

Urchfont Community Shop Committee

Minutes 1st September 2023

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

1. **Apologies:** None
2. **Minutes of last meeting and update on outstanding actions:**
Donation has been passed to Cubs for the apple juice. Next collection of apples will start at the beginning of October.
3. **Treasurer's Report:** Bill reported that Corporation Tax submissions have been made for both 2022 and 2023. There is no tax to be paid. The shop is able to offset against any previous years losses so no CT should be owed for the foreseeable future. Sales continue to grow in line with expectations. Richard E is now managing the invoicing and payroll and all is running smoothly.
4. **Managers' Report:** The large blue recycling skip (cardboard) is no longer being used. All cardboard recycling is being managed separately. Decision made to return the skip which will save on monthly emptying costs. If there is an excess of cardboard it can be taken to the Devizes recycling centre. Sarah offered to assist with this as she frequents the centre on a regular basis. The removal of the skip will free up the space. Need to think about what it could be used for. Mary commented that the Calor Gas cage is bulky and unattractive, but consensus is that the provision of gas is beneficial to the community especially with many people relying on Calor for cooking. Black outside rubbish bin needs to be replaced with the correct type as the one we have is the wrong colour. Liz to look at one she has spare that could be swapped. **ACTION LT**

Credit card machine contract (two years) is coming to an end. Need to look at other contracts to see if charges can be reduced. Richard E and Bill to investigate. **ACTION BD**

Anthea and Stephanie recently visited All Cannings Community Shop to see how they operate. They raise funds by having a 'donations' system (separate card machine) they use this money towards infrastructure projects. Might be an idea for UCS. Possibly just a box for customers to put change in. They also have a 'handling fee' for their newspapers. 10p per newspaper. Need to do some analysis on a similar system and how much this could raise. This would need to be discussed at the AGM in 2024. The argument for a small charge is that UCS incur charges to handle the papers (delivery and return costs) but these charges are not passed on to the customers. Newspapers make very little profit for the shop but it is an important service. AD/SS to find out from All Cannings how much they are charged for delivery of papers.

ACTION SS/AD

Magazine Sales: Britox News is not able to supply to us in small numbers. An idea was raised of recycling old magazines. Many people buy/subscribe to various titles and often just recycle once read. These could be donated to the shop and sold for a nominal amount (say £1.00) to raise funds. Magazines would need to be in good condition and ideally recent publications (1-2 months old). Could trial this idea. Use the outside area near the freezers, have a box on the wall for funds. Publicise on Facebook/Social Media. Could have 'Urchfont Community Shop' stickers on the magazine. Steph to look into. **ACTION SS**

Christmas stock will start to come in in October. Agreed that we do a seasonal event like last year. Decorate the shop, tasting of Christmas produce, advertise hampers. Date in November, probably 19th. Offer mince pies, glass of wine. **ACTION SS/AD**

Agreed to look at another 'tasting day' to sample produce. Sausages, pies etc. Offer bacon rolls for sale as well. Needs to be in October. Possibly Sunday 15th. Need to make sure we have the Urchfont apple juice available. Pauling to check dates. **ACTION AD/SS/PG**

Volunteers: The shop has been approached by two villagers who have expressed an interest in volunteering, and there are also a couple of people who have volunteered in the past who might now return. Sarah will chase up. **ACTION SB**

5. **Stockroom Update:** Bill reported that the electrics are almost complete. New customer alarm/help system being installed in the toilet. Richard K has levelled the floor and has obtained tiles at a good price. Phil Milanes has kindly offered to help with the painting of the walls. Plumbing is happening next week. Currently under budget. Need to look at the best type of shelving. Hot water cylinder needs to be moved in order to make best use of the space. Hoping all should be completed in the next 4/6 weeks. Blue paint for the outside wood and white interiors to keep it simple, bright and easy to touch up.
6. **Online Rota System:** This is progressing. Templates are up and running and all of the volunteer's roles and contact details have now been added to the system. Sarah has been manually adding the volunteers agreed shifts into w/c September 4th although not live yet. Stephanie is going to add the managers and relief managers and will go live with a test for this group initially. Volunteers need to be e-mailed to advise them of the changes, a draft email has been prepared. Stephanie is going to export the rota into excel to see how it looks.

ACTION SS

Sarah expressed her concerns regarding being the only person with responsibility for filling/allocating all of the volunteer slots. In the past we had six rota managers, currently down to three, but Elaine and Liz D will be 'retiring' so a lot of the responsibility will fall on Sarah. Issues may arise when there are numerous empty slots (which is a current problem). Sarah often covers slots herself on her rota weeks if struggling to fill, but this is not feasible 24/7 throughout the year. Will see how the initial trial goes and what issues arise. May need to have someone else sharing the responsibility.

7. **Membership and Subscriptions:** Decided that at the moment increasing our active membership base is a better way forward than proposing an annual subscription charge. We need more members. Look at a 'relaunch'. Reach new people to the village. Possible Redhorn article and leaflet drop. Need to actively encourage members to be involved in the shop, and not just be a name on a list. Encourage volunteering, helping. E-mail all current members to see if they wish to remain on the list. Option to opt in/out. Look at what 'Membership' looks like. Possibly have an event. **ACTION MK/LT**

Agreed that although the Rules permit it, there will not be any proposal for an annual fee at the moment.

8. **UCSA Rules:** Liz has examined the current rules (2004) against the unregistered ones (2013) and has provisionally updated into a new 2023/24 version. Changes need to be concise. Any changes will need to be approved at the next AGM. There are a few new rules that will need to be included. Might be an idea to approach Alistair E (Lawyer) to look over proposals to ensure that any changes are acceptable and lawful. Once the new Rules of the Association are approved at the AGM they can be formally registered. **ACTION BD/LT**

9. **Volunteers Suggestion Book:** Nothing Reported.

10. **A.O.B.** (1) Notice Board: Can this be reinstated? Old one was damaged so would need replacing. Ideally would like it located on the wall of the shop where the UPC ones are located, but no room available. Discussion on whether we need a 'shop' notice board? Would a more general 'Community Notice Board' be a better idea? There is a community board in the village hall but not everyone visits the VH regularly. A freestanding board could be provided/funded by UPC and located in the space in the car park where the large bin is currently located (see Point 4 above). It can be maintained by the shop, but would be for community notices only, so bus timetable, film club, clubs and events etc. Would have to be lockable. Not to be used for personal adverts, just for Parish/village events and notices. Sarah to draft a proposal and ask for the issue to be discussed at a forthcoming UPC Meeting. Also need to find out if planning permission would be required. **ACTION SB**

(2) Pete Rotherham has kindly offered to varnish the wooden bench.

(3) Kindling: Pete has asked if we can advise how much kindling the shop sold last winter so he can prepare for this year. **ACTION SS/AD**

(4) Maria asked if Mary can provide the contact details for Suzanne and her daughter so they can be added to the newsletter distribution list. **ACTION MC**

(5) Instagram: Maria asked that all Committee members encourage friends/family to follow the shop in the Instagram account.

(6) Should we offer a facility to heat up pasties/pies especially during winter months. Could be difficult (health and safety etc.). Possibly self-service microwave to be made available. Look at options.

(7) Defibrillator: Nicky Mitchel has asked if it can be partially covered. Bill to arrange before winter. Bill and Richard K to look at. Possibly speak to Pete R. **ACTION BD**

11. **Date of Next meeting:** Monday October 9th at 2.00 p.m. At Pauline's.