

## Village Shop Working Group

Report to the Parish Council Meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2017

1. The Village Shop Working Group was set up by the Parish Council at its Meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> September 2017, following concern about the delay in restoring a shop to the villages.
2. Membership of the Working Group: Councillors N. Livingstone and M. Wright and the Parish Clerk S. Read.
3. The Group's remit is based on the following minute:

*'5.7. The Meeting received the up-date from Justin Morris on Somerleyton Estate's plans for the Village Shop at the Forge Garage. The meeting was concerned that the timetable for its return has been further delayed. N. Livingstone proposed that as this is a vital resource now lost to the village, the Parish Council should look urgently and more broadly at how it might be replaced. M Wright seconded this proposal and informed the meeting that he was aware of the Plunkett Foundation which can provide funding for Community Stores. The meeting unanimously agreed that N. Livingstone and M. Wright should meet to progress this. The clerk will join the group to add her knowledge of possible funding streams.'* 5.7.

4. The Group has met three times:

### 4.1. 14/9/17 NL and SR

At this meeting, it was decided that an approach should be made to Justin Morris at Somerleyton Estate to re-state the Parish Council's concern at the continued delay in restoring a shop to the villages, and to discuss whether a collaborative approach may benefit the community. NL agreed to contact Justin Morris to request a meeting.

SR agreed to investigate what the Plunkett Foundation may be able to offer.

### 4.2. 3/10/17 NL, SR and Justin Morris

This meeting was positive.

There was broad agreement that a collaborative approach involving active community support would benefit both the re-establishment and the ongoing viability of a shop.

It was confirmed that the lead person for the Estate in this matter would be Justin Morris. It was agreed that the Forge Garage would be the best site for a Shop, at least in the medium term.

Justin Morris suggested that a Village Shop Working Group be established which drew from a broad base, similar to the successful Neighbourhood Planning Group. NL and SR realised after the meeting that they were not certain exactly how Justin

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Morris envisaged the composition and remit of this group. SR checked via email and received the following response.

*I think a representative from the Estate needs to be a member of the working group from the outset rather than the group negotiating with the Estate. This has worked well for the neighbourhood plan committee and I think more likely to lead to a potential way forward that works for all. I think it is important that the working group is independent from existing bodies such as the PC or SCA but with representatives of these bodies on it.)*

The meeting briefly shared some thoughts about how the collaboration may look in practice.

SR shared a document from the Plunkett Foundation which gives a comprehensive guide to setting up a community shop.

### 4.3. 16/10/17 MW and SR

This meeting was held to update MW, and to share information of local community-run shops. Local community shops are listed below, (with population served as of 2011).

Thurlton: (779 + 298 Norton Subcourse)

Upton: (702)

Neatishead (565)

As a comparison our Parishes have a population of 427. Like Upton and Neatishead we have potential seasonal tourist trade.

4.4. In addition to the meetings, S Read has visited the Community Shop at Thurlton, spoken to the part-time Shop Manager and made initial contact with the Chair of the Community Shop management group.

The shop is successful and makes a small but growing surplus which has been used to extend the retail area.

It is open 7 days a week, stocks a decent range of essential goods, fresh vegetables from Clinks Care Farm, meat, dairy and bakery items from local suppliers, newspapers, DIY hardware and seeds and alcohol, some from local breweries. The manager was interested in the possibility of another local community store as she has been told that this would cut delivery costs.

There is a tea/coffee machine, and tables and chairs where people can sit. This is popular.

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The store was set up with guidance and support (not financial) from the Plunkett Foundation, and is now a member, receiving ongoing support, information about funding etc. This costs £240 pa, and initially was paid for by a grant awarding body 'SOS Villages'.

The shop is staffed by a rota of volunteers and a paid part-time manager who herself covers a minimum of 10 hours per week.

The whole enterprise is managed by a group, who meet regularly. S Read will endeavour to find out more about this group before the meeting.

**5.** The Parish Council is asked to guide the working group in the following matters:

**5.1** A response to the proposal from Justin Morris in section 4.2 that a Working Group be set up which draws from a range of local interest groups.

**5.2** If the proposal at 5.1 is agreed, who would represent the Parish Council on this group?

**5.3** If the proposal at 5.1 is not agreed how would the Parish Council wish to proceed?

Sue Read  
October 17