

MARCHINGTON COMMUNITY SHOP

MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD MONDAY 18/11/24 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Liz Morgan (Chair), Terry Jones, Mike Stephens, Clare Nash, Margaret Johnson, Matt Tomlinson (Board Members)
Total present 36, of which 29 Shareholders
APOLOGIES: Mick Marrison, Tony White (Board Members), Carol Foster, Jane Hilton, Malcom Jeffery

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the format for the evening.

Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 30/11/23 to be approved with other resolutions later in meeting.

Matters Arising – none

Report of the Board of Directors

FINANCE

Terry Jones explained the Management Accounts for the year ending 31/8/24

Sales were up on the previous year by £13,372 to a total of £146,101. This was due to curry sales, plants from Woodside and new Suma range of products.

Gross Margin down from 23.8% to 23.1%. Some of this due to margin on curry sales which must be competitive. However, increased sales gave an additional contribution of £2,158 towards our overheads compared to previous year.

Staff costs were down by £3,138 compared to 2023. Three reasons for this: the shop was managed by volunteers for 1 month before new manager appointed; new structure with staff holidays taken and covered by volunteers; more volunteer cover available.

Electricity costs down £1,098 compared to 2023. Solar panels installed in April with immediate impact. Solar panel total cost £10,879, covered by a grant of £9,000 and a balance of Prince's Trust monies held from earlier years.

Other overheads increased because of small price increases. Also, first full year of increased rent; increase in credit card charges due to increased sales; purchase of sundry items for future use in shop decorations, Open Gardens and other events.

Despite the above improvements we had an Operating Loss of £11,651 (in 2023 £16,864) so again we needed Fundraising income to get us into profit.

The regular 50/50 club and Open Gardens event, despite being slightly lower than last year, contributed £9,850 in the year. Tony White organised a sponsored walk jointly with Cheadle Food Bank and raised an amazing £2,665. This meant total fundraising was £12,991, which was excellent and nearly £1500 up on 2023.

As a result of the above, this year we achieved a Profit before Depreciation of £1,340 (in 2023 Loss £5,345).

The Statutory Accounts show a Net Loss after Depreciation of £249 (in 2023 Loss £7,033). The substantial increase in Depreciation is due to the purchase of the Solar Panels. These will be written off after 5 years, so we have therefore decided to write back the grant over the same period, at £1,800 per annum.

Thanks to Gill, Stuart, Ian and helpers for the Beer Festival in September. Despite the weather a profit of £1,449 was achieved, a great start for our Fundraising for 2024/2025.

SALES

Liz Morgan advised of initiatives this year:

- Two outside signs have been updated. Paid for by funds from Princes Trust Countryside Fund 2016.
- New supplier Suma, an ethical wholesaler from Yorkshire, has provided new ranges of soups, oils, spices etc. Able to order small quantities which is an advantage.
- More variety of biscuits and cakes being ordered from Cresco.
- Staffordshire Meats have replaced JS Meats as our meat supplier. Bacon and sausages are selling well. Malcolm Jeffery has kindly offered to collect the order every Wednesday.
- Woodside Nurseries have provided a great array of plants on a sale or return basis.
- Improved variety of soft drinks and lunch items.
- Tony White was instigator of Fundraising event at Uttoxeter Racecourse which was successful in raising our profile as well as raising much needed funds.
- Tickets for various local events continue to be sold at the shop.
- Open Gardens event continues to be successful and the breakfast barbecue at the shop was more successful than ever, perhaps due to fact that people had to come to shop to buy tickets rather than buy them at the car park. Thanks to Gina Lock who has donated barbecue to the shop.
- Although selling at a lower margin, curries appear to have brought new customers to the shop on Fridays and increased sales of other products.
- Various plans for Christmas including small gifts, snacks, wine hampers, raffle and shop vouchers.

COMMUNICATION

Clare Nash explained strategy to use free resources available on Social Media, i.e. Facebook and Instagram, to promote our products and remind customers of what we have to offer in the shop, to try to encourage them to consider the shop before going elsewhere.

A plan is drawn up monthly to take account of what is current, including annual events and special commemorations.

Currently the shop has approximately 900 followers on Facebook and 250 followers on Instagram. This has increased continuously since 2021 but it seems that this may have now plateaued.

Meta, the parent company of Facebook and Instagram, only shows the posts to a small proportion of our followers. To encourage the algorithm to increase the “reach” Clare asked if we could engage with the posts, preferably by sharing them.

If we need to target an audience, we can pay Meta approximately £14 per week to boost the reach to a targeted audience. This is a cost-effective way to advertise and worked well for the Beer Festival in September.

Liz Morgan backs up Facebook post with emails. Opening rate is 60/70%.

Mick Marrison designs and manages the Website.

SHOP MANAGEMENT

Margaret Johnson introduced our new manager, Holly, who has proved to be a great asset to the shop.

Rotas are now sent to volunteers on a weekly basis, along with the weekly shop bulletin to keep everyone informed. Normally vacant slots can be covered by volunteers, often by those who do not do a regular slot but prefer to work on an ad hoc basis. More volunteers have been recruited this year on this basis and long-standing volunteers have been retained.

10 Welcome packs have been delivered this year and serve as a valuable introduction to newcomers.

Visitors to the shop have commented on how attractive the shop looks and the variety of goods on sale.

FEEDBACK FROM SUGGESTIONS AT LAST YEAR’S AGM

More fundraising – achieved.

Increase newspaper delivery charges – done.

Consider limit of £5 for card payments. This was discussed but it was decided not to impose a limit as it may detract from sales, particularly from customers who use phone for payments.

Young people wanting work experience – 2 have been accommodated so far this year and Lani will be joining us shortly.

RESOLUTIONS

To agree the Minutes of previous AGM. Proposed by Matt Tomlinson and Seconded by John Stanton. Unanimously agreed.

To adopt the Financial Statements for the period ending 31/8/24. Proposed by Phil Shelton and Seconded by Andy Boulty. Unanimously agreed.

To re-appoint Richards Associates Ltd, Chartered Accountants, as the company’s accountants. Proposed by Mike Stephens and Seconded by Andrew Mann. Unanimously agreed.

To elect individuals to form the Management Committee (Board of Directors) until the AGM in 2025. No new names had been put forward, so it was proposed to reappoint the existing Board Members. Proposed by Gill Scarlett and Seconded by Gill Davies. Unanimously agreed.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Gill Davies asked if we could have a new flag. It was agreed that this was required but need to consider longer lasting alternatives as it is only a year old.

Stuart Davies updated us on ideas for next year's Beer Festival. Had offer to hold it at the Cricket Club and split proceeds equally between the two organisations. Possibly an end of season event which will also include children. More discussions need to take place but there appears to be lots of interest already from local businessmen as regards sponsorship.

It was suggested that we reach out to utilities and companies working locally, to ensure that their employees are aware of the shop for snacks and lunches.

Queries over signage around village. It was agreed that we should investigate whether we need to renew or install additional signage.

Idea of a microwave was raised but it was thought that health and safety issues would make it difficult to implement.

There has recently been a push on the sale of hot drinks, but extra signage may be useful.

Lots of Cyclists ride through the village. It was suggested that we contact local groups to encourage their members to call at the shop for hot and cold drinks.

There is a Christmas raffle, £1 per ticket. First prize is a hamper full of Christmas goodies, second prize a £10 shop voucher and third prize some cosmetics.

Jane Coward mentioned the possibility of the 10k fun run taking place next year. Should this be the case, half of the profits would come to the shop.

Meeting closed at 7.15 pm