

THE FUTURE OF SPEEN STORES AND POST OFFICE – JULY UPDATE

Following our report in the Village Messenger of 2 July 2020, and the enthusiastic response received from villagers for the continuation of the shop and post office, the Speen Stores Crusaders have set up a Working Group of villagers with a range of relevant experience to take this work forward. Members are Adrian Farley, Peter Johnson, Henry Lane, Sandy Mitcheson and Nick or Fleur Ridley. It is the intention to co-opt others with specific expertise when the need arises. The Group met for the first time on 16 July, with Speen Stores Crusader Sue Wakefield as Acting Chair; it will meet again in early August.

The Working Group had received and reviewed a considerable amount of useful information, including the views of villagers. The status of the post office as a Community Post Office was noted as an advantage. Discussions were wide-ranging and included a review of the lease which Bob Templeman has negotiated with Buckinghamshire Housing Association (BHA), running until September 2021. Members of the Working Group hope to meet with Bob and Ali very soon to discuss workable solutions to enable the shop and post office to continue. The Working Group acknowledged the enormous contribution which Bob, Ali and the team have made to Speen and its community over the last 12 years and particularly during the Covid 19 lockdown.

Discussions will also take place with representatives of BHA to ascertain their plans for the building and to ensure that they are aware of the serious interest which the village has in the shop's future.

The Working Group discussed the potential for the village to form an entity to manage the shop in the future. The Plunkett Foundation <https://plunkett.co.uk/> has a range of models to organise and manage community ventures, particularly shops. The establishment of such a venture is a major task and would require funding.

The Working Group is keen to make solid progress and is positive about the way ahead. They will ensure that villagers are kept informed of developments in a timely manner.

If you have any questions please direct them to spenstorescrusaders@gmail.com and we will answer them to the best of our abilities.