

Dear Resident,

You may have seen that the Standlake Village Shop and Post Office is up for sale. It's on the market as a going concern, but nevertheless many local people will be worried about its future. To safeguard our village shop, one option that may be worth considering is that of the community taking it on and running it as a social enterprise - like, for example, the Appleton Village Shop.

Community-run shops can make a real difference in all kinds of ways - promoting local foods, having a real feel for what local people want to buy, catering well for all parts of the community from the youngest to the oldest, generally 'going the extra mile' - and acting as the heart of the village. Typically, a community-run shop is set up as a local co-operative, and is run by a team of enthusiastic volunteers, often supported by a paid manager, and research shows that a business like this has a 95% chance of long term success. There are 20 community-run shops in Oxfordshire, and many of them are very long-established - in the case of East Hanney it's still going strong after 33 years.

But while the idea of local residents taking on this kind of project may be exciting and appealing, it isn't easy - especially when, as here in Standlake, it isn't just the business that's for sale, but the freehold of the premises (including the flat upstairs). That means that a *lot* of money would have to be found. That would be a major challenge, but it doesn't mean it's impossible. And the sale of the business presents us with a really important chance to think about whether we, the community, think we could find a way to make it happen.

As a first step we'd have to get some idea of how much interest there might be from in and around Standlake. Do you think this could be an idea worth exploring? What might the obstacles be? Would you like to get involved in some way and if so, how? Do you have skills and experience that might help to get the ball rolling?

If you're interested, come along to an open meeting at the Village Hall on Sunday 10th February at 3.30pm and let's see what we all think. Your input would be warmly welcome.

Best wishes,
Linda Watson