

The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Village Shop Association Ltd.

Report to Affpuddle & Turnerspuddle Parish Council 8 May 2019

The Post Office and Village Shop has performed satisfactorily. There is a number of loyal regular customers and a team of 30 volunteer staff; although both groups have slightly reduced in number. Two more local youngsters have recently been employed for paid work experience at weekend.

There has recently been some evidence of a slight but steady decline in shop sales. This is due to the changes in the community and in shopping habits which are affecting retail in general. It is hoped that this might be improved following the recent internal refurbishment.

A reduction in sales has, of course, led to a similar reduction in stock purchases which in turn has meant that the shop was still able to report a modest financial surplus; this in line with the aim contained in the business plan to more or less break after making provision in the reserves for depreciation and contingencies. Depreciation costs are expected to be considerably higher in the next few years due to the increase in the value of fixed assets following the refurbishment investment.

The Post Office remains an essential part of the community enterprise and has received steady support from customers. The closure of the Bere Regis Post Office may mean more business coming to Briantspuddle.

With volunteer staff and relatively low overhead costs, particularly recognising the support of the Parish Council in making the premises available, there is no reason why the Post Office and Shop should not be providing a service for many years to come, for as long as it is needed and valued for its convenience and social presence in the community. If, in these rapidly changing times, the future of the amenity should be in any doubt it will probably not be due to any financial consideration but more likely because the need has fallen to such a level that volunteers are less willing to give their time and effort – “to sit for 3 hours with no-one to talk to or to drive 6 miles to collect 6 newspapers”.