



Village Shop News Update

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The swallows have arrived so it must be summer. It looks as though we shall soon be able to invite lots of friends around to share a glass of wine or enjoy a barbecue in the garden. All we need now is good weather.

Thanks to the sterling input from our volunteers, we have managed to keep the shop running smoothly despite the fact that (at the time of writing) we are still a supervisor down. This hasn't been easy, and a number of our regulars have had to put in many extra shifts. This leads on to the attached *cri de coeur* asking for more volunteers to step forward. Please help if you possibly can. We would also be very happy to welcome representatives from the younger generation who want to add 'Community Service' to their DofE applications or CVs.

We are delighted to welcome Sara Findlay-Staples on to the management committee where she will take over the HR role from Andrew Elliot. Sara is hugely experienced in this field and has had a high-flying career in HR so she will be an invaluable addition to the team. We would like to thank Andrew for all he has done on the MC, especially during these current challenging times.

The Shop underwent a bit of a slump in sales early in the year – probably because we had to revert to a hub system and possibly because a number of very good customers left Sulgrave. Things are now picking up again and we hope that the new arrivals in the village will adopt the shop and give us their patronage. Although the shop is a 'not-for-profit' venture there is an ever-increasing number of outgoings and we have to break even if we are to remain operational. Just a few additional regular customers can make all the difference.

Wine sales have held up well throughout the lock-down (what else was there to do after all?) and, if previous years are a guide, as the weather warms up, there will soon be a move towards barbecue-friendly wines. So do keep your eyes open for some cracking bargains appearing on the shelves over the next few months. We have just placed an order for the hugely popular "The Pick" chardonnay which we sell at £6.95 (or, if you prefer, you can buy a bottle at the Hilton for £30!). It sold out very quickly last time we managed to get hold of some so you had better hurry before it is all gone.

The food bank appeal we mentioned last month has been a big success and was boosted by a very generous donation from the Barrettine Group whose CEO, Julian Anthony, lives in Sulgrave. Father Nick has prepared a list of requirements and the shop has made its first delivery of goods to the food bank. Many thanks to everyone who has contributed so far and please continue to support this worthy cause.

Between the 14th and 16th of May, the Plunkett Foundation, which helped to guide us in the setting of Sulgrave Village Shop seventeen years ago, will be mounting a 'Walk for Plunkett' challenge. The aim is to walk a minimum of 1000 miles in support of community businesses throughout Britain and to raise £5000 in order to help community groups that are battling to save endangered local assets such as pubs, shops and libraries. Plunkett's CEO James Alcock will be walking 30 miles on Friday 14th May and will be calling at various community ventures on the way. He hopes to collect a lot of supporters to join him on his walk and will be dropping in at Sulgrave Village Shop between 12pm and 2 pm. It is a great cause and information about the walk is available on <https://plunkett.co.uk/walk-for-plunkett/>

We have recently added chicken breasts, whitebait and soy & chili squid to our freezer food range and, on the fruit and veg counter, there is new-season asparagus and locally grown rhubarb. We have also added some new lines to our Porch Preserves range. We have just taken a delivery of new greetings cards so do have a look on the stands when you next visit the shop. With barbecue time upon us, we have bags of briquettes on hand to get you fired up.

Fingers crossed for a happy, sunny, Covid-free summer.

Digby and Alison