

SPEEN STORES AND POST OFFICE

When we moved into Speen in August 1979 the shop opposite was run by Ann and John Cross. Although the petrol pumps were still outside from the era when Keith Jones's family ran the shop they were no longer in use and at that time



Keith and Sharon Jones lived above it. The Post Office sold sewing materials, sweets and toys and was located opposite at The Old Post Office. Bread was still baked locally at Bakery Cottage on Chapel Hill.

Several different people ran the shop over the years till it finally closed in 1989 at which point Buckinghamshire Housing Association acquired the site and developed the social housing in Laurel Close along with the shop. In 1998 the shop was opened again with Sharon and David running it. (There is more information about this including a video at the Speen Village website).

The "It's a useful little shop" sign, designed by pupils from Speen School, still hangs outside today. Since 1998 the shop has been run by several people and the tenants were able to sublet the upstairs to hairdressers helping pay the rent to the housing association up until it was sold by Ali and Bob.

In October 2021 Ruban and Vicky took over. They have spent a lot of money on the shop, upgrading it and increasing the range of products. However, the upstairs could no longer be sublet to the hairdressers which had a significant impact as the hairdressing business not only helped pay the rent but brought in people from outside Speen who also used the shop.

Ruban and Vicky not only sell locally made bread and meat supplied by Kings but have also majored on selling fresh fruit and vegetables. Two mornings a week Ruban travels up to the Western International Market



at Southall in the early hours to buy from the wholesalers. The fruit and veg he sells are superior in quality and more inviting to that sold by the local supermarkets and particularly the supermarket home deliveries. The

mangoes and avocados, for example, must be the best for miles around. Ruban also provide fruit and vegetable boxes that can be delivered to local homes or collected from the shop.

When Ruban and Vicky took over the shop and Post Office it was many months before Ruban could become a Sub Postmaster due to Post Office bureaucracy. This meant he could not earn any income from the Post Office until the process was finally completed.

The Post Office offers an extensive range of services including everyday personal and business banking, travel money ordered online and collected from the branch, postal services including collection and returns.

We still have the benefit of a village shop and Post Office however many people use it infrequently or not at all. For some it is a point of return for unwanted online purchases or to buy a newspaper.

This is making it increasingly difficult to earn a living from the shop particularly with the current financial challenges. Unfortunately, this may mean we lose our shop and Post Office all together. With neither a pub nor shop we will all miss out.

Speen is frequently described by estate agents as a "sought after village community" and this may well add a premium to the value of our homes. The shop is a key part of this and to keep that going we all need to use it.