



## Talk about John.....

Having lived in Essex from the age of four John has had a variety of occupations ranging from a trainee chef, the goods-in manager at Asda and that of a qualified plumber. However it is in his workshop that he feels most at home, never happier than when using excess stock items to make cake stands, bird boxes or wind chimes that are then re-offered for sale in the shop. His latest venture is a range of cup and saucer candles that I'm sure will prove very popular when the shop re-opens.

## The Last Word .....

Last week, Val, Ian and myself had a lengthy discussion, in the open air I hasten to add, about when the shop is likely to re-open and the measures that need to be put into place ahead of this time.

Steps are being taken to prepare for this, however rest assured that until the level of risk to both staff and customers is at an acceptable level the shop will remain closed.

Peter Blackman, has offered to assist with advice as to what measures will be necessary, calling upon his experience with the South Woodham Ferrers Health and Social Care Group.

Please keep safe, take care and I'm so looking forward to seeing you all when the shop re-opens as and when the time is right but in the meantime should you need any help or assistance "you have my number".

# **Talking Shop** Issue 8

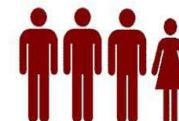
June 2019

Well here we are towards the end of lockdown and thankfully there have been no casualties from Covid-19 amongst our own staff. For this we must be thankful but not lose sight of the fact that this pandemic is far from over.

I did mention in one of my "Breaking News" cards that the trustees felt that we should play the waiting game before making any decisions as to when the shop might re-open. Personally I feel that the price to pay for opening too soon could be much greater than the penalty to pay for taking our time.

With the opening of some of the major charity shop's branches it will be interesting to see what mistakes are made and learn from them, also there will be good practices that we can adopt thereby saving us the trouble of re-inventing the wheel.

It is interesting to see that the WHO has changed its stance on the wearing of face masks and as such when we do re-open there should be far less resistance if we insist that as well as the staff all customers visiting the shop will be required to wear a face mask.



## **Mister Gees**

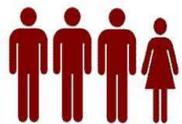
*Foundation*

When you return to the shop you will notice a few physical changes in the rear area, this is to ensure that the fire brigade officers observations pointed out during their recent inspection have been implemented. All of the extinguishers have either been serviced or replaced and the necessary signage put in place.

Between now and when we return a risk assessment survey will need to be carried out and drawn up followed by a number of training sessions undertaken in order that we all fully understand the risks and how best to keep safe.

There will also need to be changes to the way that donated goods are stored and sorted in order to comply with the recommendations as outlined by the minister of health, but again I'm willing to look at what other charity shops do and learn from them. My prime concern is your safety and that of our customers. Even if the shop only makes one quarter of the profit that it did last year it will still be a worthwhile exercise.

Referring back to the WHO advice, I have seen online a number companies selling face masks and whereas I would favour a face shield for the staff it might pay us to be offering face masks to those customers who arrive at the shop without any protection; these could be sold at less than one pound each including a pair of disposable gloves.



***Mister Gees***

*Foundation*

Registered Charity No. 1181204

This next week I intend to get into the containers outside and have a good sort out in order to create space for the deluge of donations expected when we do re-open, although hopefully if we are later than some of the other charity shops in town they might get the goods rather than us.

Whilst talking about the containers they have been leaking for some time now, not a lot but just enough to cause some deterioration to the goods stored in them, but as we don't own the containers or pay any rent for them complaining to the "landlord" is a bit off, so consequently I've ordered steel sheeting and timber in order to make them completely watertight and this will enable us to use them more effectively.

Fortunately in establishing the university scholarships the way we did there will be no disruption caused by the shop's closure. Newcastle, Plumpton and Stirling have been given twenty five thousand pounds each to cover a five year programme, this was done so that they would have at least four years notice of any cessation of funding. I will post on the website details of the latest recipients of the awards.

To date the shop has raised far more money than I ever envisaged so the lack of income this year should only be looked upon as a hic-cup, hopefully when all this is over we can carry on and continue to provide the charity with funds to create even more scholarships and put money at the disposal of the Village Group for use locally, after all the message that "charity begins at home" is still as strong as ever and continues to make the foundation different.