

Longborough

Community Shop and Cafe

Spring Newsletter

2024



It is almost a year since the shop was in serious trouble. With the support of the village and the new team of staff and volunteers, we have managed to make the necessary changes to keep the shop open for another year and hopefully beyond.

Sales have improved and our customers seem to like what we have done to the place since the last AGM.

We will be holding our next **AGM in the Village Hall on Monday 22nd April at 7.00** and would love to meet our shareholders to provide an update on the shop and cafe over 2023.

We have already reached the end of the first quarter of 2024 and sales have matched our expectations for this period. The shop looks great and our team of staff and volunteers are doing a fantastic job. This Spring Newsletter has a little bit of the past, an update on the present and most important, and insight into our sales and some future plans.

A Bit of History

Last Summer we were visited by Clive Jardine and his wife Liz. Clive mentioned that his Grandparents **Vic and Lilly Knight** had lived in the cottage that is now our Cafe almost 100 years ago and they ran the shop next door for over 30 year. His mother was born in Longborough and grew up here before the war. In 1959, he and his brother lived for a short while in the old cottage with his parents and younger brother.

Clive recently sent me some photos of his family outside the shop and cottage taken in the 1930's and 1950's. Its lovely to see how the shop has survived all these years and is still here for future generations.



The first photo is of Clive's Grandmother, Eliza Lilly Knight (nee. Tuffley) known as Lilly or Lil outside the shop in 1930. You can see the front of the building was very different in those days, with no bay shop window and a separate door to the cottage next to the shop entrance. Above the shop door there is a plaque reading "W V Knight Grocer".



The above photo is of William Victor Knight standing in the doorway of the shop in 1932 with his 3 children and his sister-in-law in the next doorway.



These photos were of Clive's parents in 1950 in front of the new bay window of the shop.

The photo on the right is of Lilly in 1959 holding her youngest grandchild in the cottage doorway and you can just see Clive in the shop door.

The New Cafe Garden

If you have visited the shop over the past few weeks, you will have seen our old back yard transformed into a tranquil cafe garden seating area.

With the help of Stuart, we have cleared some of the storage sheds and made space for new garden furniture provided by Debra, Kathryn and Martin. Richard provided the trellis and Mandy and Andrew supplied all the pots and plants.

This new garden has been created by our community and is an exciting addition to our lovely Cotswold Cafe. We look



Before



After



forward to some sunshine and warmer weather when we can welcome you to join-in with ideas for planting. This year we hope to grow tomatoes and green beans for the shop, which will be fun and reduce some of our food miles!

Trading Hours

As another part of our preparation for the good weather, we are also now open longer every Saturday and Sunday.



For a limited period the shop and Cafe will now be open until at 4pm every weekday and Saturday and 12 noon on Sunday. We plan to run these hours for the next few months and see how popular it is.

You may have seen the new temporary signs around the village to encourage walkers and visitors to come and visit the shop.

We have had been very successful with our homemade soups over the Winter and have lots of plans to increase the choice of lunch options throughout the Spring and Summer.

Shop Layout

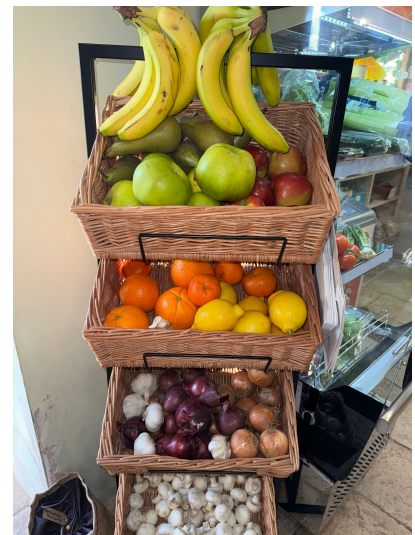
We are constantly looking at how we can improve the shop's range and provide great value for money.

Last month, we removed the papers from the shop floor and now have all our newspapers behind the counter. This has freed up space in front of the shop window to add a



new ice-cream freezer and new produce baskets for fruit and some vegetables.

We have also added a new bakery display stand on the counter and freshened up the outside baskets.



Staff and Shop Volunteers

We now have four permanent members of staff : Becky, Jo, Andrew and Kirstie who between them share the day to day running of the shop with Debra and Mandy, who are both volunteers. We also have two young people, Poppy and Georgie who work with us



on Saturdays, although we will soon be losing Georgie to touch football. However, we are looking forward to our latest recruit, Rose who will be joining us when she has finished her exams in June.

In addition to this incredible team, we also have a supergroup of about 25 volunteers from the village, who give anything from two hours on the odd occasion to regularly working full days to help keep the costs down and the shop open.

The shop could not survive without the support of these amazing volunteers.

They are all signed up to an on-line rota system that enables them to see if there are any gaps in the work rota when it is possible for them to come in and work for few hours.



They also communicate with each other through WhatsApp. Many of our volunteers didn't know each other before they came to work in the shop and volunteering has enabled them to meet so many more people from the village and make new friends. In addition to the Shop Volunteers, we have another network of villagers who support the shop in other ways.

We receive homemade cakes almost every day from our incredible team of bakers. Over the Winter we also had freshly made donations of soup every Thursday. We receive gifts of flowers, fruits and vegetables from allotments and gardens throughout the village and firewood from the nearby estate.

The shop and cafe are maintained and improved by Charles and Stuart. The window display is created by Anna every month and Anne Taylor regularly provides fresh flowers on the tables in the cafe and plants for the garden. There are so many people who give their time to the shop that we couldn't do this

without and of them.

It is a privilege to work with all these volunteers and supporters and we thank you every day for your support and ideas.



Shop Window

The shop window has become a regular feature of our little shop. Visitors often stop to have their photo taken in front of our Award Winning shop window.

Last month, Anna and Debra have surpassed themselves with their tribute to the Cheltenham Festival, followed by the Easter and Spring Window we have today.

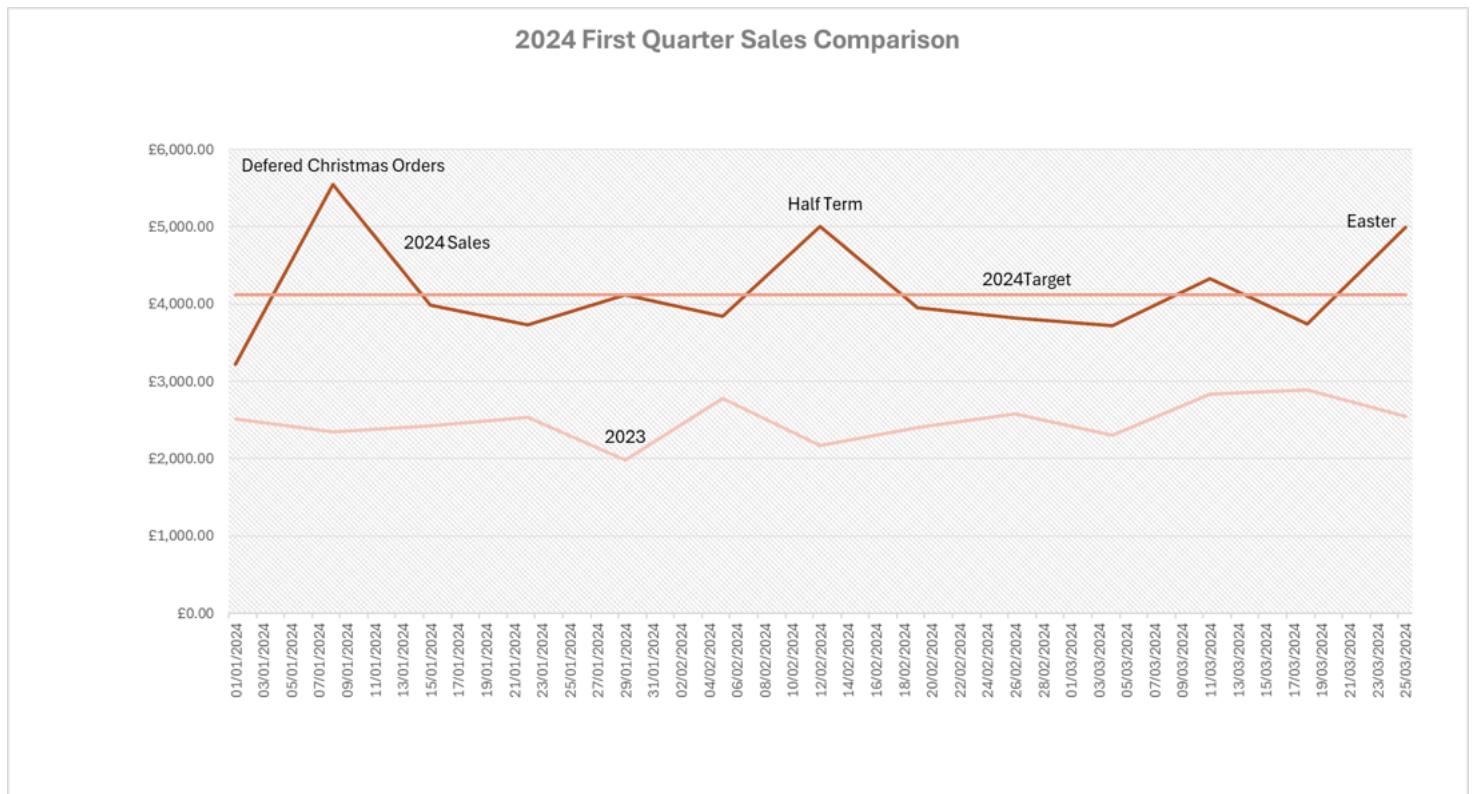


We also had the Hunt come through the village last month.

Now the weather is getting a little warmer, it is so nice to have walkers and visitors sitting outside our shop window again after such a long wet Winter.



Sales Report



The red line on the above graph shows sales so far this year against our 2024 (orange) Target average for Weekly Gross Sales. As you can see, we are currently “on target”.

We did have an initial boost in sales in January when we received payment for some of the Christmas Hampers and had another peak during ‘Half Term’ and in the recent Easter Holidays.

The weather has been very wet and miserable for much of the first quarter, so we hope to lift sales as we go into May and June.

Sales have been 60% up on the same period last year (pink) when the shop was open for shorter hours.

We have made some significant investments in equipment such as the produce chiller, ice cream freezer and shop displays in this first quarter, which has reduced our profits by almost £2,000. Despite this expenditure, the Shop and Cafe have made a surplus so far this year £2,790 compared to a loss over the same period last year of -£6,457.

This is all very encouraging for the future of our little village shop.

Thank you to all our volunteers and customers for your continued support.

Richard, Charles, Patrick, Mandy and Kathryn.

Longborough and Sezincote Community Shop and Cafe Committee.

