



Titchmarsh Village Shop Project

c/o 15 Chapel Street, Titchmarsh, Kettering, NN14 3DA
T: 01832 734568; M: 07786 408958 E:
jane.teague@mac.com

1st Annual General Meeting 26 July 2007 Report of the Chair

- We've come a long way since March 2006. Eight weeks from tomorrow, on Friday 21 September, Alan Titchmarsh will be here in the village to perform the official opening of Titchmarsh Village Shop. I'd like to reflect on the events of the past 16 months.
- Many of you will recall that the impetus for the Titchmarsh Village Shop project came about as a direct result of the 2005 Parish Plan, in which so many of the people who responded said that what they really wanted in the village was a shop.
- The Parish Council was charged with investigating this further and their enquiries led them to the idea of a community shop. Two organisations were found that helped villages looking to set up a community shop: one of these was The Shoparound Project where we met Sue Moxon, and the other was Village Retail Services Association, (ViRSA), represented in this area by Ian Toye. Both Sue and Ian were guest speakers at the Public Open Meeting in March 2006 from which the committee was formed. Both of them believed, from the very beginning, that a community shop in Titchmarsh was a viable prospect. They attended our first committee meeting to point us in the right direction, and without their initial enthusiasm, encouragement and belief we may never have made it off the starting blocks. They have continued to support and advise us along the way. Thank you both.
- Some 16 months ago we began the long process of applying for grants to fund the project, as well as generating ideas for our own fundraising efforts. I know that some of you here tonight have also been involved in the process of applying for grants on behalf of other village organisations and I'm sure you can testify to the amount of effort that goes into this process.

Some of the funders' applications we have completed have been relatively straightforward, some more complex, and others downright exasperating! I remember driving all the way to Norfolk to hand deliver an application to meet the deadline, having spoken to the fund manager at length by telephone, only to be told a week later that the project didn't meet the eligibility criteria! We have been fortunate and have had more successes than failures with our many applications – or perhaps that's just my rose-tinted recollection now that the process is almost complete. We have successfully raised £87k from external funding organisations.

- Our own fundraising events and donations from within the village have raised an additional £7k and we're very grateful to everyone who's supported us by attending events and making donations to the project. You may recall the wonderfully successful Bingo Night and Silent Auction last summer, the Autumn Fair, the Line Dancing Extravaganza in April this year followed by the Open Day & Food Fare in May. We've certainly had a great deal of fun along the way.

- One line of expenditure that has perhaps surprised us is the amount we've had to spend on legal and professional fees, which has exceeded our initial budget estimates. Some £6k has been needed to cover fees for planning drawings, footpath drawings, building regulations drawings, planning applications, building regulations, a structural survey, building inspections, DDA access audit, advertising consent, and to the Financial Services Authority, solicitors and NCC Highways Department. Peter James, our treasurer and a very experienced chartered accountant, has controlled our finances and written our business plan with great professionalism. I would like to thank him for the considerable amount of time and expertise he has dedicated to the project.
- TVS project officially became TVSAL in September 2006, a legally constituted IPS registered with the Financial Services Authority and bound by our own constitution. Peter James will cover some of the obligations in his report.
- In February this year the Youth Committee, chaired by Daniel Ward-Williams, held its inaugural meeting. This group of young people is producing some really exciting and innovative ideas. We're delighted to have them on board and to have younger members of the community represented on the project. They are currently working on ideas for the opening day celebrations.
- The Committee organised a Health & Hygiene course in March, here in the Clubroom, for all those who have volunteered to work in the shop. A few hours of intensive training, made very enjoyable by the professional tutor, was followed by an examination, which all those attending passed with flying colours. Certificates have now been issued to confirm this.
- Mid-May finally saw the start of refurbishment work on the former engine house and Jackie Rowe will give details of this and progress to date in her report. At the same time, with the project now a tangible reality, shares in the Association were offered for sale to members of the public.
- We started to generate some media interest this year with an article in the Nene Valley News, followed by a mention in Country Life, interviews broadcast on Radio Northampton and Northants 96FM, and several articles in the Evening Telegraph who are following our progress with interest. Local television will also be present when the shop opens on 21 September to record Alan Titchmarsh's visit.
- We have now advertised for the post of Manager and Assistant Manager, both of which are paid positions. The closing date is tomorrow, 27 July. A free workshop for volunteers will be held on Sunday 9 September. The aim is to give ownership to the values underpinning the way the shop is to be run and to allow volunteers to express views on what support and training they think they need.
- Once the refurbishment works have been completed, we will be organising community decorating and gardening parties to complete the interior of the building and revamp the Pound garden next door to the shop. Anyone who would like to help will be welcomed with open arms – being handy with a paintbrush or a spade would be useful but by no means essential, in fact, enthusiasm is the only requirement! Home cooked food will be provided. Please see any member of the committee if you would like to be part of this.
- Finally, the Committee would like to thank Titchmarsh Parish Council and all our supporters for the assistance and encouragement that have enabled us to progress to this point. Thank you for believing that it was possible.