



CBS Newsletter March 2022



In our last news update we summarised the results of the questionnaire circulated to members about a suitable patio cover, which Peter Roberts used as a basis for a suggested design. Our planning application is now with Exmoor National Park, having been reviewed by Old Cleeve Parish Council. The Council supports the application, with a request for a few technical considerations. Once the planning process is completed, we will gather information about likely costs and call a village meeting to give everyone (shareholders and non-shareholders) a chance to comment and feed into the final decision. We all recognise the importance of reaching a solution that is acceptable to the majority and within sensible budget limits, so please look out for posters with information on a meeting in the next few weeks.

The planned work on the café kitchen to address safety issues and improve layout has now been completed by experienced kitchen fitter Dave Swinburn, ably assisted by volunteers Andrew Benson and Steve Eggar. Many thanks to all three for their hard work and managing to complete the task in such good time. There has been a lot of positive feedback about the reconfiguration, which is not only safer but also far more convenient for staff, volunteers and customers.

As promised, a second till has been installed in the café, so customers no longer have to go to the busy shop till to pay for their coffees, and they can use this till to pay for items from the shop at the same time. The new contract gives us a better deal in terms of support and we also have new card machines that automatically display the amount, rather than staff having to key this in manually, thus reducing the potential for mistakes. Having a back-up system in case the main till fails is a further advantage, so we hope that all of this will enable us to provide a more efficient service.

We are working on improvements to the layout of information in the hub to make it more accessible and informative, so that it is better able to fulfil the social impact aims for which it was established. Rafi Pilcher is helping with this as part of his Duke of Edinburgh Award community service, bringing a valuable youth perspective. Other developments in the café/ hub include a fortnightly Tuesday Friendship Hour, launched by Mary Coles to which anyone is invited for coffee and chat, and possibly a game of Boggle! We hope this will be particularly appreciated by people living alone and not able to get out easily. Lifts can be arranged where needed. Sheila Robertson has been in touch with two local village agents and she arranged the first Talking Coffee Stop with Izzy Silvester at the beginning of February. This is to be a monthly Wednesday event, providing an opportunity for people to seek advice and support on lifestyle issues and services.

A weekly garden group, organised by Linda Bickford, one of our coffee shop volunteers, has also started meeting on Mondays, to discuss (guess what?) garden matters. The first one had some interesting ideas for planting around the recreation ground and encouraging youngsters to become involved, which will be discussed with the Village Trust Committee. Hopefully these will all become regular events and there will be more groups starting up.

Our business plan is due for updating, and the committee is just beginning work on this. It will look very different from the previous one, as we move from a fundraising and major development phase to one of consolidation and more gradual evolution, getting the right systems in place and moving forward with social impact and community benefit projects. As we are now in a reasonably stable financial position, we will be looking at good causes within the village requiring funding and support. Projects will need to be carefully selected, so we will set up a small working group to begin generating ideas and consulting within the village. We think the best approach would be for the group to comprise a mix of committee and non-committee members who have a strong interest in the community, and to start with small projects. Watch this space!

Sorry to say there is also news of two departures. Firstly, having been a huge support to us over many years through her management of the website, Ann Bernard will be stepping back from this role (though not from all the other things she does for the shop!). We have been talking for some time about redesigning the website, in the light of our move to the next phase of the CBS and shop and the availability of rapidly changing technologies, and Ann feels this is the right time for a new person to take this on. Huge thanks to Ann for all her hard work on this, which has kept the website looking fresh and informative. The second change is that Pat Gubbins is stepping down from the management committee in order to focus on the car scheme, which we know is a much appreciated but also time-consuming enterprise. The good news is that Pat will continue to support wider hub and community initiatives associated with our social impact aims, so she will still be working closely with us. We have very much appreciated her inputs to the committee.

A final piece of very good news, the Somerset High Sheriff, Thomas Sheppard, who visited the shop and café last summer, has honoured us with a High Sheriff's Award, in recognition of our achievements as a community project. The beautiful framed certificate is on display behind the counter in the shop.

Mary, Cherry, Simon, Di, Karl, Pat, Sheila and Bruce

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