



Friday, May 1, 2020

Dear All

Apologies for the lack of communication recently.

We hope you are keeping safe and well. The current coronavirus emergency has changed all our lives in major ways, and many of us will be taking extra care of ourselves, and others who are vulnerable by 'staying home'.

Many are anxious about their own health and that of their family and friends, whether at home, or at work. We look to our Lord and Saviour in these times of need, knowing that our lives are 'hid with Christ in God'.

Ps 32:7 'You are my hiding place;
You will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.
v.10.... the Lord's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

As you may imagine, the current situation has complicated our, already uncertain position at the shop.

Whilst the shop has been closed due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Trustees, mainly myself as Chairman, and Heidi Boardman our Treasurer, have been considering our options now that the goal posts have been moved!

We know that you have all played a major role in the ministry of Market Place Bookshop and your support has seen us through thick and thin over many years, and we would like to thank you for your support and to keep you 'in the picture' as far as possible.

Currently Matt and Ruth are 'furloughed' from work for 3 months until the end of June, 2020.

Matt felt it right to stop our volunteers from working from March 19th due to the rising risk of infection and we were very grateful to Matt and Ruth who continued to staff the shop between them.

On March 24th, as the 'lockdown' progressed, the shop closed to the general public, as did many others. Matt worked hard to organise things so that he could continue to fulfill orders placed by phone or on-line which was greatly appreciated by the Trustees.

However, this came to an end on March 31st as our income dropped sharply and the Trustees took the decision that Matt and Ruth should be furloughed for 3 months from the beginning of April 2020 to the end of June 2020, and an application be made for the government's 80% salary support. Staff 'on furlough' are not allowed to do any work in the organisation.

We had originally planned to have our AGM on Saturday June 27th 2020. You will understand that this was to be a particularly pivotal meeting with our options of moving or closing being discussed once our financial situation had been determined.

Currently, we do not know whether we will even be able to hold our AGM on that date. Just one of the many 'unknowns' at present.

The position as at today's date is that the Trustees anticipate that we have sufficient funds to see us to the end of the summer. We have signed a short term agreement with our landlord to remain in our current premises until the end of September this year. This is on the basis of a reduced rent and a two month rolling termination clause.

So as it currently stands, at the end of September the bookshop will either close or we will transfer to new premises at Kendal URC, if their refurbishment work is complete by then.

As our situation unfolds and decisions are taken we will try to keep you informed.

The Trustees continue to listen for the still small voice of the Lord. We are grateful that God has provided for the shop during this period, through the continued support from our supporters and individuals, through the Government's payment of 80% of the salaries for our furloughed staff, and through the payment of a £10,000 small business grant. Without this support we would have already had to close.

We look forward expectantly, to see how God will lead us, over the coming days and we hope that together we can write a new chapter for the bookshop in the years to come. We continue to wait with hope until the next steps are revealed.

If you have questions to ask please do get in touch by phone or email.

Kind regards

Jonathan Brook