

DRAFT

The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Village Shop Association Ltd

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Briantspuddle Village Hall, Friday 15th February 2019, 19.00

The Chairman opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending and for their support over the past year. He stated that no nominations, resolutions or items of any other business had been received prior to the meeting.

Attendance

There were 30 members in attendance.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 6 members of the community.

2. Minutes from the previous AGM

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Friday 23 February 2018 were accepted as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matter arising.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman described the year as one of "ups and downs".

On the down side, the loss of several long-serving and popular volunteers who will be sadly missed. On the up, new volunteers have come forward to take their places, though there had recently been some difficulty staffing the shop counter on Thursday mornings and a need to strengthen the Post Office counter team.

The Chairman also reported that in the previous week one of the young weekend employees had resigned and he asked if anyone knew of a local youngster who would like to earn some money and, perhaps more importantly, gain work experience to add to their curriculum vitae.

The main event of the year had, of course, been the complete internal refurbishment of both the Post Office and Shop areas. The improved accommodation was officially opened in May 2018 and feedback from the community has been very good. Thanks were extended to all those involved in the works and particularly to the project managers, Chips Badcock and Peter Head, and to the customers for their support and understanding during the few weeks when the Shop and PO were closed. He also recorded thanks to the national Post Office for the generous funding which made the improvements possible.

The Chairman then referred to the discussions and suggestions recorded in the minutes of the previous AGM, about further promoting the Shop and Post Office and what it has to offer to the community. These had been considered by Committee and one result was the introduction of occasional newsletters giving details and news and inviting customers views. The newsletters seemed to have been very well received and resulted, among other things, in the introduction of more eco-friendly and healthy options being added to the range of products.

With regard to the trading and financial performance, the Chairman stated that turnover had decreased from the previous year. This was largely due to changes in the financial year and the loss of over two weeks trading during the refurbishment. There did however seem to be signs of reduced turnover due to changes in retail generally, in shopping habits and in demographics of the community. As just one example, he gave details of considerably reduced newspaper sales.

Despite the above, a trading profit and small overall surplus was achieved in line with the Association's aim to break even taking one year with another. The Shop's niche position in the community makes it less dependent on outside influences. This, together with the Post Office facilities, the support of the Parish Council in making the premises available, the small army of volunteers, low overhead costs, and the benefits of its Community Enterprise status should ensure the Shop's future for a few years. If the community needs it, it will use it, if not it will lose it

No comments or questions were forthcoming from the Chairman's report.

5. Treasurer's Report

In his absence the Chairman presented the report prepared by the Treasurer.

This first considered the profit and loss statement and pointed out the difficulty in comparing this to the previous due to changes to the financial year in 2017 (giving a 54 week trading year) and the closure of the shop for 16 days in 2018 (giving a 50 week trading year). Averaging the figures still suggests that the trend of falling cash sales continued through 2018. This was offset by even lower costs of purchasing resulting in a slight improvement in profitability.

The refurbishment project was completed during the year. The Post Office funded the new counters, floor covering and the whole alarm system. The Shop funded improved lighting, additional shelving and a larger display chiller. This expenditure was £5,435 and comfortably with the Shop's cash reserves at the time. The old chiller had been purchased 3 years previously for £672 and was sold to a commercial trader for £150. Although it had depreciated in the accounts to a nominal value of £412 the realisation of a true value of £150 required the additional depreciation charge of £262 shown in the Statement of Profit and Loss.

The shop depreciates its Non-Current Assets at 15% per year. As another £5000+ of fixtures and fittings have been added the ongoing depreciation charge will be considerably larger for the next few years, around £800 per year. The effect of this was softened in the reported year by the fact that the refurbishment took place halfway the year.

Despite the heavier depreciation costs the accounts report a modest profit net of £390.

The Treasurer's Report next considered the Statements of Financial Position and Cash Flow which indicated how an asset of cash in the bank of £7500+ had been converted into a different form of asset, namely fixtures and fittings and in doing so reduced the cash in bank to £3600+. The Treasurer noted that at the time of the meeting the cash at bank had gradually rebuilt to £4000+.

Looking to the future the Treasurer referred again to the worrying trend in recent years of gently decreasing sales and hoped that increased impetus of the refurbished shop and other initiatives that this trend can be reversed. There were promising signs as the first 4 months of the current year have seen slight improvement.

Comments and questions on the Treasurer's Report were invited.

The reduction in the cost of wages was queried. It was explained that this was mainly as a result of the Shop being closed for three weekends during refurbishment.

Another person asked if the effect future depreciation costs might reduce net profit to the point where it might be necessary to increase the margin applied in pricing. The Chairman said that he hoped this would not be necessary but that the position would of course be closely monitored by the Committee.

There followed a discussion on what steps might be taken to increase sales and awareness of the shop. Suggestions included, increasing the amount of information on the shop and what it stocks in the "newcomers" welcome pack, the upgrading and increased use of the Parish website and articles and advertisements in the Parish Magazine.

The unaudited accounts for the financial year ended 31 October 2018 were accepted.

6. Election of Management Committee

The Association's constitution required that all members of the Management Committee retire at the AGM. All current members of the Committee had indicated their willingness to stand for re-election apart from Robin Snaith.

The Chairman thanked Robin for his valuable contribution to the work of the Committee over many years and for the specific duties he had performed in managing insurance and energy contracts, banking, compliance, FCA reports, rates and taxes for the Association and, importantly, for supplying AGM and Christmas wine! Members showed their appreciation.

There was therefore one vacancy. No nominations had been received before the meeting. Nominations from the floor were received on behalf of Ali Chorley and Cindy Read. Audrey Grindrod offered to stand down to admit new interested members. The Chairman thanked Audrey for her offer, the thought behind it and for her contribution to the Committee over years, adding that this did not mean that her advice and hard work would not be expected in the future.

The following were elected to form the new Committee:

Chips Badcock, Ali Chorley, Peter Head, Ken Kilbank, Cindy Read, Roger Stayte, Lesley Wilcox and one other member.

7. Annual Subscription

It was proposed and unanimously agreed that the annual subscription be maintained at zero.

8. Resolutions

No resolutions were proposed.

9. Any Other Business

The Chair of Affpuddle and Turnerspuddle Parish Council made the following statement:

"On Monday I attended the Purbeck District Council Volunteer of the Year Award at which I introduced Chips Badcock as Volunteer of the Year for our Parish. In my address I thanked Chips for the contribution she has made across the Parish over many years, but in particular for taking on the role of Postmistress, a position which comes with considerable financial responsibility and one which she has held for 16 years. I would take this opportunity to ask you to join me in thanking Chips for the very significant contribution she has made to the life of our parish."

After the meeting showed their appreciation, the Chair continued:

“In preparing my address I was also conscious that I was tracing the history of the village shop and post office. As parishioners we have been privileged to have the shop and post office at the very heart of the community for so many years. It is an amenity that is only made possible by the collective effort of so many willing volunteers and tonight is a welcome opportunity to thank everyone for their contribution on behalf of the whole Parish.

Volunteering is the life blood of any community and whilst it involves hard work and commitment it also brings its rewards. Tonight these rewards are clear to see as “The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Village Shop” gather to enjoy each other’s company with a common purpose. All is achieved with goodwill and a sense of humour.

Good humour is of course something that has become synonymous with this annual event- “What did the letter say to the stamp? - Stick with me and we’ll go places”. Thank you once again to the volunteers and committee of the shop and post office for bringing this joke’s punch line to life.”

The meeting was closed at 8.30 p.m.

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