

## Update on Linda's Stores – 10 June 2018

We wanted to post and update the village on our progress.

Reading through the lively conversation earlier this week {on *TatsfieldTalk*} regarding the shop, there were a few points we wanted to cover.

Progress on the shop building works: behind the front doors there has been much activity, the internal staircases have been removed and all of Linda's card room and stock room opened. Steels are on order and over the next 2-4 weeks we will fit them and knock down the wall between the two shops. See below pictures we have taken of the newly cleared out space in the rear shop areas.

We are looking at our options for replacing the front of the shops and want to find a good joiner to work with. Do you have any recommendations in the village or nearby areas?

Who will be running the shop: by now, we had hoped to be able to confirm who this would be. As mentioned by one of the community, whilst Vanessa and I are committed to seeing a success made of the village store, as the freeholders, we will not be managing the store ourselves as it is not our area of expertise. We have spread the word to other local Village Stores that the premises is available for let and have been following up on a number of leads. We have had some interest from individuals, but currently no-one has confirmed that they want to take on the shop. We are continuing to research and explore every option to get this finalised as soon as possible. This does mean that you are going to have to continue to be patient, we really are doing our best. Retail is a tricky business and particularly difficult for independent owners with profit margins being squeezed by the big supermarkets. Therefore, taking on a premises is not a decision which can be taken lightly. We are committed that this continues to be a local village store, however this decision (whilst we think it is in the best interests of the village) does limit our options; therefore it might take longer to find the right person/business with the experience to take it on the shop.

Option for a temporary store: we have obtained advice from local retail experts who have confirmed that a temporary shop is not a viable option. Retail profit margins are currently very tight, and if not run with a long-term view not only is it hard to find suitable suppliers, but would very likely make a significant loss. It would also divert our attention from the building works, which have to be our first priority due to a) the poor condition of the building at purchase and b) the financial risk that comes with that.

Progress made so far: we are very pleased to be able to confirm that we have now completed works on both 1st floor apartments. They have been fully refurbished and our first tenants moved into their new home this weekend. We are very proud of the quality homes we have built and we will continue to work to finish the full building renovations by the end of August 2018. (pictures below). If you are interested in renting a two-bedroom apartment, or know anyone who might be, please message me directly.

Lastly, we want to reassure you that we are working hard to complete the renovations and find the right solution for the shop. Our priority is to do the work properly, and secure the future of the shop for the long-term as a trading business for the community. We know how important this is to Tatsfield, it is one of the village's hubs and sorely missed since it closed. We appreciate your understanding that these things take time when they are done properly and we are doing our best. We will be in touch again as soon as we have more news.

Best wishes,  
Pippa & Vanessa - 10 June 2018

