

The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Village Shop Association Ltd

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Briantspuddle Village Hall, Friday 31 January 2020 at 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. Copies of the agenda, the accounts, the minutes of the last AGM and an attendance record were distributed.

AGM Members

Richard Killer set out a change in the administration of the Association. A list of current members needed to be kept and, if requested, provided to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). Membership confers the right to vote at the AGM but imposed no liabilities. Members are defined as all Committee members (as appointed at the AGM), all volunteers who assist in working in the Post Office and/or Shop and all supporters who attend the AGM. To that end, all present were requested to provide their names and postal addresses and Richard would compile the list of members. That list will be held in accordance with the Cooperative and Community Benefits Societies Act 2014. It will not be used for marketing or advertising or disclosed to a third party (save the FCA upon their request).

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from 6 members of the community.

2. Minutes of the previous AGM of 15 March 2019.

The Minutes were accepted as an accurate record.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chairman's Report

The Chairman presented his reports in two parts; the past and the future.

The Past.

He reported that the last year had been a satisfactory one for both the Post Office and the Shop which had:

- i. Provided a service to the community every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day;
- ii. Received support from 40 volunteers to provide that service both in maintaining stock and serving customers (although more volunteers were always welcome);

- iii. Provided work experience to 3 young people of the community;
- iv. Produced the annual calendar, introduced new ideas, eg gift vouchers, and tested new ranges;
- v. Achieved consistent sales figures and a trading surplus in line with the aim for the shop to more-or-less break even; and
- vi. Continued to play an important role in the life of the community.

He also explained that:

vii. The Committee had agreed to increase the average mark-up on prices from 10% to 12.5%. This had been deemed necessary due to above-inflation increases in running costs, notably insurance premiums and electricity, and also to cover the additional depreciation provisions following the investment in the 2018 refurbishment.

viii. As most people would be aware, Barclays had announced during the year that their customers would no longer be able to withdraw cash from Post Offices. The Committee had supported the protest against this decision which Barclays eventually withdrew.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to all the Committee members, volunteers and supporters.

The Future

ix. The Committee will continue to look into the possibility of accepting payments by card (see Treasurer's report);

x. It seemed likely that the general shop in Puddletown would soon be sold. The Chairman expressed his thanks to the owner and his staff who had been very understanding, helpful and tolerant over the 18 years of the business relationship with our Shop and he wished the outgoing owners all the best for the future. However, it was not currently known whether the new owner would wish to continue the current business arrangement, ie supplying chilled items, fruit, vegetables and newspapers. This would prove to be a big challenge and the new Committee would need to urgently investigate other options.

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

5. Treasurer's Report

Roger Stayte reported that there had been a 17% increase in expenses over the year eg the insurance and electricity costs already mentioned and the employment of a pest control company. Nevertheless, there had been a modest increase in cash received but a reduction in income from newspaper sales. There was a profit of £178 which appeared low but took account of depreciation charges of over £900. Those charges would decrease significantly in future years. Day-to-day trading figures were steady with no significant changes in either sales or costs.

The unaudited accounts were accepted.

With respect to card payments he explained that the necessary internet access was currently unreliable and the costs of installing equipment would need to be measured against the likelihood of additional sales. In any event, it was only an issue at weekends as customers could withdraw cash from the Post Office during the week. However, the introduction of 5G should improve network access and the Committee would continue to monitor the position.

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 with the exception of Ken Kilbank who, after 15 years on the Committee and 10 years as Chairman, had decided to stand down although he would continue as a volunteer.

There was therefore one vacancy. No nominations had been received before the meeting. However it was understood that David Griffith, who was not able to attend the meeting, would be willing to stand.

The following were elected to form the new Committee:

Eve Badcock, Ali Chorley, David Griffith, Peter Head, Richard Killer, Cindy Read, Roger Stayte and Lesley Wilcox.

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

i. It was suggested that the Shop sell a wider range of pet food and that a larger order from the current supplier might off-set any delivery charge. The Committee would investigate this.

ii. Sue Jones, Chair of Affpuddle and Turnerspuddle Parish Council, then made the following statement:

'On behalf of the Parish I would like to thank the Committee for another successful year. Together you have provided parishioners with a much-needed amenity, but this is not just an amenity. The village shop and post office remain at the heart of our community and in Ken's words it is 'run by the community, for the community.'

This AGM isn't just an AGM either. Ken is stepping down as Chairman after more than a decade, so now is an opportunity for the Parish Council to pay tribute to the contribution that Ken has made to our community over many years.

Whilst there must be many achievements and successes that I do not know about, I would like to highlight a few that stand out to me.

Over the years Ken has masterminded a volunteer network which has secured a sustainable future for the shop and post office. By only asking volunteers to commit to working 3 hours each week an army has assembled in support, with recruits now numbering in excess of 30. This alone is an outstanding achievement for a small rural parish.

In his recruitment call for volunteers Ken describes not only the benefits for the community of volunteering, but those offered to volunteers themselves. He describes volunteering as a way of meeting people. It is no accident that the full name of the shop is 'The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Village Shop'. Here tonight we can see the warmth and strong friendship ties that bind volunteers and strengthen the shop as a result.

Ken himself is best described as a people person. His northern sense of humour which comes to the fore at the AGM also helps to lighten each day. It is of course great news to hear that Ken will

continue to be very much involved with the shop and I'm sure the sense of camaraderie that is so evident will continue.

Ken's ambition for the shop has meant he has cast his net far and wide. He has forged and sustained the very important and successful relationship with local supplier Brian Ball. Whilst we hear tonight that this arrangement may change, I am sure the committee will meet this challenge head on.

Ken has also seized other opportunities to modernise the shop and we all enjoy the benefits of these changes. Ken has steered a steady course; the result today is an improved amenity which has a bright future.

I am sure we can all agree that the combined shop and post office occupy a very small space, but in every other respect it amounts to a very large success. Thank you, Ken, on behalf of the whole Parish. '

The meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.