minimal and she can just about utter the words, 'ten pound top up please' in a very strong Spanish or Portuguese accent. Last week Libby was trying to find out what this hungry girl wanted to eat. She tried to mime sandwiches and baguettes but had more of a problem miming chicken tikka filling. Everybody laughed as she gave a rousing imitation of a chicken and then scrunched up her mouth to demonstrate the effects of a hot tikka sauce. Undaunted, Libby acted out the whole menu: from beef to tomato and tuna. Eventually she made a

breakthrough miming cheese, which the customer consumed with relish.

Thanks to Libby's amazing talent and persistence we now have a new regular!

The Lottery

Sales of Lottery tickets are still running at £500 per week but we will still have to increase this to £1000 if Camelot is to guarantee continuity of service after one year.

Emails and BCA membership list

We like to keep in touch with you by email if possible as it saves time and money and also allows us to communicate about urgent things between newsletters. If you have an email address and are receiving this as a paper copy it means we do not have your email address on file. To remedy this or let us know of any change of address, email address or other relevant details drop a note or email to David Brown at Oates End, High Street, Blockley (mail@davebrown2.co.uk)

BCA Management Committee Members

Chair: Margaret Bryan 01386 700500 mbryan@btinternet.com

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