

Debden Village Shop
Report to the Annual Assembly – April 2018

The Shop is now in its 36th year. It continues to be a valued asset to the village and is still mainly run by volunteers, many of whom have served for a considerable time. A big thank you goes to all of our staff, for their amazing loyalty and support. The weekend shifts are covered by young people from our community. We have had a change this year, as Adam Roper and Lydia Tew have left to go to University. They both did sterling work and deserve our sincere thanks. We have welcomed Michael Collins and Anezka Gilder-Wood to fill their shoes. Without their help our Shop would not be able to open on Saturdays or Sundays.

The Management Committee of five would welcome any new members, who would be willing to contribute their skills and ideas, to ensure the on-going welfare of the Shop. Andrew Jenkins has served as a valuable Treasurer for several years and is now having to leave due to work commitments. We thank him for his great support in keeping us on the straight and narrow. Happily Lilly Barker has agreed to replace him and will assume the role shortly. Karen Roper remains our Manager and sincere thanks go to her for all she does.

Our budget remains extremely tight and the Committee is constantly looking at ways of attracting more custom within our financial boundaries. It is very sad that, although the village constantly claims that the Shop is very important, relatively few people support it in a meaningful way. If most residents could spend a small amount on a regular basis, the footfall and income would increase, and there would be more scope to improve the level and variety of stock.

Current proposals to separate the New Village Hall from the Shop are causing the Committee considerable concern. Major building works will be required to ensure that its safety and security is not compromised.

In conclusion, the following are some of the highlights from the year:-

- We're currently holding our own! However, the saying "Use It, or Lose It", is still very relevant.
- Our staffing levels continue to hold up. However, if the Shop is to maintain, let alone increase, its opening hours, further volunteers must come forward.
- We've installed an electronic card reader for cashless transactions, in an attempt to boost sales.
- Grants from Uttlesford District Council, arranged by Councillor Tina Knight, have allowed us to install new floor mats, a Stockroom freezer and a new cash register. We are extremely grateful for her on-going support.
- A Community Grant from the Post Office, arranged by Karen Alexander, has enabled refurbishment of the area opposite the Post Office Counter. New Post Office signage has also been ordered to promote it further. Sincere thanks to Karen for these initiatives.
- A trolley has been purchased to assist in the cleaning of shelving.

We look forward to seeing you soon!!!!

Nina Manser
April 2018