

RADLEY VILLAGE SHOP

Serving the Radley Community

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www.radleyvillageshop.com

Annual report by the Chair of the Radley Village Shop Association

May 2011

In last year's report I expressed my admiration for how in a very short space of time, one full time employee and a highly effective and dedicated team of volunteers had transposed a small, compact unit into a viable and vibrant village shop. This year I can report that there has been no let up in the enthusiasm and commitment of our one full-time employee, our steadfast volunteers and the shop committee. Their skill and determination has ensured that the shop continues to go from strength to strength.

Despite one of the worst recessions the country has seen, the shop has continued to increase its sales, this year up again by 3.6%. Sustained confidence in the continued viability of the shop has enabled the committee to progress the most significant achievement of the year, securing the funds to purchase the shop lease.

Lynda Pasquire and other members of the committee have given generously of their time and expertise to successfully negotiate a grant of just under £27,000 from the Southern Oxfordshire Leader Rural Development Programme for England (administered by the South East England Development Agency), and have secured a mortgage for the remainder through Cooperative and Community Finance.

Transfer of the leasehold of the property is now complete, but we remain indebted to the generosity of our original benefactor, Graham Steinsberg, in providing the premises rent free for its first 3 years of operation. This undoubtedly enabled the shop to gain a foothold and build reserves, without which securing the leasehold would not have been possible,

As we are all too well aware, having experienced extreme weather in February 2010, the snow and ice returned again in December. This served to highlight once more the shop's role in providing a service to the community in times of need. In recognition of the shop's contribution to the parish, the Parish Council kindly agreed a contribution towards the costs incurred in purchasing the shop premises.

Moving with the times, an electronic Point of Sale (EPOS) system, grant funded by Awards for All (the Big Lottery Fund), was introduced in the latter part of 2010. This involved the Rota Manager organising the training of some 60 plus volunteers in a short space of time. True to form the volunteers were completely unfazed, and soon got to grips with this new technology. Shop space is at a premium, and the new system should enable us to monitor stock levels more effectively and ensure that popular products are always available.

Patronage of the village shop by the local community, visitors, and passing trade has enabled the shop to maintain its reasonable pricing policy. The shop continues to support environmental issues, helping to reduce the carbon footprint. Over the last year it has sought to increase the range of Fairtrade products, and to expand its range of locally grown fruit and vegetables.

And on the subject of the environment, the shop was subject to its first Environmental Health Inspection in July and achieved a very creditable 3 stars.

So we look forward to the coming year with confidence; never forgetting that it's the teamwork and generosity of so many volunteers that have made the last year's successes possible.

Mike Sadler
Chair of Radley Village Shop Association