

Urchfont Community Shop Committee

Minutes 26th September 2022

Present: Bill Donald (Chair), Sarah Bamber, Mary Craddock, Anthea Donald, Maria Kemp, Stephanie Szakalo, Liz Turner

1. **Apologies:** None
2. **Minutes of last meeting** – Approved
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Bill reported that the shops figures are good. Sales are down on newspapers, but this is a national issue which we have little control over. Need to look at the figures to see if those buying papers are purchasing anything else, and what we can do to encourage additional spending from this demographic.

The shop is continuing to build trade from walkers and cyclists, purchasing coffees and sandwiches/snacks. Also attracting local builders working in the village and have had good trade from the Network Rail workers. Look at increasing the price of the teas/coffees to £1.75. Also look at offering hot soups take away in the winter (Cup-a-Soup). Need to keep the visible stock level of sandwiches etc. high. Fridge is looking very inviting with the new products (pasties, pies, quiches etc.).

Discussion on whether the shop could offer the use of an oven/microwave to heat products, particularly in winter. Could be in the office area, for volunteers to operate, but might be problematic if people are not comfortable with microwaves, could it be located outside in the store area (once this is repurposed), needs to be discussed in more depth once alterations are approved and functioning. Perhaps ask customers/builders who are buying these products what they think and if it is a facility they would use.

Bill reported that the shop will be producing 355 bottles of the Urchfont apple juice which will be on sale shortly.

4. **Managers' Report:** Saturday October 8th 10-12 noon, tasting session at the shop. Samples of different flavoured sausages, the new savoury products including quiches, pork pies, pasties and sausage rolls, as well as the apple juice. Advertise on the community Facebook pages and on Instagram. Sausages to be precooked and heated, Maria to provide camping stove and gas to be set up outside. Anthea and Stephanie to calculate costs so we have a clear budget. Will use frozen sausages (so no wastage) and also see if we can order a larger square quiche that week that will be easier to portion up for samples. Have a small cash float on the day so people can pay outside if busy, but generally get people to pay in shop.

ACTION AD/SS

Christmas Orders: These are being processed this week. Christmas cards (boxes and individual from Whistlefish, as well as some charity cards. ACTION AD/SS

Kindling: Stephanie has discussed with Peter Rotherham, who has access to suitable kindling wood through his work. He can supply to the shop at a lower cost than the current supplier. Anthea and Stephanie to look into this further. ACTION AD/SS

Bread Sorting: This is now being done in the outside chiller area rather than at the pub. Much easier, quicker and more sheltered.

Prices: It has been noticed that wholesale prices have sometimes increased on items that are price marked, but the item price has not increased, this mean that shop's margins are reduced. Managers need to check prices and margins regularly.

5. **Shop Layout.** Bill has now spoken to Wadworths re plans to relocate the toilet and move the stockroom into the current toilet area. They have no objection. Bill has also spoken to Wiltshire Council, who advised that we need to get Listed Building Alteration Consent, which will be applied for online. There is no charge for this but we don't know how long it may take. Discussion regarding what to do with the old chiller fridge, which is no longer in use (as salad items etc. have now moved to the inside fridge). Should it be kept (to use at Scarecrow) or shall we dispose of it? Concluded best to dispose of it, Bill to speak to Dave Stevens to see if Scarecrow could utilise. ACTION BD

Need to look at various sources for funding of the project. Approach UPC and possibly Scarecrow Committee (next year's application) to see if they will make a contribution. Maria is also looking at possible funding via a lottery grant that can be accessed for community projects. Can be funded from current funds if necessary.

6. **Volunteers Handbook.** Liz has now finalised the layout of this. Need to print 35 copies initially. Mary kindly offered to donate paper and shop funds will cover ink cartridges if Liz purchases them. Bill to see if he can obtain a long stapler to secure the booklet. ACTION LT/BD
7. **Parish Leaflet Drop:** This is still being looked at by Stephanie. Should be finalised soon. To discuss at October's meeting. ACTION SS
8. **UPC:** Bill and Maria to attend the next UPC meeting on October 5th to discuss shop and update UPC on current plans. Up to date shop photo needs to be taken and put onto the UCS section on the UPC site. Minutes need to be published on UPC site, site clearly states it is UCS's responsibility to do this we don't have access. Sarah has contacted Bob, but has not as yet had a response. Sarah to chase prior to the council meeting. ACTION SB
9. **A.O.B. (a) Till Performance:** Still having some issues with inconsistencies in stock levels and sales data. Stephanie to see if a sales person or someone from the support team can come and look at it. Need to look at the cost of an upgrade. Card reader sometimes faulty, but generally works if rebooted (turned off and back on at the plug). Should the system be

rebooted more often? could either get a timer to turn off and on in the early hours or get the managers to do a hard reboot on days they close. Probably worth trying this option to see if it makes any difference to performance. ACTION SS/AD

(b) **Water costs:** Noted previously that these are high. Most of the costs are the standing charges. Bill to investigate our supplier and what we are paying to see if we can source a lower cost alternative. ACTION BD

(c) **Plastic screen/Guard.** Ian W is going to look at this and increase the size of the aperture, ideally to fit a basket.

(d) **Market Lavington Post Office/shop is closing.** Bill/Anthea/Mary to speak to the current owner to see if there is any stock available to buy. ACTION BD/AD/MC

(e) **Membership Annual Fee:** If we do decide to charge members an annual fee this needs to be discussed at the next AGM. Would be a per person charge, which would enable members to vote on issues at the AGM. Needs more thought/discussion, including who would deal with the admin of the list/payments etc.

(f) **Outside Flowers:** These are coming to the end of their life and will need to be replaced. Need a budget agreed. Mary to discuss with Ian Walker. ACTION MC

(g) **Bench:** Look at moving this to the side in front of the new window. No real need to close the doors at night. This would free up space for the small bistro set that Bill and Anthea have for shop use, which would go where the current bench is.

(h) **Magazines:** Brittox News has agreed to continue to supply these on a SOR basis. Stephanie to run a monthly report on what sells. Also offering some weekly titles. ACTION SS

(i) **Condolence Book:** This is still in the shop, will keep for a while longer but will then pass to UPC or them to decide what to do with it.

(j) **Volunteers Suggestion Book:** Need to check this more often and bring along to the meeting to address any issues. Look at responding to individual volunteers who have raised issues. ACTION SB

(k) **Christmas Decorations and Volunteer Event:** Decorating on Saturday November 12th and volunteer event with wine and mince pies from 12.00 – 2.00 p.m. on Sunday 13th. Bill to organise wine, Stephanie and Anthea to source mince pies. ACTION BD/AD/SS

Date of next meeting: Wednesday November 2nd 1.00p.m. at Liz's