

Dear Everyone

Christmas is fast approaching and so I'd like to take a bit of time now to give you an update from the shop and also to wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Post-Covid, trading has now returned to more normal levels and it was good to see visitors returning in numbers during the summer. Our new chiller cabinet has proved its worth, enabling us to display more of our freshly made sandwiches and to stock a wider range of snacks. Of course, we, like all businesses are working hard to manage the effect of higher costs and wherever possible we are trying to absorb these and keep our pricing at reasonable levels. We want to continue to make shopping local the best choice for those in our community.



Some of you will have attended our recent Christmas tasting event in the shop earlier this month. The two new festive flavours of Mrs Dowson's ice cream proved a huge hit, as did the truffle flavour crisps, the nuts and the fruit cake to mention just a few. If you didn't manage to make the event then do pop in to have a look – both at the Christmas food items, and at the range of gifts and cards which will soon include our own Tea Towel - printed with a pictorial map of the village. And of course, if you're not sure what to buy as a gift, we can make up hampers for you, or you might like to think about a gift voucher.

As touched on above, 2022-23 is proving to be a challenging year on the financial front. However, we have decided to use some of our reserves to make improvements to the premises to reduce our energy consumption. We will be installing solar panels, when Ingleborough Estate replaces the roof later this year, and we will also be fitting secondary glazing on the upstairs windows. We have been very fortunate in securing a £10,000 Lottery Grant towards these costs. In addition, we will be replacing the kitchen door with a stable-style door to improve ventilation in the summer months and undertaking various minor works and repairs to equipment and facilities.



We told you at the AGM that grants from our Community Fund had been made to four local causes (Clapham Age UK, Clapham Sustainability Group, Clapham Park Association and St James' Church). We are currently reviewing applications for a further issue of grants. Plus, we continue to support local causes with raffle prizes and to provide a collection point in the shop for the food bank.

The year has seen many new people moving into the village and surrounding area. Some of whom have already joined us as volunteers. As they've found, it is an excellent way to get to know people.

As well as volunteers to help in the shop, there are many other non-customer-facing roles to fill: At present we are trying to build a small team to take care of maintenance and DIY jobs when they come up. This is both people who have specific skills to offer, and those just happy to help out with a

paint brush. Also, we are looking for someone with some HR knowledge / experience to give us some ad hoc support.

If you are interested in helping with either of these roles then please get in touch with me and I can tell you more.

Finally, before signing off I'd like to thank all of our staff and volunteers for their efforts over the last year, and yourselves, our shareholders, for your continued support.

Harriet Naden

Chair of the Management Committee

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