



## Village Shop News Update

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Our hope that life would be returning to normal by the time this newsletter came out was a tad premature and, at the time of writing, we are still in the throes of lockdown with no imminent signs of any change to the regulations. Thankfully, the new system that the Shop Management Committee has put into play has been a resounding success and has enabled the residents of Sulgrave and the surrounding villages to continue to depend on the shop for their day-to-day needs. The substitution of face-to-face shopping with the placement of orders by telephone or order-form followed by collection or delivery resulted in a big increase in applications for shop accounts and we now have eighty new account holders on our books. Despite the inevitable fall-off in casual passing trade, sales have remained strong and our supervisors and volunteers continue to be as busy as ever. For the moment, the Post Office is open only on Monday from 9.00 to midday but it is now accepting parcels again. We hope, in due course, that Post Office opening times may be extended and the Management Committee is also looking into the possibility of gradually introducing limited face-to-face shopping so long as social distancing guidelines can be adhered to - so do keep an eye on the shop notice board, Nextdoor or Facebook for the latest information.

Supplies of some scarce items have improved considerably since last month and bread and cake makers will be very pleased that we now have a range of different flours (including pizza and pasta flour) in stock. Wine supplies have also picked up and some of your old favourites are back on the shelves. The Management Committee is constantly tweaking the system and the shop is now open from 9 am to midday on Sunday morning when it will also be selling freshly baked croissants. Order them in advance if you can.

The long-awaited upgrading of the shop interior is now almost complete. We have a brand-new central counter and storage fridge and the old, rather temperamental freezer has been replaced with a new split unit incorporating a chiller and frozen food display. Clive's wonderful trolley has been brought in to serve as a vegetable stand (see the photo on the Nextdoor site) and, all in all, the shop is looking extremely smart. Fingers crossed that everyone will soon be able to see the improvements for themselves. The new display freezer is well stocked with all manner of frozen foods ranging from king scallops to ice lollies and we currently have a range of ready-meals and other frozen products on special offer.

These newsletters regularly praise the volunteers for the effort they put into keeping the shop running. In these difficult times, they, and our hard-working shop supervisors, are especially deserving of our gratitude for ensuring that everything continues to operate smoothly. The Management Committee has been holding Zoom meetings every week to monitor the operation of the shop and constant adjustments are being made to improve the service. Many volunteers freely give up their time to collect supplies, accept and pack orders, manage the accounts, oversee stocks, update the information on social media, keep the shop clean and make deliveries to the vulnerable members of the community. Just remember when you next collect your order that a great deal of work, most of it unpaid, has gone on behind the scenes to provide this facility.

No big barbecues yet we fear but at least we can all savour a glass of wine in our gardens and, one hopes, enjoy some lovely June weather.

Digby and Alison