

## Urchfont Community Shop Association Limited

### Minutes of the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting

Saturday April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023 2.30 p.m. Urchfont Village Hall

Present: 45 people attended the meeting, 44 members including six Committee members.

1. **Welcome/Chairman's Introduction:** The Chairman, Bill Donald opened the meeting and thanked all for attending. Bill read out positive comments and thanks from three members who had been in touch with him prior to the meeting, Malcolm Turner, John Pownell and Paul Bancroft.
2. **Apologies:** Apologies received from Kay and Paul Bowyer, Clare Cannon, Liz Woodward, Liz and Malcolm Turner, Carole Jones, Robert and Ros Pendry, Paul and Elaine Bancroft, John Pownell, Richard Hawkins, Elizabeth Milner and Cecilia Gillington.
3. **Chairman's Report:** Bill offered thanks to all of the shops volunteers. It is thanks to their hard work that sales are growing ahead of inflation. Thanks were given to Mally Kimber for her involvement over the years. Thanks to Liz Turner for being the Secretary, to Stephanie and Anthea for all of their work as shop Managers. To Mary for all her support from the Post Office. To Maria for her work as Vice Chair, and to Richard Kemp for all his help. Bill also thanked Sarah, Elaine and Liz Dark for their hard work as rota managers, and also thanked the two recently retired rota managers, Michelle Wingent and Ian Smith. Derek Milner was thanked for his work painting the doors. Bill commented that we are still in need of a few more rota managers to lighten the load of the three we already have, and if anyone would like to help to get in touch. Bill also thanked the five Duty Managers that have been recruited, Ian Walker, Pauline Guiney, Christine Dolan, Liz Woodward and Wendy Castle.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Bill brought up two Points of Order: (1) Rounding – there has been some criticism recently that the accounts are not accurate as they have been 'rounded to the nearest pound'. Bill advised that the process has been agreed and accepted with the examiner of the accounts. (2) Request for unpublished Numbers: It has been agreed by the Committee that they will not automatically provide individual numbers not published in the report and accounts. Requests can be made to the Committee in writing, along with why the information was needed and what it was going to be used for. The Committee will then decide if the data should be released. Bill asked that members refer to Rule 51 in the 2004 Association Rules for clarification.

Overall sales in the shop have increased in the past year. Sales are up 3%, if you removed newspaper data, they are up 11%.

New stock lines are popular. Particularly bakery items and the new range of pies and pasties. Donut Friday is very popular, shop is regularly selling as many as 50 every Friday. Frozen foods sales are down; this is partially due to us selling fewer ready meals that were

popular with some of our older customers. The Managers are looking into providing better frozen offerings. New veg supplier is providing good quality veg at reasonable cost. Newspaper sales are falling, after costs there is no profit in selling them but it is an important service provided by the shop. Noted that this is a national issue with more people accessing their news online.

Scarecrow Festival takings were up 48% on the previous event (2019), at just under £5k. This year the managers will look at improving the outside sales area as this was lucrative last year with sales of cold drinks, sandwiches etc.

Gross Profit was up 10%, gross margin rose by 1.4%

Net operating costs are down year on year, as are salary costs.

There has been some saving on electricity costs with the installation of LED lighting and more efficient fridges.

Card transaction charges have increased due to the volume of people now paying by card (47% of sales are by card).

Last year it was noted that water costs were considered high. Shop was tied into a water deal that had high fixed retail charges. Bill pointed out that as a business we cannot access domestic rates for water supply. Bill has now found a new supplier with lower retail charges; we have incurred costs changing, but will still be £20 better off this year, and considerably better off next year with an approximate annual saving of £152.

Profit was £1900, up 8% on a comparable year.

Trading in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter was up 18% on the same quarter last year.

Total sales per week are reaching £2400.

Waste and discounts are stable, with waste up 0.2% of sales and discounted sales down 0.1% of sales.

Capital reserve is £31k.

Future investment will include repainting of the interior, and an upgrade to the POS system as it is currently running on very old software.

Training of volunteers has improved. The Volunteers handbook has been rewritten and all volunteers have now completed a personal training record which has highlighted the areas where they feel they would benefit from some additional training. . This is being done on a 1:1 basis with the managers when on shift.

5. **Approval of the Accounts:** David Myers asked that it be minuted that he does not approve the annual accounts. He commented that he doesn't think they are accurate. He also asked for more detailed sales information which the committee are not prepared to hand over. (See Points of Order in the Treasurer's Report). Derek Milner thanked the committee and all of the volunteers for their dedicated work to keep the shop open.

**The 2022 Accounts were presented for approval.**

**Proposer: Ian Walker    Seconded: Christine Dolan.                      Proposal Agreed**

6. **Approval of resolution to disapply section 83 Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (duty to appoint auditors).**

**Proposer: Rodney Gillington    Seconded: Peter Cook                      Proposal Agreed**

7. **Appointment of Accounts Independent Examiner (Andrew Castle)**

**Proposer: John Watson    Seconded: Pauline Guiney                      Proposal Agreed**

8. **Election of Management Committee for 2023/24:** The Committee is permitted to have a maximum of eight members. The current committee of seven all submitted their intention to stand for re-election to the secretary seven days prior to the date of the AGM. One additional person also submitted their name before the deadline. As there are eight people standing for eight vacancies, it would have been sensible to vote by a show of hands, however if two members request a secret ballot then this must take place. David Myers and Barbara Myers did request such a ballot. All members were given a ballot sheet to complete. Philip Lough was appointed to administer and count the ballot. All eight individuals standing received votes. The 2023/24 Committee members are therefore confirmed as :

**Sarah Bamber  
Mary Craddock  
Anthea Donald  
Bill Donald  
Pauline Guiney  
Maria Kemp  
Stephanie Szakalo  
Liz Turner**

9. **AOB/Open Forum:**

Derek Milner asked what percentage of sales are now card transactions and can people be encouraged to use cash. Richard Elder commented that card transaction costs can

sometimes be negotiated with the supplier. Bill wasn't aware of this and is going to investigate.

David Myers asked if the terms of the shops insurance stated that the front wooden doors need to be closed at night in case of vandalism, Bill advised that this is not the case.

Mally Kimber asked why the toilet was now restricted to staff. Bill advised that we did put the sign on there to stop the facilities being abused, but that in reality we don't refuse members of the public access.

Nicky Hammond asked if the new toilet once installed would have disabled access. Bill confirmed that it will. Jirina Wheatley also commented on the importance of having disabled access.

Nicky Hammond asked where the £5k was coming from for the alterations to the store/toilet area. Bill stated that he didn't know where Nicky had got her information from but that the cost was likely to be closer to £3k. Bill said that savings will be made by us managing stock better in the long term. He also commented that an indoor stockroom would be beneficial as easier to access, it will not need to be locked and unlocked all the time, and most importantly volunteers won't have to constantly go outside to access the area, especially beneficial in inclement weather. Maria commented that the current stock room is very cramped and not easy to access efficiently. Bill also stated that there are meant to be two members of staff in the shop at all times and that an inside stock room would facilitate that. Ian Walker said that stock control is difficult in such a small space. A larger area will allow for much better organisation.

Derek Milner commented that the current stock room is hot in the summer and freezing in the winter. It was noted that the shop has to run the A/C in the summer months to keep the area cool, which is expensive.

Pauline Guiney commented that when she first came to the village the shop was encouraging everyone to spend £5 a week in there to ensure its sustainability. She said that many people are now spending significantly more with more people coming in to get a proper shop, not just sweets and a few grocery items, many people are spending £15/£20 + which is excellent for the shop.

Nicky Hammond said that she had never been thanked for her years as a rota manager and a volunteer. *(The Committee wish it noted in these minutes that an acknowledgement of thanks was given to Nicky at the 2022 AGM, although it wasn't specific to her various roles, she was thanked for her work).* She also commented that she would like to see a long term plan presented to the members. Bill Donald stated that the Committee will always take ideas on board and consider them, and that some things work and some don't. Nicky said that as nice as the seasonal displays were, you don't see them unless you enter the shop (Christmas/Valentines/Shrove Tuesday etc.) and it would be better if the window had not been covered in film, so that displays could be placed in the area. Bill commented that

volunteers don't have time to do this, and that the emphasis is on more sales space, which the shop now has due to the addition of significantly more shelving in the area. Nicky also commented that in her opinion window displays attract customers. She also said that she knew of some villagers who don't like certain volunteers, and do not want to come into the shop if they are working there, and that these people cannot now see who is serving before they enter. Pauline Guiney said that she should not be so personal about individual volunteers. Sarah Bamber commented that she thought this criticism of volunteers was very unfair and uncalled for. Bill also commented that there was no need to be personal about the volunteers.

David Myers Agreed with Nicky Hammond re window displays and the need to attract passing trade. Simon Holt said that he thought the window film was attractive and would entice people into the shop with its graphic of some of the stock lines.

David Myers again requested additional sales data from Bill, he said that Bill had told him he'd provide data at the AGM. In email exchanges prior to the AGM Bill had told David "you are entitled to ask for any numbers at the AGM". Following discussion with the Committee members at the informal AGM planning meeting, the Committee didn't see the need for this data to be released to David, and after examining the Rules it was clear under Rule 51 that the Committee are not under any obligation to provide such information. David accused Bill of lying to him, which is not acceptable. Bill asked David why he wanted the data; David stated that it was to make comparisons with previous years. Bill reiterated that he didn't lie to him. The decision not to release data other than that in the report and accounts relates back to the Treasurer's Report "Points of Order (2) Requests for unpublished numbers" at the start of the meeting. David was insistent that the Shop was the Member's shop and not the Committee's shop. There was some dissent in the room at this comment. Alison Taylor said that everyone has the right to be heard. Bill stated that the Members vote for the Committee to run the shop on behalf of the members.

Bill asked David what would attract him into the shop, as far as he was aware David hadn't used the shop in the past year, David said nothing would attract him in as the shop didn't sell anything he wanted to buy.

Jill Halliday said that she wanted to thank all of the volunteers for being so helpful and considerate to her when she came into the shop, and how much she appreciated their help as she struggled with her eyesight.

Derek Milner made a comment regarding the window film, saying the large supermarkets like Sainsbury's use it, and don't have window displays. Bill Donald commented that items in the window in the past had been damaged by the direct sunlight so there were limited items that could be placed there anyway.

Suzie Grant commented that the Easter display outside was nice.

Nicky Hammond thanked the shop for now displaying more prices on the shelving.

Maria Kemp thanked Bill Donald for his considerable hard work stating that there would not be a shop without him. There was a presentation and a loud round of applause!

Ian Walker thanked the Managers, Stephanie and Anthea, and presented them with flowers from the Duty Managers, who wanted to show their appreciation for their ongoing support.

The Meeting closed at 3.55 p.m.