

# Clapham Community Shop Ltd



## Shareholder Update

March, 2017

Dear all,

As we approach our second birthday at the end of March I thought I'd update you on some of the exciting things that have been happening to us this year and let you know about our plans for the future.

2017 started really well as we were nominated for, and received, the award for the Best Community Group in Craven in 2016. In our application we emphasised the role that the shop plays in the village, not simply as somewhere where people can shop but also because of the many other things which we offer such as the prescription collection service, holding the village hall keys, providing a collection point for the newsletter and oil collective and selling tickets for village events.



*Award winners at the Craven Community Group Awards ceremony*

We also emphasised the critical role played by volunteers and were able to support our application with lots of quotes from the volunteers themselves and customers.

We also started the year with a number of sessions attended by most of our volunteers. The Management Committee want to arrive at some priorities for the future and we thought that the volunteers would be a good place to start. There were three 2 hour sessions and a total of 28 volunteers attended. We looked at what they thought we did well and what was perhaps not quite so good and how we can improve it. The Management Committee will be looking at the suggestions later this month and I am sure that you will hear more about the report in due course. The sessions seemed to be appreciated by all and volunteers enjoyed the opportunity to meet up with one another and have time to discuss their work in the shop.

Our volunteers have also all signed an agreement which lays out clearly what they can expect from us and what we expect from them. This is regarded as good practice in the voluntary sector and it was good to have some constructive discussions with volunteers, making it clear what we feel our responsibilities are.

There was an altogether different tone at our volunteer social evening in February. The focus here was on thanking people for their time and commitment. Once again there was much chat but the tone was rather more light hearted. Stuart Marshall provided an excellent quiz to tease our brain cells and the conversation flowed in the way it normally does in Clapham.

Moving on to the shop itself, we have just taken possession of our much needed counter extension. The original counter still provides stalwart service but we found that when people have a 'big shop' the space to put items through the till is too small, making transactions even more complicated. The extension was, therefore, commissioned and installed, creating more room for baskets, improved display space and more room for storage. We are very grateful to the Kirkby Foundation who gave us a generous grant towards the cost of the extension.



*Wendy Jennings presiding over the new counter extension*

Great work has also been going on in the shop garden. Barrie Webster and Brian Jackson have taken on the challenge of what was a weedy and unloved space and the plan is to make it somewhere where we can grow produce to sell in the shop. There are now new steps up to the shed, three areas for growing and a path which is about to be gravelled. Please ask to see this work in progress if you come into the shop.



*New, safer steps*



*Progress on the path and beds*

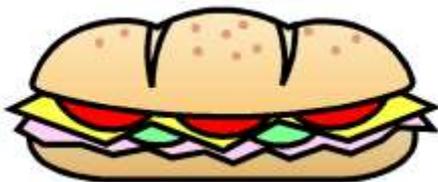
We are also looking at installing air conditioning in the shop and the upstairs office. Last summer (which was not particularly warm) revealed just how hot the shop itself can become once the sun is fully on the front. In fact, even in the winter months the sun can be strong enough to melt a chocolate reindeer – a very sad sight! In addition, the fridges and freezers have to work very hard to keep down to temperature in warm weather. This is not good for them and we had to call the engineers out a couple of times.



The stock also suffered in the back room. We take a pride in having a good display of fresh fruit and vegetables but this is a losing battle when it is so hot. Apart from the damage to stock we are very concerned to provide a safe and comfortable environment for both our paid staff and volunteers. The shop itself is difficult enough to work in in these conditions but the office upstairs is impossible. We have, therefore, sought quotes from three contractors. At the moment we seem to be looking at something around £7,000. Clearly, that is not money that we have readily available and so we will be seeking funding from other sources. If anyone would like to buy any additional shares to help us toward this total please get in touch - contact details overleaf. Every little will definitely help!



One final piece of news is that the Management Committee has decided to employ another member of staff. This is something of an experiment and the post is, initially, for 6 months. The major focus for this role will be to develop our takeaway food offer. We do sell a lot of this and feel that we could develop this area more effectively in house if we have a post dedicated to it. The post is for 9.5 hours a week and will operate across the lunch periods on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. We have carefully costed this out and we know that it will work for the first 6 months. Obviously, we hope that, if we are successful, the increased trade will pay so that the post can be extended.



By taking this approach, we hope to be able to provide an improved service for our customers as well as make more profit for the shop. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in this post please contact Helen at the shop. The closing date for applications is March 17<sup>th</sup>.

Finally, all of us on the Management Committee would like to thank you for the way you support the shop. We are all very happy to hear your views, ideas and suggestions so please feel free to contact any of us.

Once again our best wishes and thanks,

*Sue Mann*

Management Committee Chair

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Find us on 



P.S. Keep an eye on our notice board outside the shop for amusing approaches to marketing.

