

**Chairman's Report Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**  
**21<sup>st</sup> AGM for the trading year 1<sup>st</sup>December 2018 to 30<sup>th</sup>November 2019**

This years has seen the refurbishment project completed.

We now have a fantastic new counter area, new roof and smart looking exterior.

The shop and cafe are blossoming, business in on the up, the facility is being used by various different groups and individuals' providing valuable community activities and services, ranging from the Young at Heart Coffee Morning, the Conversation Cafe to a monthly drop in with the village agent, plus lots in between.

The area's which have seen the most growth this year are the Cafe and The Arts and Craft section.

### **The Cafe**

Mousier La Soupe alias Ivan makes soup every Monday, he started with 5 portions weekly. His reputation as a Master Soup Maker soon spread, he now makes double the amount as well as stocking the freezer. He thought the soup would not be popular during the summer, he was wrong. Customer's still wanted soup made by Ivan.

Maggie Berry, sorry Lester is Head Cake Maker, baking cakes and other delights weekly. The customers are always eager to know what she has baked "this week", they also know they have to get into the cafe early in the week before the delights are sold out.

The Baked Bean Club Team do an amazing job. Not only do they feed up to 10 hungry children, they manage the rowdy adults who accompany them. I think the team really enjoy the challenge, especially when the customers sang happy birthday to an elder team member. The home made Thank You card says how much they are appreciated.

Thank you Ivan, Maggie, Paul, Carole and Alex and all of you volunteers whose contribution makes the Cafe what it is, a lovely, friendly, fun place for people to enjoy. You all work hard, our customer frequently tell me and others how grateful they are to have such a wonderful place within this community, they also come back for more and take time to spend their money. WELL DONE

### **Arts and Crafts**

The Rules of the Association state that one of the aims is to

- to sell and exhibit arts and crafts made locally

I feel that we have definitely achieved that this year, the Arts and Crafts area has grown significantly, we have over 15 people selling their ware, sales have gradually increased month after month, in December we sold nearly £600 worth of items.

This has been achieved by Dorota with her continued support, using her organisational skill to set up system and processes which enable the shop to operative the sales effectively to the benefit of everyone. The seller, the customer, the volunteer and the treasurer.

Her artistic eye means she works with the seller to display items and promote sales in an imaginative and interesting way. She has continues to do all of this while managing her own work commitments.

Thank you Dorota, you should be proud of what you have achieved, I am delighted with what you have created, you have planted the seeds to allow the Arts and Crafts too grow and flourish, which benefits everybody.

I also want to say a thank you to Lisa and Nikki who spent time turning the dresser into a perfect piece of furniture to display the Arts and Crafts on.

### **General shop sales**

**The committee discussed at length the possibility of selling re-fillable and more variety of organic produce, after lots of discussion it was felt that there are limits to what we can achieve with the space and resource available to us and agreed that there is a lot of opportunity in the wider community of Stroud for people to obtain these items. One of the cost challenges for the shop is “Best by Dates”, when we purchase items in bulk there is a high risk that we will not sell everything within the time frame, this then becomes a waste which = a loss.**

**We have spent time reducing the levels of waste during the last two years, this appears to have made a contribution to increasing the gap between sales and purchases.**

**We have also tried to reduced the amount of disposable plastic bags replacing them with paper, the introduction of the bowls for sweets helps us count quantities of penny sweets and use paper bags.**

### **Volunteers**

Another areas which has seen significant growth is the number of students wishing to volunteer at the shop as part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award. Currently we have students every weekday evening, at the weekend we have 3 on a Saturday and 2 on a Sunday, I also have 1 on a waiting list. Thank you volunteers for supporting these young people.

We have attracted some new volunteers during the year, they are now embedded into the team. That's great news, keep coming.

As you know we would like to have two volunteer per shift. We have during the year asked for your comments regarding how we might be able to address the challenge and have talked about different options, if anyone has a magic solution please share it with the committee.

Paul and Sally do an excellent job of managing the rota's. Thank you so much, I really appreciate what you do.

It was a great sadness to lost John Dunford, he made a massive contribution to the running of the shop, working away on an almost daily basis, in the background, with a smile and cheerful outlook. This has been a difficult year for you Mary, but she still manages to produce delicious jams, marmalade and chutney's as well as continuing to cover shifts, Mary, thank you for everything you do.

This brings me to the management committee, everyone has different roles, they form the cog that keeps the operation running. Without their continual support this village asset would not be here. We should be proud of what we have achieved in the past two years, transforming the shop and cafe into what we have today and ensuring that it will still be here providing a service to the community and playing it's role, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031; for the foreseeable future.

This means we need the support and desire of the whole community to ensure that future. We need people to volunteer, to access and use the facility, with that commitment we can continue to grow and blossom, as we have for the past 21 years.

I think the whole community should be proud of this amazing achievement, we are probably one of a few communities in Gloucestershire to achieve this, we were the third of the village community shop and cafe to open back in 1998, we are still run totally be volunteers, providing a 7 day a week service.

What are the aims for the next year?

The balcony project is in the early stages. We need to complete the planning process, this in it's infancy at the moment.

We want to look at the layout of the cafe area.

We need to recruit more volunteers to enable two per shift.

We need to maintain and grow shop sales.

We need to grow and develop the Arts and Craft area.

We need to enjoy and use this facility to the benefit of the whole community.

Any questions about what I have reported.