

I am sure that you do not need reminding here that so far 2020 has been quite a challenging year for all of us. Who would have thought that 6 months go we would be approaching Christmas with festive facemasks looking as though they will be the most popular stocking-filler?

This year has been no less problematic for us here at Brundall Home Hardware. As we entered lockdown we had an initial flurry of gardening and DIY purchases but we were soon forced to close as we ran out of key lines and were unable to restock from our suppliers. During the following weeks Alison and I worked alone, with delivery support from a band of Brundall volunteers, to take telephone orders and make home deliveries. It was quite tiring but we were able to start to re-establish the business and serve our customers in the best way we could.

Our staff were on Furlough for a good period of time and this valuable Government support helped us to recover a little bit financially. By June we were once again able to welcome customers back in store although, we had made some significant changes to the shop to ensure that we maintained high levels of Covid safety.

We also intend to make further changes over the coming weeks to make the shop more accessible minimising our high standards of Covid security. More information can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

The availability of stock has been a problem for some months now. We are very grateful to our suppliers who have worked tirelessly to ensure we are able to obtain necessary supplies. However, we continue to experience difficulty, along with many other retailers, in obtaining some paint lines, timber and Calor Gas. We have also discovered supply issues with lines where you would not expect a problem, such as some suet products for bird feeding. Where we have struggled to obtain stock we have tried to source alternatives.

We are very grateful to all of you for the words of encouragement that we have received and the support that has been shown for our business. Like all businesses we have been financially hit by the Covid Crisis and we continue to work to find ways to serve our community and hope for the ability to do so for many years to come.



A redecorated shop front ready to welcome customers back in through our main entrance.....

The value of local business.

Many of our shopping habits have changed over the past few months and the on-going Covid Crisis is also creating a sense of uncertainty. This is having a direct impact on many small businesses across the country. This impact is being felt by businesses in Brundall and also here at Brundall Home Hardware.

Every business has a financial model which helps to ensure that it remains solvent. This year these models have been severely tested, with additional expenses to ensure that they remain a safe place for customers to visit. The crisis has also naturally encouraged an increase in on-line shopping which has reduced trade for local shops. You will have seen many reports lamenting the demise of the High Street and the concerns for future recovery. Whilst there are many advantages to on-line shopping there is an impact in other areas which may not be so obvious. Local independent businesses serve their local community, they typically employ local staff creating job opportunities. They provide a personal service where questions can be answered and problems solved. You have the chance to interact with a person who typically wishes to help and ensure that you leave the business happy. No frustrating on-line chats or waiting for telephone support.

Local business means local. You can walk to a local shop. There is no expensive packaging to be processed. The cost of distribution is reduced and the number of delivery vans in our villages can be minimised.

Local business also means support for village groups and charities. The charity raffle is frequently supported by donations from local businesses.

You may also be surprised to discover that local business means local value. I have been price checking some of our basic products against major on-line retailers. You could well be surprised to discover where the cheaper price can be obtained? Local supermarkets also offer local value. So whilst our shopping habits may be changing and the Covid Crisis may have hastened this change, it is important to remember that the life of our villages can be enriched by a thriving village centre. How many villages can boast the number of small businesses found in Brundall and Blofield? Please do help to keep our shops here for the future by visiting where you can and keeping a little bit of your expenditure with businesses which serve your local community.

By purchasing your pet food at Brundall Home Hardware or enjoying some refreshment in our village Coffee Shops you help to keep a bit of village life here and now and for future years.

Reasons to Shop Local



When the shop fully reopens in October we hope to have started to display some of our Christmas lines.

Already on display is our very popular range of Brundall Christmas Cards.

Forthcoming Changes

Over the coming weeks we will be making some adjustments to the way we welcome customers to the shop.

Since re-opening we have tried to keep our customers safe by limiting the number of people in the shop at any one time. This has meant some customers have been served in the garden centre by staff using our new portable till facility. Whilst we have enjoyed beautiful summer weather we are now looking to modify our approach to make the experience of shopping with us a little more comfortable during the winter months.

Over the next couple of weeks we will be completing our modifications to once again allow customers to enter the shop through the front door. To ensure our compliance with social distancing we will need to operate a one-way route around the shop and to restrict the number of customers in the shop at any one time.

To assist with this we have installed a traffic light entry system on our door, installed new screened till areas and clearly marked a route through the shop. We have also had to remove our popular self-serve bird feed and dog treat areas. All our products can still be found in store but they will now be bagged up for your convenience. This will limit the risk of infection from using self-service scoops. Whilst this is a more costly approach for us we have not increased our prices. Throughout the store you will find automatic hand sanitising stations and hand sanitiser pump dispensers at both till positions.

When you enter the shop in future we will try to greet you and ask if we can be of any assistance. Very often we have customers who visit us to ask for a replacement light bulb or a specific piece of ironmongery. By providing assistance as you enter the store we hope to be able to resolve your requirements before you reach our till positions and thus speed up the payment process for you.

We do not have a specific date when these changes will be implemented although, we anticipate this will be completed by early October. We may close for 1/2 a day at relatively short notice to implement these changes and safely prepare the shop for you. This will be communicated at the time. Thank you for your patience and continued support.



Construction underway on a new till position near the shop front door. This is now awaiting Perspex screening to protect customers and staff. Part of our plans to safely reopen the whole of the shop.

Feeling Safe

Many customers have thanked us for creating an environment where they feel safe to visit and have told their family and friends to visit us. We are grateful for your positive words of support.

We have staff members, including myself, who either need to be mindful of their own health issues or need to be mindful of the health of their loved ones.

It is not our intention to devalue the integrity of our existing Covid safety measures as we wish to protect everyone working at and visiting Brundall Home Hardware. Our future modification will require the co-operation of all staff and customers to help us maintain our Covid safety measures.

Please be assured that we have not set out to make the experience of shopping with us more complicated. We just wish to ensure that in these difficult times we are acting in the best interests of everyone.

Please help us by maintaining social-distancing, wearing a face covering where you are able and ensuring the cleanliness of your hands by using the santiser provided.

Home Delivery

We have always provided a free home delivery service to customers within the villages of Brundall, Blofield, Blofield Heath, Postwick, Strumpshaw, Lingwood and Cantley and we will continue to do so.



During lockdown this was important to many of our customers and it also helped ensure that our business had the opportunity to

maintain financial solvency before we were able to re-open the shop to customers.

In the event that we are placed into a lockdown situation again it will be our intention, subject to Government guidelines, to once again ensure that we can increase our delivery service to support you at home. We remain confident that our supply chain will remain open and that we can operate safely within our own premises.

If you feel vulnerable and do not wish to visit the shop, please do call us on 01603 714341. We will be pleased to take an order, accept payment by card and then make a free of charge delivery to you.

Staff Update

We are very grateful to all of our staff for their understanding of the difficulties that Alison and I faced in trying to re-establish our business. As you can imagine there was a period of uncertainty for all concerned. Since re-opening we have had two changes in personnel.

Bridget Warns is now concentrating on her own business activities and Wendy Searle will be embarking on her planned retirement from the end of September.

We are grateful for the years of service and friendship that Bridget and Wendy have provided and wish them both well in their new adventures.



Spring Bulbs now in stock



How to contact us?

Telephone 01603 714341

Email info@brundallpetandgardencentre.co.uk

www.brundallpetandgardencentre.co.uk

www.facebook.com/brundallhomehardware

We are open 8.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday. Closed Sunday and Public Holidays.

Free local delivery on purchases over £15.

Subject to availability of delivery driver and weather conditions.



Brundall
homehardware