

Our Website has grown

The RGVS website now has a full summary of the business plan, a downloadable membership form, useful links, frequently asked questions and much more.

www.rushlakegreenvillageshop.co.uk



Join today

If a membership form does not accompany this newsletter please ask a member of the Campaign Group or email rushlakegreenvillageshop@googlemail.com

Village Shop Campaign News

Newsletter for the local community campaign to keep a shop in Rushlake Green

Issue 4

We have a plan

At the village meetings on September 11th and 13th, residents learnt about the progress made by the campaign group in putting together firm plans for creating a community shop if no suitable buyer is found. Jamie Fairbairn, Jonathan Austin, Ian Collett, Clyde Young and Mike Smythe summarized our **Rushlake Green Community Shop business plan**. The document was created so that, in the event that the shop is not sold, the village will be able to act quickly in approaching banks, charities and fund-holders for financial support to buy the shop.

Three possibilities

When the auction of Daws Stores takes place in October, there are three possible outcomes

- 1) Shop bought by someone eager to take on the shop**
- 2) Shop bought by an investor, eager to develop the property potential but keen to lease out the shop**
- 3) Shop doesn't reach reserve price (guide price £350k)**

Our favoured outcome has always been the purchase of the shop by someone keen to take on the shop and develop in a way that maintains and builds its value to the local community. However we have to be conscious of the fact that this would be a fairly high risk venture for those concerned, particularly in the current period of uncertainty for property prices.

If the shop is bought speculatively, the developer will probably be able to divide the building into one or two residential properties but is unlikely to get change of use for the shop, which could therefore be offered for lease. If this is the case the village needs to be ready to take on the lease and reopen the premises as a community shop. If we can show a widespread community support, the developer is likely to look favourably on this option and offer a reasonable lease period.

The final option is the most challenging for the village. If Daws Stores does not reach its reserve price at auction we would need to raise the full purchase price, or close to it, and take on the whole building. In this scenario, to offset the considerable loan required for the purchase, we would need to develop part of the building and either sell it or let it. **If you know someone, or several people, who might be ready to loan us the money to buy the shop, please let us know urgently.** All the options, and the plans for running the shop, are explained in detail within our business plan, copies of which are available on request.

We need your contributions

If, to save the shop, we are faced with the challenge of outcomes 2 (lease and run shop) or 3 (buy and run the shop) we will need to prove that we have very strong support from across the community of Rushlake Green, Warbleton and the surrounding areas. On the next page we explain how you can support the campaign for a community shop by joining the campaign and by indicating what you might be able to contribute should the need arise.

Join our campaign today. The more members we get the greater our chances of saving the shop.

In a nutshell . . . our challenge . . .

The future of the last remaining shop in Rushlake Green is in danger. The village, and the wider community, faces losing its centre of gravity. The whole community agrees that every effort should be made to save the shop from closing. The only option open to the community, if a suitable buyer is not found, would be to take it on and run it as a community shop. To achieve this, two possible routes can be considered. Either buy the shop or lease it. The success of the whole enterprise now depends on contributions, both financial and through time and effort from the community, without who's backing as members, the campaign will not reach a satisfactory conclusion.

Why a community shop?



Across the UK, there are around 170 towns and villages just like Rushlake Green that have successfully established community shops. The experience seems to be that whereas small shops often struggle to stay in business, community shops manage to grow their business and provide a sustainable solution to local needs. Visit our website:



www.rushlakegreenvillageshop.co.uk and read more about how shops in villages like Sulgrave (above) with only 400 houses, can still make a go of it, when fully backed by the whole community.

A shop catering for your needs . . .

To be successful, our community would need to be good at providing goods and services that really match our needs as residents. Our initial survey indicated that the most popular improvements were things like:

- Better range of locally produced items
- Wider range of fresh fruit, veg and produce
- More convenient opening hours
- Wider range of breads, some baked in the shop
- etc.

Our research indicates that simply be being more responsive to local needs in ways like these could considerably boost takings in the short term. Longer term we would also consider bolder ideas for putting the shop on the map.

An example would be to provide 'own grown produce'. With the possibility of use of the land behind the shop for veg growing by village volunteers, we could offer shoppers the possibility of the lowest food-mileage veg in the UK!

But these are just some initial ideas and we would want everyone to have a chance to have their say.

A shop for all reasons

*a traditional local village shop
run by the community, for the local community
valued and trusted by all its customers
active in bringing the community together*



Warbleton Horticultural and Poultry Society annual show on Rushlake Green 2008

Become a member

The most important way that you can contribute to the campaign immediately, is simply by becoming a member of the Rushlake Green Village Shop Campaign Group. This only costs £25 per person and every single extra member adds to the power of the message we can send out to anyone with the ability to support our project.

After just a week, we already had over 100 registrations for membership – Use the form opposite to show your support by joining too.

Contribute financially

Another way many residents are offering to contribute is through loans or donations. All we are asking for at this stage is a rough indication of the level of contribution you might be willing to make. This is important because it helps us calculate how much we would need to raise through commercial loans and charitable grants. The form on the right has spaces for you to indicate this.

Contribute you time

Whether it's offering your expertise to refurbish the premises, or assisting with deliveries, or serving in the shop, your time could be the most valuable contribution you could make to the project. The form opposite also has space for you to give an indication of the areas where you might be able to donate your time and effort.

Act now

We have between now and early October to encourage as many people as possible to support our campaign and become members of the Community Group. Each member of the family can become a member and many of us are encouraging friends and colleagues who know and love Rushlake Green to join us in the campaign.

Our community of support is growing every day

170 people came to our first awareness meeting. Around the same number came to our recent fund-raising meetings. 174 individuals have logged onto our website and we've had a total of 350 hits to date. We have more than 80 people on our email list. 130 people did our survey and offered ideas and support. And to date we've already received more than 100 requests for membership with more coming in daily. So:

JOIN TODAY

The campaign for a Community Shop in Rushlake Green



Membership application – make a difference

Please indicate below the extent that you are able to invest your time and/or money and add your name and address & comments where indicated:

1. Making a contribution to become a Community Group Member.

Yes, I would like to become a member of the Rushlake Green Village Shop Community Group by purchasing a “share” for £25 Tick boxes as applicable

I am paying by cheque made payable to **RGVS Community Group**

I am paying by cash to a member of the RGVS Campaign Group

I understand that (a) the first 1000 members will be recorded as being Founder Members of the group, and (b) if the Community Shop does not proceed and the campaign folds I will be entitled to a refund of my contribution less operating costs which will be spread across the membership as a whole.

2. Areas where I could invest my time to support the project

I believe that I could be of help with the setting-up and/or running of the Community Shop in the following way:

Helping to run the shop	Helping set-up the shop	Help in other ways
Counter work <input type="checkbox"/>	Retail design / planning <input type="checkbox"/>	Customer research <input type="checkbox"/>
Pricing/stacking/unloading <input type="checkbox"/>	Shop fitting <input type="checkbox"/>	Buying / sourcing <input type="checkbox"/>
Making deliveries <input type="checkbox"/>	Electrical / electronic work <input type="checkbox"/>	Local products/produce <input type="checkbox"/>
Collecting from Cash & carry <input type="checkbox"/>	Building & decorating <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

3. Additional financial investments

I have indicated below the likely amount of donation and/or loan that I would be prepared to make to the RGVS Community Group if the plans for setting-up and running the Community Shop and the terms of the loan were to my liking:

A donation of: £100 £250 £500 £750
 £1,000 £2,500 £5,000 £10,000 Other £.....

A loan of: £100 £250 £500 £750
 £1,000 £2,500 £5,000 £10,000 Other £.....

Name

Address Post Code

Tel Email

Additional comments

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This form can be given to any of the following members of the Campaign Group:
 Jamie & Catherine Fairbairn (01435) 830 502; Ian Collett 830 263; Jonathan Austin 830 280; Clyde Young 830 059; Nigel & Farideh McKeeman 830 574; Andy Long 830 164; Mike Smythe 830 955; Christian Jervis Read 830 248; Monica Adams-Acton 830 489.

Or, alternatively posted to Clyde Young, Pond Cottage, Rushlake Green, Heathfield, East Sussex. TN21 9QN