

Mustard Seed AGM, 15 November 2024

Managers' Report – Katie Foot and Karen Vogt

The shop was open all year, from 9am to 1pm Mondays to Saturdays, and in December we were also able to remain open until 4pm Tuesdays to Saturdays.

We were very sad that, having supplied us with books and cards I think since the Mustard Seed very first opened, The Lighthouse in Highworth closed at the end of January 2024. We greatly miss the help and advice we received from Malcolm and Val Swift over nearly 25 years since Malcolm became manager. We were, however, able to buy some closing-down stock and re-use some of the shop fittings, so our customers soon noticed the re-vamp, which has made our shop much more colourful.

We have made a new arrangement for ordering books and cards through the Cornerstone Centre in Grove, which has worked to both shops' advantage, as Karen has been able to order some fairtrade food and gifts for them, which all helps with minimum orders. Our thanks to Sarah Shewring, the manager at Cornerstone, for being so helpful.

A stall was held in the Corn Exchange on Faringdon's Big Green Day in June. Blessed Hugh church also has a sale after Mass on the first Sunday of each month, and St Denys, Stanford in the Vale has held several this year again as well. The Big Bali Bonanza in the Corn Exchange last November was a great success and made up for us not being able to offer hampers since Traidcraft closed down. This will be repeated on Saturday 16th November 2024, 10am-2pm, so please do come along and stock up on Christmas presents!

As agreed by the Management Committee, one grant was given from the charity account to a particular case of local medical need. There is also a grant still pending to All Saints' for 50% of the cost required for planting one or two new trees in the churchyard, but a decision is awaited from the District Council/Town Council about this work.

Our shop staff are wonderful and so reliable – as is Kath Thacker, who keeps us in clean towels each week. We were delighted to welcome Jessica Paixão Duarte to the Monday (and occasion stand-in) rota, as Katie Dyet decided it was time to step back for a while. We are also very appreciative of our window dressers for their attractive displays, and of Lois Chell for her hard work keeping the books in order and arranging for the accounts to be audited by Alder Demain Akers free of charge. Thank you all!

We remain very grateful for the support from members of all the churches in Faringdon and the Vale, both as volunteers and customers – long may that continue!

KMF/06.10.2024