

Woodgreen Community Shop Newsletter

Easter Opening

Good Friday	6.30 – 13.00
Easter Saturday	6.30 – 17.00
Easter Sunday	6.30 – 11.00
Easter Monday	6.30 – 11.00

Non Shopper?

... Oh no, I cannot believe it!

Our recent customer satisfaction questionnaire may well have dropped through your letter box and, if you returned it, many thanks. It's always good to hear from as many people as possible, regular shoppers or not. We also like to give our newsletter a wide coverage across our local villages so that we can keep everybody up to date with who we are and what we do.

We all have our own established shopping habits, and lots of differing reasons for them. You may not be a customer of ours - this might be because you may have tried us in the dim and distant past and found us wanting in some respect, or you have changed your shopping routine, or we are just not on your radar.

We are always seeking to improve what we do. All we can ask is that you give us a try, or another go if you have not been in for a while. You will find we have a very wide range of products and services, with a very strong local bias, excellent quality, value ranges, and a cheery atmosphere. As the local banks close one by one, you can use our Post Office for just about all your banking needs. We've great greetings cards and gifts too. And just look at our convenient opening times.

Please pop in, our free car park couldn't be more convenient, and have a wander. We feel sure you will find something to tempt you and hopefully become one of our regulars.

A brief word from Nikki of Nikki's Little Cake Company

You may have noticed the absence of my cakes in the shop of late. After 9 years of delighting you with my range of cakes and desserts, I am now indulging in other interests. So a big thank you to all of my lovely customers who have bought, ate, shared & loved my products over the years.

The Managers' bit

We hope you are all enjoying some better weather and the lighter mornings and evenings.

Easter is later this year but don't forget to call into the shop for your hot cross buns and croissants for Easter weekend breakfasts. If you have visitors for the weekend then why not



preorder your pastries ready for you to pick up. Easter chocolate is a must and we will have hand-made chocolate eggs from New Forest Chocolates, chocolate lollies and of course Cadbury mini eggs! There is a fantastic selection of Easter cards for you to send to friends and family.

Easter lunch....A great selection of meat from Hale Pig'n'Poultry and Prices, be it joints or burgers, we've got it all. Fish too, from the local smokery in Fordingbridge. Cheese to finish with and we have an excellent range to choose from, including Lyburn and other local cheese.

Don't want to cook? Then why not try one of our frozen ready meals from 'Love Food', which are proving very popular.

Look forward to seeing you all over the Easter weekend.

Julie and Sue



“Love Foods” - we certainly do!

We have been looking for a good quality range of frozen meals for a while now and, after an initial hiccup, we really believe we have found a winner in the frozen meals stakes.

Love Foods are a local company, just over the border in West Sussex, whose mission is “*to make high quality meals which provide all the nutrients and flavours of a home cooked meal, but with the convenience required for busy lifestyles*” (<https://lovefoodreadymeals.com/>).

Made in small batches with local ingredients their meals have “*100% flavour and 0% nasties*”... **no artificial colours, flavours or preservatives**. Most of the meals are microwavable.

For every meal purchased, Love Foods donate the cost of a meal to the charity they support in Kenya, helping children in need with food and education. Amazing, and supporting our wish to help charities wherever we can.

Having said that, the meals still have to satisfy your palate, your purse, and your lifestyle. We have tasted the product, and are really impressed, and we are pleased to be able to sell the meals at £3.99p.

The range is extensive and alongside **Chilli Con Carne**, **Chicken Jalfrezi**, and **Thai Green Chicken Curry**, we can offer **Cottage Pie**, **Fish Pie**, **Steak and Ale Pie**, **Beef Stew and Dumpling**, and a range of vegetarian options including **Vegetable Madras**, **Butternut Squash Lasagne**, and **Macaroni Cheese**.

We really do recommend you give this new range a try. It's in the chest freezer on the right just after you enter the shop, just past the ice-creams. We are sure you know where they are!

David



Check out the Love Foods range in our frozen foods freezer (next to the newspapers)

Your Shop Needs You, and you, and you...

Our well-oiled machine, otherwise known as your lovely local shop, needs one heck of a lot of effort to keep everything in sync. Our team of volunteers provides loads of help across a whole range of things from shelf-stacking, car-park raking, back-office computery, van collections.., and all points west.

This plea for your help and time is for Newsletter Distributors...particularly if you live in Hale, Breamore or Godshill.

We produce 3-4 newsletters per year and have always had Woodgreen pretty much covered. We also distribute shareholder information at AGM time but here the numbers are much less.

More recently, we have been trying to cover the whole of our neighbouring villages too. Frankly, it's a worrying sight, seeing Ron off in the van, never sure if we will ever see him again. They have both seen better days and.., well, it doesn't bear thinking of. We would have to call an EGM...

It would be great if we could rely on 2 or 3 volunteer distributors for each village. Then we could divide up the territory into manageable chunks; we would give you your newsletters and off you go. Your reward? An invite to our annual Shop thank you social event, and our undying love!

Anyone, for playing at postie?

David

Customer Survey and Focus Groups

What an amazing response! Nearly 200 of you took the time to fill in our customer opinion survey; 40 sat around Carole's kitchen table for up to 2 hours, not all at once of course, to discuss in detail your views of our Shop and Post Office. Thank you, one and all.

With so much information at our fingertips it would be unwise to rush to judgement on what we can do to enhance your shopping experience - without throwing the baby out with the bathwater of course...

The first step was to share the results with the full shop team: managers, staff and committee. All are now applying their expertise, assessing what's practical, and how best to pursue your great ideas.

Among all the love and positives about the Shop/PO as it stands, you gave us much to consider. From potential projects to minor tweaks, all will now be looked into. Indeed, eagle-eyed customers will have already noted some significant developments.

For starters, we have already addressed your concerns about the car park. You said you love our meat, but asked for more choice. Done! You commented on the freshness of our milk, and we now have this stored in a new chiller. We are also actively looking into our fruit and vegetable offer.

Obviously there is still much to consider, and we promise we will report back again when we have completed our review. Thank you for your help.

David, Carole and Steve

We're on a roll...

"If you taste a crust of bread, you taste all the stars and all the heavens"...with apologies to Robert Browning.

In our recent survey and focus groups discussions you told us that our extensive and tasty range of bakery products is one of the top reasons you pop in, more or less daily, to shop with us.

That's why we take delivery every day of fresh bread and bakery from Cottage Loaf Bakers, just down the road in Fordingbridge, where bread has been baked since 1900. Sliced, unsliced, white, brown, large, small... you name it, we stock it.



Bread from Cottage Loaf, Hedgehog and Bakehouse 24

And now Cottage Loaf are sending us delicious filled rolls to add to the long-standing range from Pandora's bakery.

At the upper-crust end of the market we continue to supply various sourdough and yeasted breads from Long Crichel bakery, in nearby Dorset, who use organic ingredients and bake in wood-fired ovens - orders by Wednesday please for delivery on Friday. Go on, spoil yourselves at the weekend!

More recently we have added fine bread from newly established **Bakehouse 24**, in Ringwood; artisan bakers using locally milled flour to bake really tasty breads, including their ryebread. Have you tried it with the trout pate yet? Shame on you! We can take your order for BH24 to avoid disappointment.

And last but certainly not least we have our trusty early-starters, Norman and Derek opening up at 6.30 every morning to freshly bake our in-house loaves, rolls, baguettes, croissants, pain-au-chocs., maple pecans and Danish treats, plus an organic loaf and olive bread.

Your main beef with all of this is that we sometimes run out. Well, we can help you solve this by taking orders for your bread, or dipping into our store of frozen bread, rolls, croissants etc. We will give you baking times and temperatures and off you go. Is there anything nicer than the aroma of home baking?

And when we don't run out by the end of the day, we always reduce the price on any leftovers. You can't lose can you?

David

Where have all the Banks gone?

"... long time passing" as Peter Paul & Mary would have said when they sang about the flowers, the young girls, the young men and the soldiers way back in the 60s. This was before my time I hasten to add, but Ron gave a memorable rendition of this folk song in the shop last month.

Indeed the banks have disappeared from the High Street one by one, but do not fear, we have our very own "Bank" in Woodgreen and it comes in the form of our Post Office.

We can cater for some of your basic banking needs if you are a customer of NatWest, HSBC, Lloyds & Barclays, to name a few.

So do not despair and hot foot it to the Post Office counter to draw out cash, to pay in cash and to pay in cheques (subject to availability - check with us).

We look forward to making life a little bit easier for you.

Nikki

Not a Shareholder? Invest in your Community Shop

When the Woodgreen Community Shop Association was formed in 2006, with the aim of saving the shop from closure, many local people bought shares as a positive sign of their commitment to the project, help raise funds, and to have an ongoing say in how the shop was run.

These shareholders continue to play a vital role in the oversight and governance of what we do; their views and support, as expressed at the Annual General Meeting, are vital. Some of those original shareholders have subsequently moved away from the area and, sadly, some have died. We would like to maintain and even increase that local involvement with the shop.

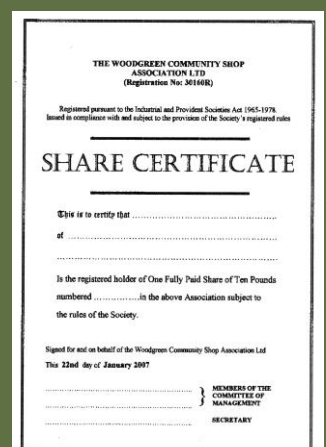
Did you know that if you are not a shareholder already it's never too late to become one? Each person can hold one £10 share, including your children or grandchildren. What a lovely and imaginative gift.

All you have to do is collect a form from the Shop, give us all the usual details - name, address etc., with cash or a cheque made payable to *Woodgreen Community Shop Association*, and return it to:

*Sue Manktelow (Secretary),
Woodgreen Community Shop,
Hale Road,
Woodgreen,
Fordingbridge,
SP6 2AJ.*

Having the backing of a strong group of shareholders is vital to the future of the shop and its sustainability. The funds add to our reserves, your support is much appreciated, and we always love to hear your views.

Welcome Aboard!



Wonderful Woodgreen Wines (or WWW for short)

Chairman Ron has only gone and done it again!! He's sourced three cracking value 'bin end' wines! Well, maybe a little credit should go to Graham at New Forest Wines.

In at entry level; a lovely Chilean **Manutara Carmenere** from the Maule Valley. Plump & fruity (*leave Reg out of this Ron!. Ed*) yet balanced with that spiciness you'd expect from this difficult to grow grape. £2 off normal price so only £6.99 in the shop. Try it on its own, but it does match with such a variety of food from practically all the meats through to spicy dishes and cheeses. Versatile or what?

Next, at a whopping £5 off normal price, is '**Monsters' Reisling** from winemakers '**Some Young Punks**' in Australia (Jen Gardner, Colin McBryde, Nic Bourke – look em up!) This wine from the Clare Valley is just off dry. Some might say a touch sweet but your Chairman is still talking about his first taste – "nectar". He says it was still on his palate 10 minutes later (*he was probably still glugging. Ed*). Try this at £9.99 - let me know what you think.

Last but not least; a fine **Fiano di Avellino** from the heel of Italy. Lots of stone fruit flavours and texture. So much quality here for £9.99. Get David to invite you round for a glass while he tells you what to do with your Helebores.

Take note! These offers are bin ends. When they're gone, they're gone. So many customers discover them too late and blame yours truly when they run out! And please - just moderately chill these lovely whites. It's not ice cream.

Ron



Cider vs Beer

For a small village shop we stock a large range of cider and beer much appreciated by our villagers. Have a look through the range next time you go to the shop:

For cider lovers:

- New Forest Cider (in 3 different flavours)
- Thatcher's Gold
- Stowford Press

And for beer drinkers:

- Ringwood (of course) in 5 different varieties
- Downton: New Forest Ale, Dark Delight, Honey Blonde
- Hop Back: Summer Lightning, Typhoon, Crop Circle
- Marston's Pedigree, Wadworth's 6X and Mackeson Stout
- Doom Bar (our Cornish special)
- San Miguel
- Stella Artois, Carlings and Leffe Blonde

So what do you think? If your particular favourite is not there please let us know and we will see if we can get it for you.

Whether you are a beer cider or lager drinker, please keep drinking sensibly and get your supplies from your wonderful village shop.

Reg

Become a Happy Shopper

...how to beat the inflationary blues (**think Yellow!**)

Do you remember the headlines: "*Morrisons raise price of Marmite by 12.5%*" - not to mention the 10% rise in Coleman's English Mustard and the stretched Toblerone? Well, we don't have to remind our canny customers that inflation is back, after a remarkably long period of stable grocery prices.

Among other things, blame has been laid on the shrinking pound and the awful weather in Southern Spain, where a lot of our fresh food comes from, all year round. As a Community Shop, we are not immune from any of this, and the intense competition between the Big 4 and the Discounters, makes our job of providing you with the products and services you need particularly challenging.

The advice from us, if you want to beat the Blues, is to look for the Yellows! Our main value offer is "Happy Shopper", with its distinctive yellow labels (clearly showing you the lower price you will pay). We have other value ranges too, flagging their offers with a yellow stripe.

It's a long list: from tinned tomatoes and vegetables, to jams and biscuits (custard creams!), to cling-film and freezer bags, cooking oils and foils, soft drinks and firelighters, to cleaning products, bleach, washing up liquid and kitchen rolls.

We all have our favourite brands, but sometimes it pays to try something cheaper. If you are cooking a stew or soup would the Happy Shopper tin of tomatoes suffice? Would anyone know you had used something a bit cheaper? If you need jam for a sponge or cake, would the Happy Shopper strawberry jam be just as good and tasty?

You might be a convert already, but we hazard a guess that many of you might not have noticed that we frequently offer a value alternative to our main ranges. Even in our small shop we are giving you choice, and a fighting chance to offset inflation.

So don't be Blue, look for the Yellows!

David



Some of the great value products from our Happy Shopper range

Woodgreen Community Shop & Post Office

Hale Road
Woodgreen
SP6 2AJ

Telephone: 01725 512467

Email: wgcommunitystore@btconnect.com

www.woodgreencommunityshop.org

www.facebook.com/WoodgreenCommunityShop