

— THE —  
**SHOP**  
AT CROWLE  
— a community enterprise —

**Second Annual Members' Meeting  
of Crowle Community Shop Ltd**

**Sunday 29 September 2019 at 12.00 noon at  
Crowle Parish Hall**

**Annual Report to Members 2018/9**

# **Crowle Community Shop Limited**

**(Trading as The Shop at Crowle)**

## **Agenda for second Annual Members' Meeting of Crowle Community Shop Limited**

**Sunday 29 September 2019 at 12.00 noon at Crowle Parish Hall**

1. Welcome and introductions:
  - present
  - apologies for absence
  - minutes of 2018 Meeting
2. Chairman's report to Members
3. Financial report for 2018/19:
  - presentation of annual accounts
  - financial performance and trading outlook
  - resolution not to appoint an auditor
  - independent accountant's report
4. Current and future plans:
  - operational reviews
  - resourcing: our volunteer strategy
5. Management Committee for 2019/20
  - supporting resources
6. Any other business

## Chairman's Report to Members

In my report last year I said we believed we had laid secure foundations for a vibrant, appealing and valued new community facility. It is now time to review progress!

Our first year transitioning from a 'development project' to 'running a retail food business' was a period of new challenges and inevitably some frustrations but, happily, many successes and achievements.

From day one we set out to provide the products that customers wanted – be they 'convenience' items or local products. We received encouraging and constructive feedback, not least via the customer research we undertook in January, following which we made over 50 improvements to our product range. Respondents gave The Shop a very high rating for offering a warm and friendly welcome, and we are delighted to have created the 'community hub' that everyone asked for!

We extended our Café service over time, gradually improving the range from cakes and savouries to light lunches and later offering hot food – initially on Saturday mornings (much appreciated by those attending football matches) and later more generally.

We set up rigorous processes around stock purchasing and pricing, to ensure that our products both achieve an appropriate margin and sell at an acceptable price. This, together with careful stock selection, has played a key role in achieving robust financial results for this initial period.

None of the above could have been achieved without our loyal and committed volunteers, led by our energetic Shop Manager, Joan Goodman, all of whom have risen to every successive challenge and embraced the many essential processes to make sure we keep our customers safe and The Shop compliant. As well as all those who serve

in The Shop and Café, we thank the many volunteers working hard behind the scenes.

We look to the future with enthusiasm. We feel reassured that we have set out on the right road, but will always seek out improvements to maintain and enhance 'The Shop at Crowle experience'. We thank Shareholder Members for their ongoing support and loyalty.

## **Financial Report for 2018/19**

This year saw the transition of The Shop from a development project to a construction project and finally to a trading entity, opening for business on 16 October 2018. The financial statements to 31 March 2019 reflect this journey from development project to trading entity.

The headline results for the year were:

- Sales from trading £63,398, on which
- Gross profit earned £17,651, from which expenses of
- £20,687 were paid, resulting in a trading loss of £3,036, to which is added
- Revenue grants of £5,131, capital grants released of £4,970 and money from fundraising and donations of £3,845 (total £13,946), resulting in
- Profit before tax of £10,910 and finishing the year with
- Cash at bank of £15,975

We started the year with cash of £68,716 and finished the year with cash of £15,975, a reduction of £52,741. This reduction in cash is due to what you can now see in the corner of the Parish Hall car park: a newly built and fully equipped community shop that is the envy of many a community!

Trading since 1 April has built on the success of our first 24 weeks although we are still in our first year and are still learning how local village events impact on our trading. The summer holiday season

inevitably saw takings drop slightly but now that Saturday morning football has resumed and holidays are mostly taken, trading has once again ticked up. Our current forecast suggests a profitable outcome to the current year together with an increase in cash. Let's all remember, though, that we're still at an early stage in our life!

The finance function of our Shop can work only with the help of some very dedicated volunteers. There is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes: daily takings to be reconciled and entered, supplier invoices to process, payments to make, payroll to run, VAT returns to make, stock counts to be planned and executed, to name just a few. I would like extend my thanks to my predecessor John Hood, Janet Coleman, Karen Smith, Anne Borg and my wife Tracey for giving their time and making the finance function operate as smoothly as it does.

## **Current and Future Plans**

### ***Operational Review – Customers and Products***

This time last year, I felt nervous and a little apprehensive as to whether I would be able to live up to everyone's expectations. One year on, and I've been overwhelmed by the support that I've had from the whole 'Shop team' – the expertise and creative energies in the team seem endless!

We are so fortunate to have such a wonderful range of local suppliers providing top quality, exciting products, which we see our customers value and appreciate (some of whom make a regular journey to The Shop on delivery day). I mention just three – Fircone Farm, virtually next door, who provide lovely apple juice (which also manages to find its way into Peopleton Press's cider!); Fladbury Pies (who would have thought that sausage rolls would become our best-seller?); and of course Lisa Andrews, whose cakes and many other delights have become a local legend. We are not, however, resting on our laurels, and constantly look to seek out new suppliers and products to keep customer interest and excitement alive.

It is evident that our reputation is growing steadily, with word of mouth working powerfully and allowing us to welcome new faces every day from far and wide.

Only this week I was reflecting with our Chairman on 'what The Shop had achieved for the community'. We realised that it was in plain view as we looked across The Shop – a young mum with a baby had popped in for a cup of coffee and a chat; several of our off-duty volunteers were enjoying tea and cake together; an elderly regular had just called in for his usual shopping and natter; and a couple dashed in for a last-minute greeting card and a takeaway treat from our deli.

I am proud to be part of The Shop's great team, and want to thank each and every one for their huge support and belief in me as we all strive together for a common goal – continuing success for The Shop at Crowle.

**Joan Goodman, Shop Manager**

### ***Operational Review – Trading and Regulatory***

Prior to The Shop and Cafe opening in November 2018 , considerable thought and preparation was required to establish the statutory trading, safety and legal requirements of operating a public retail and catering facility. The Management Committee were exceptionally fortunate, to have the wisdom and experience of Sandra Gellert to advise in all these matters and her continued advice and support has been invaluable; Sandra had just retired after 28 years as Commercial Retail Manager of a national retail chain.

The implementation of those regulations continues on a daily basis so that the Environmental Authorities may sanction The Shop's ongoing performance.

In addition, decisions were made regarding Fire Evacuation and an Assembly Point and also the type of alcohol license required whereas domestic subjects such as the storage of cleaning materials and equipment continue to evolve.

A COSHH (Control of Substances, Hazardous to Health) file has been produced listing all the products, their contents and methods of usage; the cleaning schedule, covering a multitude of functions, is still evolving.

Prior to The Shop opening , job training sessions took place which continue by a combination led by our fabulous Manager, followed by a tremendous team of mentors as well as the wonderful team of volunteers, all learning from each other.

A comprehensive file of 'How To' guidance documents is now being developed to ensure consistency in the way The Shop operates. As new volunteers come on board, their induction includes essential legal training, a free Food Certificate course and safety guides.

The Shop has been fortunate to benefit from the guidance of a former Environmental Health Officer who recently assessed the Food, Hygiene and Safety Standards of The Shop and Café which covered cross-contamination, allergens, temperature controls, and storage. We currently have a four star rating awarded by Worcester Regulatory Services and it is now hoped this will rise to a fifth star at the next formal inspection.

It has been an extremely challenging year for every volunteer serving The Shop to master and apply the strict codes of operating a community shop and even more so for our hard working, loyal and charismatic Shop Manager, Joan Goodman. Everyone should be proud of their contributions and the way in which their participation has ensured that the first year of operation has not only been a financial success but has revolutionised Crowle and the surrounding villages as a wonderful engaging community.

### ***Operational Review - Premises***

The Shop has now been fully operative for nearly twelve months during which time the facilities have been tested in a variety of usages both by the public, staff and operational activities.

Additional works have included the early provision of the external fenced waste storage area and the paved patio which later proved popular in the summer with bench seating tables and parasols, the latter funded by generous benefactors. A brightly coloured awning was also fitted over the servery window which proved to be eye-catching and well received.

Internally, a locked cupboard housing cleaning materials has been installed in the customer toilet to enable the store room to be converted later in the autumn into an office for the Shop Manager.

The Café has proved to be a major asset and is patronised from far and wide. For that reason, an extra table and chairs are to be installed for the winter months which will then require some modification to the shelving display in that area.

At the same time, it is proposed to re-configure the central shelving layout to facilitate increased shelf space and accessibility. Minor modifications are also to be carried out in the kitchen and till areas.

New levels of interior lighting will shortly be introduced and consideration is being given to improved air cooling in advance of another hot summer next year.

### ***Resourcing – Our Volunteer Strategy***

Our volunteers are the backbone of The Shop. Without the excellent volunteers we have, The Shop and Café would not be as successful as it is today, one year on from opening.

Our team of in-shop volunteers ranges in age from 14 to mature(!), including Duke of Edinburgh award students and other youngsters seeking work experience; in addition, we have many behind the scenes keeping us legal and adhering to health and safety regulations, ongoing training, marketing, finance, general admin, assisting with the fabric of the building, and future planning.

Our in-shop volunteers are praised for their friendly, kind, and helpful approach, including a warm welcome to all. We are not just a shop and café but a meeting place, and all visitors are made to feel welcome. Our volunteers have opportunities to refresh old skills and learn new ones. New volunteers are allocated an experienced mentor to learn the ropes

from and tick the legal boxes. All volunteers are offered a food safety course to ensure we maintain good standards in the Café department. The volunteers willingly give their time and expertise to The Shop for which we are always very appreciative.

Operation of the till has been a challenge at times but experience has made the processes easier especially with the recent addition of a bar code printer.

We always welcome new volunteers to become part of our community success story and help spread the load, and we have promoted our 'volunteer proposition' energetically this year to good effect and will continue to do so. We have a great online rota system whereby volunteers can pick and choose their own shifts from the comfort of their own home. This system is overseen by two very efficient members of the team.

We would like formally to say a huge 'thank you' to everyone who volunteers in The Shop, including everyone who offers time and expertise both behind the scenes and on the front line.

## Management Committee for 2019/20

The Society's Rules require the Management Committee to be composed of not less than 3 and not more than 12 persons, at least three-quarters of whom shall be elected by and from the Members. The Management Committee elect from amongst themselves a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary.

The four existing members of the Management Committee are as named below. Sandra Gellert and John Hood stood down from the Committee on 18 October 2018 and 23 October 2018 respectively. Nick Williams was co-opted on 23 October 2018.

Stephen Denne, Richard Temple Cox and Sue Cole were re-elected in 2018 and have indicated their willingness to remain on the Committee; they do not require re-election this year. As a previously co-opted member, Nick Williams stands for election at this Annual Meeting.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Office 2018/19</b>	<b>First appointed</b>
Stephen Denne	Chairman	22 March 2017
Richard Temple Cox	Vice-Chairman	22 March 2017
Nick Williams	Treasurer	23 October 2018
Sue Cole	Secretary	22 March 2017

Four people stand for election to the Committee as new members at this Meeting: Julie Bott, Nick Brett, Joan Goodman and Trish Hartley.

*Crowle Community Shop Limited (trading as The Shop at Crowle)*

*Registered office:*

*Blenheim*

*Netherwood Lane*

*Crowle*

*Worcester WR7 4AB*

**September 2019**