

— THE —
SHOP
AT CROWLE
— a community enterprise —

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

**Sunday 11 April 2021 at 11.00am via "Zoom"
(on-line due to Covid-19 restrictions)**

Annual Report to Members 2019/20

Crowle Community Shop Limited

(Trading as The Shop at Crowle)

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

Sunday 11 April 2021 at 11am by Zoom

1. Welcome and introductions:
 - present
 - apologies for absence
 - minutes of 2019 Meeting
2. Chairman's report to Members
3. Financial report for 2019/20:
 - presentation of annual accounts
 - financial performance and trading outlook
 - resolution not to appoint an auditor vote
 - independent accountant's report
4. Current and future plans:
 - marketing and promotions
 - risk management
 - volunteers
 - premises
5. Management Committee for 2021/22
6. Any other business

Chairman's Report to Members

The year under review was dominated by the pandemic. Our current Shop Manager, Carolyn Bull, had joined us in February 2020, having recently retired from a national retail chain, where her experience included running a substantial food hall; understandably, we felt that there would be nothing anyone could throw at her that she had not previously encountered. Little did we know!

From the moment that lockdown was announced, many new challenges presented themselves. We had to consider how to continue to run a largely volunteer-staffed food retail business during these unprecedented times whilst keeping staff and customers safe: new sanitisation processes needed to be developed and protective materials obtained, limits on numbers of shoppers, closure of the café, vulnerable volunteers stepping back due to health concerns (for themselves and their families) – the list went on.

As a service sponsored by the community, we were determined to press on as best we could, albeit with shorter hours to match our reduced staffing availability. We were extremely fortunate to have an infection control specialist amongst our volunteers, who proved invaluable with her expert guidance on how we should respond to the seemingly never-changing raft of requirements.

But the pandemic affected The Shop in other ways too: early on, supply shortages required us to seek out other wholesalers, and we were pleased to be able to support some regional businesses who had supported the hospitality trade and thus were suffering; and we needed to ask some suppliers to deliver certain products to offsite locations to help avoid congestion in the Shop during trading hours.

Customer support proved consistently strong during the pandemic (at one time our turnover was double the normal level), and we are proud to have lived up to the vision of 'a community lifeline'. We have worked hard to make the Shop a safe place to shop and have had great feedback (one customer travels 10 miles to come in as he feels we are the safest shop around). We introduced customer orders and home deliveries for those worried about going out. We remain 'on alert' but with cautious optimism; the most recent development was the re-opening of our outside café area last week. We hope to see you there soon.

As well as our Shop Manager, I must thank the hard core of Volunteers who worked with her (both front-of-house and behind the scenes) to keep the Shop going during the crisis. As lockdown eases, this is a good time to encourage new volunteers to spread the load.

Looking ahead, we are currently planning an extension to The Shop. This will provide much needed additional space for retail, storage and office, and we hope to complete this by the autumn.

Stephen Denne, Chairman

Financial Report for 2019/20

This report is on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020, but I will also very briefly touch on the year to 31 March 2021.

The year to March 2020 should have been a year of consolidation as the shop developed with its new manager. However, how it progressed was not as envisaged but progress it did.

The accounts are not audited but they are independently examined. An audit is significantly more expensive, and the directors (the management committee) decided at the outset that independent examination was sufficient.

The accountants nevertheless review our records and then compare that review with the statutory accounts, and they have confirmed in their report on page 2 of the accounts that all would appear to be in order and compliant with legislation.

Turning now to page 3 of the accounts which is effectively a summary of the profit and loss account for the year. A little more detailed account is shown at page 11.

You will notice a figure for tax on profit of £1,735 in brackets. This is a repayment of the corporation tax paid on the 2019 profit because of a claim submitted after submission of the 2019 accounts to HMRC. A claim was made that the “Peterhead Principal” should apply whereby a notional charge for volunteer wages could be applied thus reducing the taxable profit to nil. This was accepted by HMRC and that principal has been applied again on the same basis in 2020 and thus no tax charge arises. We will continue applying this until we are advised otherwise.

Staying with profits and losses, a very healthy profit of £25,551 is shown.

On the face of it the shop seems to be doing incredibly well, and it is but, when the shop began, and subsequently, it received various grants, some were capital and some revenue. Accounting policies now require these grants to be released systematically over periods of time. For example, capital grants received at the beginning in respect of the build and development of the shop are released to the profit and loss account over the same period that the building (for example) is being depreciated (effectively 10 years).

The profit of £25,551 includes a release of £15,581 of grants. This is included in "other operating income" as a deduction from administration expenses.

Thus, the operating profit is £9,970 which is still a healthy position. I mention this as I would not want you to think we are capitalists gone mad!

Our trading gross profit was 33.2%

This is perhaps pushed a little higher than might be expected because of the operation of the café at the shop which produces a higher margin than normal shop sales.

However, that was severely curtailed in March when the plague arrived and the café facility closed.

When the tax computation is completed the number of hours worked by the volunteers is costed using the national minimum wage and that is then deducted from the taxable profit thus leaving no taxable profit and no tax. For this year I calculated a volunteer cost of some £45,161.

Page 34 of the accounts is the balance sheet and sets out our assets and liabilities. There is not a lot to comment on here. Assets are written off in equal amounts annually with the building being over a total of 10 years.

A brief mention of 2021 which has only just closed.

This year because of the pandemic we had very little in the way of Café operation, so our income was almost totally sales of products.

Sales amounted to some £174,398 which is an increase of £24,107 or 16% on 2020.

One thing this year did highlight was, as our activity increased, a lack of space for storage etc. I think it is safe to say that 2021 will have returned a net profit which will help with the expansion plans which will also help resolve storage etc.

I believe the shop really came into its own during these strange times because although we would only have 1 or 2 in the shop at a time, we were busy as I believe people felt safer shopping in Crowle than elsewhere.

Credit and a huge vote of thanks must be given to all the volunteers and Carolyn our Shop Manager for keeping the shop operational through exceedingly difficult times.

Finally, a thank you to everyone involved in the shop operation and I'm not going to try and mention everyone because I may miss someone, but you know who you are. Thank you one and all.

Howard Painter, Treasurer

Current and Future Plans

Marketing

During the year, we continued to develop the use of the website www.theshopatcrowle.co.uk and our social media platforms on Facebook and Instagram to advertise and promote specific products and occasions (Christmas, Easter, Valentines etc). The number of followers on these platforms continues to increase and interaction with customers too, this is witnessed by the increased number of visitors from outside of our immediate community including walkers, cyclists etc.

They are also a valuable tool to communicate with the community to inform them of local events such as events at the Hall for example Crowle Searchers Football Tournament, Crowle Players and promoting our Supporters including local businesses. In addition, we support the Parish Council by sharing with our followers (we have a lot more than them!!) their notices such as road closures.

The website and social media platforms are also used to communicate our volunteer events and for recruitment.

We went “the extra mile” for Christmas 2019 with Tasting Events and various other promotions. As Stephen mentioned, local products are a key focus for The Shop, and we have been pleased to participate in a county promotional programme to support local producers which is badged ‘Make it Worcestershire’. This is an activity sponsored by energetic Shop supporter Richard Soper. You may have seen the display materials in The Shop. Some joint events were envisaged but had to be postponed, and we look forward to getting back on track as the lockdown restrictions permit.

Although mostly undertaken post the financial year in question, the website and social media platforms have been an invaluable tool in communicating all the coronavirus-related measures we have had to implement. Not an easy task with the constant changes, nevertheless some positives have come out of all this with us increasing the range of goods available to customers to order and deliveries to vulnerable customers.

We have also started selling Gift Vouchers and are constantly considering new potential income streams, one example being that we are now charging local businesses to advertise on the Till and Noticeboard and to display Flyers.

Finally, our thanks go to Maisie, one of our Duke of Edinburgh Students, for her help with social media, particularly in the setting up of our Instagram profile, and without whom we would have no idea what a hashtag is (#), a meme, a feed, etc.....!

Nick Brett, Promotions & Marketing

Risk Management

I think you will all agree it has been a very 'interesting' year.

I am Incredibly proud of the fact we have kept the Shop open throughout, our volunteers have been amazing and so supportive of the Shop, Carolyn our Manager, and the Management Committee.

Many customers comment on how brilliant they have been and continue to be. Other comments include how safe customers feel when visiting the Shop.

We have had some negative comments about not letting more than one person in at a time but that has been part of our COVID strategy to maintain safety by social distancing for everyone including our volunteers.

Generally, people entering the Shop have been very mindful of the rules and regulations and been appreciative of volunteers ensuring they stick to them during their 'shop'.

Behind the scenes we have had a team of volunteers monitoring Government guidelines and translating these into the Shops Risk Assessment whenever changes occur.

This has been in place since opening but over the last year it has never been a more pertinent document to possess in our tool kit.

We are incredibly fortunate to have an Infection Control specialist on our Team of Volunteers in the form of Eileen Roberts who has taken on the role of keeping us all on our toes and up to date with safety issues.

The Risk Assessment is available for all our volunteers whether shop fronting or behind the scenes to view at any time via our online rota and data storage system – 3Rings – so no one is kept in the dark!

We also have a communications book and regular newsletters from Carolyn to make us aware of any immediate changes.

We did the first version of the Covid specific risk assessment in June 2020, updated it in November and again in January this year. Since January we have set a monthly review period (previously it was every three months or as and when government guidance changes); February and March were reviewed (no changes required) and we have just done a revision to take account of Monday's impending changes as we move into Step 2 of roadmap.

Volunteers have been sanitising all surfaces touched by customers, door/fridge/window handles, the sanitiser unit outside etc; sanitising all areas touched by volunteers, till screen, card machine, telephone, scales, taps, coffee machine, kettle etc; maintaining a constant flow of air throughout the Shop – even in the cold weather!

The need for hand washing has never been so important. Volunteers do this frequently throughout a session and always wash or sanitize after taking a cash transaction. We also always sanitise the card machine after a customer uses to input a pin number rather than use contactless.

Having discussed this with Eileen we do not think that over the last 12 months anyone (customer or volunteer) has contracted COVID from the Shop which corroborates that maintaining safe practices through our regularly updated Risk Assessment has been effective.

My thanks go to the Risk Assessment Team – primarily Eileen but also Sandra, Lisa, and Carolyn for ensuring we adhere to all Government Guidelines and maintain a safe Shop for everyone.

Also, though to our wonderful team of volunteers (whatever they do for the Shop) without whom we would not have been able to maintain this incredibly safe and valuable village facility. We are always on the lookout for more to join us – so if you are interested give the Shop a call.

Trish Hartley, Vice-Chair

Volunteers

I am very pleased to announce we have retained the majority of volunteers who joined the team on Day one, ably assisted by new people coming forwards, from all walks of life and all age ranges.

We have been fortunate to have Carolyn join as Manager, bringing her wealth of experience from M&S to our village shop.

The Shop was/is a lifeline for many during the pandemic and we really appreciate the efforts made by all involved to keep it going during these difficult times, front of house and behind the scenes.

I will be stepping down from the committee and would encourage anyone interested in joining to contact Stephen or Trish for more details.

We had super fun in the pre-opening stages, getting training done and all of us on a huge learning curve but now systems are in place to deal more efficiently with How To's and induction/retraining of new volunteers.

I wish the Shop continued success and will still be popping in on the customer side!

Sue Cole, Volunteer Recruitment & Training

Premises

During the year, several alterations were undertaken, including the conversion of the store (next to the customer toilet) into a Manager's Office.

In addition, several Picnic Tables were bought for use as an external café seating and eating area on the side patio area which has proved to be extremely popular and well used.

Improvements to the patio area were undertaken including to the bordering areas with new planting and free-standing plant boxes. Our thanks go to Helen Dowson for all the cultivating and planting, and Frances Hood for donating plants and hanging baskets, all of whom have greatly brightened up and enhanced The Shop's first impression and external appearance.

Just before the year-end we entered lockdown because of the covid-19 pandemic. Although a lot of the consequent alterations were undertaken post year-end, to comply with social distancing requirements and to keep our customers and volunteers as safe as possible, we installed a Perspex Screen around the Till & Counter Area and introduced a one-way system around the Shop.

Our thanks go to the DIY Team, Paul Bussey, Ivan Treloar, Stephen Denne, John & Caroline Brookes, and all others who have "pitched up" at times to help with all these works.

Looking ahead we are proposing to build an extension to the east side of The Shop (where the current Bin Store is located and which will extend the Shop by c.3m).

The pandemic has delayed these plans, although a planning application has now been submitted and all being well complete the extension by late summer 2021. Further details will be provided in the AGM report for the year ending 31.3.21, in summary the extension would allow us to:-

- convert the current office into retail space
- create a new, larger office
- create a new separate storeroom + 'lockable lobby' with new exterior door for deliveries.
- flexibility to include an extra café table if we felt the need, because of moving some retail shelving into the new space.

It is envisaged that most fit-out work would be DIY, although contractors would be needed for electrics, flooring and plastering – in addition to foundations + providing and installing the new building components. All help welcome when the time comes!

The cost is estimated to be £25,000 which will be funded primarily from our own resources, together with support from some local grant funders.

Our thanks go to Richard Temple-Cox for his help with preparing design drawings and making the planning application for this project.

Nick Brett, Premises

Management Committee for 2020/21

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 five existing members of the Management Committee are as named below. Nick Williams stood down from the Committee and as Treasurer on and Howard Painter was co-opted as Treasurer on.....

Stephen Denne and Sue Cole were re-elected in 2019. As the term of Office is 4 (?) years Stephen Denne is standing to be re-elected and Sue Cole is standing down. Trish Hartley and Nick Brett have indicated their willingness to remain on the Committee; they do not require re-election this year. As a previously co-opted member, Howard Painter stands for election at this Annual Meeting.

Name	Office 2019/20	First appointed
Stephen Denne	Chairman	22 March 2017
Trish Hartley	Vice-Chairman	29 September 2019
Nick Brett	Secretary	29 September 2019
Julie Bott	Committee	29 September 2019
Joan Goodman	Committee	29 September 2019
Sue Cole	Committee	22 March 2017

Julie Bott and Joan Goodman stood down from the Committee during the year.

Two people stand for election to the Committee as new members at this Meeting: Jean Morris and Odette Green.

Crowle Community Shop Limited (trading as The Shop at Crowle)
Registered office:

Blenheim
Netherwood Lane
Crowle
Worcester WR7 4AB

April 2021