

THE VILLAGERS' STORES
"At the heart of our community"



NEWSLETTER (February 2023)

Hello to you all, from Wootton Courtenay Villagers' Stores Board. This is another of our regular Newsletters, to keep you updated on progress being made on the Villagers' Stores front.

Shop Tenancy

We are so happy that Sarah Fox and Mark Burgess have agreed to take on the tenancy of our Villagers' Stores. Head of Terms were signed last month, this means that the prospective new tenants and the Board have agreed the key terms that will be included in the lease agreement. We have now commissioned a solicitor to draw up a formal lease which will reflect these agreed Heads of Terms.

We are hopeful that the shop tenancy will be finalised and signed off by April/May; the final agreement is dependent upon two key elements - both parties agreeing and signing the lease, and the re-registration of the Post Office in the name of Wootton Courtenay Villagers' Stores (see below).

Post Office

The new Post Office registration process is progressing well. We have passed the financial assessment stage and are now working our way through the suitability process – this will involve a formal interview in March. Sarah and Mark have already started their PO training (under Andy Giles' expert guidance!), to help ensure that they will be fully confident and competent in delivering PO services when they take over in April/May.

Shares and Fundraising

The Board is taking its financial responsibilities most seriously, and this area is taking up a significant amount of our time and energy. In the interests of existing shareholders and the wider village community, we must get this right. We have commissioned legal advice and are considering a range of fundraising options, but this is a complex area, and it will take some time.

We appreciate that, some months ago, a number of villagers expressed an interest in helping by investing in the Company and we are sorry that this issue is taking some time to resolve. However please be assured that we will be in touch as soon as we are ready to confirm our proposals.

Premises Issues

The Board met last week to assess priorities for important building works and refurbishment. The safety of our tenants and shop users is our key priority, therefore we are commissioning essential works associated with Fire Regulations. This work will be carried out over the next couple of months; it may be necessary to close the shop for 1-2 days and we apologise in advance for any inconvenience.

We are also going to have the front of the shop painted, it is in definite need of some TLC- Sarah is suggesting a change in colour scheme which we are very excited about, it is going to look great!

With all of our building projects, the Board is keen to use local contractors; and we are pleased to confirm that we are appointing local builders and decorators to carry out this work.

Open Evening

We are planning to arrange a session in the Village Hall, probably in April. This will give all villagers the opportunity to meet Sarah and Mark to hear more about their plans and aspirations for the shop, café/bar and Post Office, and also take the opportunity to share your ideas about what you would like to see.

Villagers' Stores Garden: Coronation Event

Even if the tenancy is not formally signed off by 7th May, Sarah and Mark will be coordinating celebrations from the garden (Andy Giles will be happy for this to happen). Please put this date in your diary; it will be fantastic opportunity for villagers to get together.

How to contact us

As ever, if you have any queries or concerns, or would like to contact us to share ideas you have about the future development of The Villagers' Stores, please get in touch using the email below.

Barbara O'Keefe

On behalf of the Board

Wootton Courtenay Villagers' Stores

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