

Weald News

Week beginning 20 September 2017 – Editor: Sue Gidman, wealdnews@hotmail.com

History in the making

This special edition newsletter is to mark an extraordinary day in the village and one I thought needed to be marked...read all about it!

Weald Community Shop, a new beginning

As the sun rose this morning, 20th September, a group of eager shoppers waited for the opening ceremony, a blessing and cutting of the ribbon at 08.00 to mark the beginning of a new chapter in Weald's History - the opening of Weald Community Shop.

I'm not sure exactly what propelled Ian and Linda Walker to come to the open meeting on 24th July in the Memorial Hall to discuss what might be done once The Old Bakery closed and Barbara retired, BUT it was certainly life changing for them both.



By the end of July they had made plans to open a 'pop up' shop in the Memorial Hall for the month of August, gathering the support of the villagers as they went. The Memorial hall offered plenty of space to stretch out and people soon took advantage



to buy the basics and to have a cup of coffee and a piece of

cake and I'm sure I'm not just talking about myself. I'm hoping that Ian and Linda will be setting up a loyalty scheme soon! At the beginning of September the whole operation moved up to the Church rooms for a couple of weeks while the 'cabin' was delivered and prepared!



Over the past week the 'cabin' had electricity and a water supply installed and, over the past few days it was 'all hands to the pump', fitting shelves inside and a new counter for the coffee bar and till made out of 'scraps', a vegetable container for the fruit and vegetables outside replete with its own fake grass and a ramp which was built with a masterly display teamwork.



The colourful new logo combines all the elements that were present from the outset. The rainbow colours represent a rainbow that appears in the sky as the rains pass and the sun comes out - a new beginning; the entwined hearts are for the feelings of the community joining this collaborative effort and, of course, the loaves represent the shop and the



cup of steaming tea, the cafe.

There are now 90 volunteers on the rota, each giving 2 hours of their time to help in the coffee shop or to work behind the till. The Newspapers and bread fly off the shelves and, now that the new shop boasts a fridge, bacon, sausages and yoghurts are offered as well as milk.

Ian, wearing a biscuit coloured coat, is channelling 'Arkwright' although the shop is not 'open all hours' and Linda certainly doesn't resemble Granville!



As the sun rose higher, Hilary Allen who little knew what she started when she called the meeting in July, shared a few thoughts and then Rev. Mandy Carr blessed the cabin, Ian and Linda and all who had had a hand in this new beginning. As I sat having a Bucks fizz at 08.30 I looked longingly at the cake but realised that I'd just

have to come back at coffee time! Mum and I have made a new set of cards and hope that you enjoy these new ones along with all the other goodies provided by the shop. See you there!!



Opening words: Hilary Allen

I begin with the following quote by Henry Ford 'If you think you can do a thing and if you think you can't do a thing, then you are right.'

The 24th July saw the birth of a commitment from two people, and promises from dozens more to volunteer to be part of a concept – a concept to form a shop! Heads, hearts and hand began to engage and the goodwill trail like a touch-paper was almost tangible.

The volunteers number about 90 and that's before one counts the very immediate response from local businesses for the larger tasks that have required skilled knowledge and craftsmen.

But let us remember who is cutting their way through virgin terrain and creating a pathway for those who follow – Ian and Linda Walker with extraordinary grace and inspiration have demonstrated hard work, enthusiasm and a willingness to listen. At every stage they have responded to their supporters with gratitude, respect and courtesy. Never before have I witnessed such widespread goodwill demonstrated at every level.

Herculean effort has gone into bringing this shop to this point today and it's all been made possible because this band of amazing volunteers have delighted in following the ideas and requests from these two people who made it a pleasure to say 'Yes, we can.'

So thank you Henry Ford and congratulations to Linda and Ian and Team Weald.

Blessing Prayer for the cabin:

Rev. Mandy Carr

In the name of Jesus we dedicate this cabin for its use in the community of Weald.

May it be a place of welcome, where people from this community can feel a shared sense of belonging. We bless its atmosphere with joy and peace, so that friendship can grow between people and new friends are made; may there be harmony between all the volunteers and the customers.

We bless Ian and Linda in their roles as Managers; we bless them with strength when they are weary, wisdom for their decisions and hope and excitement for the future. We bless them with everything they need for this project and for time off too for relaxation and renewal.

We bless everyone who volunteers their time, work or talents here, in enterprise and service. We bless the business side of this project so that it will flourish and we give thanks for all that the members of the community can share with one another.

We bless this community with more of God's presence and the commitment and resources to grow the vision for this project for the future.

In the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. AMEN