



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

Sunday 16 October 2022 at Crowle Millenium Hall

Annual Report to Members 2021/22

Crowle Community Shop Limited

(Trading as The Shop at Crowle)

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

Sunday 16 October 2022 at 11am at Crowle Millenium Hall

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Chairman's Report to Members
3. Financial Report for year ending 31 March 2022
 - Presentation of annual accounts
 - Financial performance and trading outlook
 - Resolution not to appoint an auditor
 - Independent accountant's report
4. Operational reviews:
 - Customers and products
 - Volunteers
 - Premises
5. Management Committee
6. Any other business

Chairman's Report to Members

Thank you everyone for coming to our Annual Meeting and to mark our 4th birthday. I'm joined here today by Nick, Howard, John, Carolyn and Anna. Carolyn, our Shop Manager, returns soon from two months sick leave, and Anna has been standing in in her absence.

It hardly seems possible that four years have passed since we first opened our doors. And it's now nearly seven years since Nick Brett first reached out on behalf of the Parish Council in late 2015 for a small team from the community to get together to research the setting up of a community shop and café – which had come out top of the pops in a local community survey on new facilities.

So many questions needed answering. Sometimes we didn't even know what the questions were! Ultimately, the fundamentals boiled down to three initial cornerstones – they all needed to be in place:

- How can we evidence the need for a shop?
- Can we find a suitable site?
- How much money will we need and where can we get it?

These questions were later followed by 'how can we create appeal for a volunteer workforce?' to work alongside our paid-part-time manager.

Many people here today were central to that initial programme of work and everything that has followed. Without you we could not have got to where we are. Thank you. I would just like to mention Wychavon District Council, who have made a major contribution not only to The Shop but also to our recent Wellbeing Project, and I welcome Patrick Connelly who is here today on behalf of the Wychavon team.

Whilst mentioning the Wellbeing Project, we have joined many other local people and organisations in making a financial contribution to the new facilities. Our takes the form of a picnic table set by the field, with a plaque recording our sponsorship.

It's not that long since our previous Annual Meeting, which was delayed by COVID and took place on date. We are now seeking to get back on track and hold these meetings within a few months of the year end.

In today's meeting we are, strictly, reviewing the year commencing on 1 April 2021, much of which was still dominated by Covid. In many ways, COVID all seems a long time ago, although there are still risks, people are still becoming ill, and we remain watchful.

Our aim throughout the pandemic was quite simple: to stay open and offer a valued service that was as 'COVID-safe' as possible – both for customers and for all those working at The Shop. Nick will elaborate on this in our Risk Management report, after we've heard from Howard, our Treasurer, on how we fared financially during the year.

In the meantime, let me thank Carolyn and all our volunteers (front and back of house) who kept the Shop going throughout these challenging times. We continue to seek and welcome new Volunteers, of course, and Anna will comment further in her report.

Our Local Focus

When we set up The Shop you told us that you wanted us to have a strong emphasis on local products. We're therefore delighted that about two-thirds 65% of our product spend goes to producers within the county or a little beyond. We regularly review new local producer and product options to see how we can extend our range. Of course, you've sampled some of our local items today – many thanks to those suppliers who donated them for the occasion, and to Lisa and her team for setting them all out.

Our local focus is a central part of our wider marketing activities, energetically spearheaded by our Vice-Chairman Nick Brett, using both traditional channels such as the Cryer alongside social media. Nick is especially busy at Christmas, showcasing our many festive products, but also at other calendar events and whenever we have new product news.

Repaying the community

As a community venture, it's no surprise that we set out to have a strong community focus. When we set up The Shop almost all the local community groups supported the venture in one way or another.

At our last meeting I mentioned that, with the success that you've all helped us to achieve, we were in a position to put something back. We had hoped to launch a 'community support and recognition programme', whereby we allocate some modest funds to deserving causes in the community and we have been thinking through how this would work. However, although we would still like to move ahead with this, we have deferred deciding on further details whilst we come to terms with the cost increases that will soon come through on the electricity front, which Howard will touch on later.

Goodbyes

It's sad that, as time goes by, we lose some of the people we've come to know through The Shop.

This year we said goodbye to founder shareholder Donald Pearce. Donald, 93, was a familiar figure to many and relished his weekly trips to The Shop and Café. This highlights the value The Shop adds to many who live alone. Shop volunteers joined those from the Church to organise a spread in the new Platinum Hall after Donald's service in July on the hottest day of the year.

At the time of the previous Premises Report the main interior construction work of the Shop extension has been completed. Since then, the office has been fitted out, complete with new printer, shelving installed in the storage area and the delivery lobby has been brought into use. The team then set about removing the partition walls to the old office and previous staff loo. This was quite a challenge since demolition of the walls had not been in Paul Bussey's mind when he built them. As you will have seen, that area has now been completed and is providing extra retail space as was planned.

Looking to the future, there are plans for a partial covering for the outside café seating area to provide protection against the vagaries of the English weather.

Finally, so many thanks are due to those involved with all the work done - no names, but they know who they are!

Stephen Denne, Chairman

Financial Report for 2021/22

This report is on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022, but I will also very briefly touch on the period to date.

We have circulated a profit and loss statement and a balance sheet from the full accounts, for 2 reasons, one to avoid bombarding you with information than is supposed to help understanding but very often confuses and two to cut down on the paper used.

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 these accounts and report appropriately.

Turning to the profit and loss account for the year.

You will see that we have a trading deficit of some £3,177 compared to a surplus in the previous year of £11,208 but I'll come to that in a moment, so as Corporal Jones from Dad's Army would say "don't panic".

Starting at the top the significant point here is that our sales have decreased by some £21,990 and that, I believe, is a direct result of the easing of the rules and so on about covid and customers becoming less fearful of mixing. I think during the height of the pandemic shopping at Crowle's shop was probably regarded as a lot safer than supermarkets.

Moving down our gross profit is at around 28%. The target gross profit is 26% on sales but this is slightly higher due to the café. It would normally be expected to be a bit higher but over the year to March 22 and certainly in the previous period, the café part wasn't fully operational.

Expenditure has remained steady with some small increases but the one I want to particularly mention is the bottom one of depreciation and back to my Corporal Jones comment about "don't panic". There is a £4,000 increase in depreciation in 2022 over 2021. This is principally due to the shop extension. The depreciation policy on the building was set so as to write the cost off over the life of the licence or lease (whichever it is we have with the Hall). That is fine for the original build but some 4 years or so later we have added £28,400 worth of extension. That extension still runs on the same timetable as the original build and has, therefore added another £4000 to the depreciation charge. The point not to lose sight of is that depreciation is not cash lost as payments but a bookkeeping adjustment.

Continuing down our release of grants is significantly less in 2022 as for one we have no covid grant.

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).

You will note that there is no tax charge and that is because we are again applying the “Peterhead Principle” whereby a notional charge for volunteer wages has been applied thus reducing the taxable profit to nil. This principle has been accepted by HMRC and that principle has been applied again on exactly the same basis as previous years and thus no tax charge arises. We will continue applying this until we are advised otherwise.

During the year to 31 March 2022 there were 5,014 volunteer hours recorded. The actual hours is undoubtedly very much higher than that as those are only the recorded rota hours and don't account for the backroom volunteers' time. Using £9.50 as a minimum wage that would equate to a wage of £47,633!

The balance sheet sets out our assets and liabilities. There is not a lot to comment on here. Assets are written off in equal amounts annually over their estimated useful lives. For example, computers equally over 3 years.

A brief mention of the year to date.

The shop extension is complete and provides more storage space, shop space and an office for our manager.

Looking at the year to date, that is 1 April 2022 to 14 October, the downward trend in sales is continuing which I believe firmly demonstrates that customers are getting used to living with covid and maybe no longer seeing the shop as a sanctuary from the plague.

Year to date sales were £85,138 compared to £91,049 for the same period last year. Costs have increased slightly but the big change we are about to encounter, the hike in energy prices, has yet to hit us.

An exercise I did on June to June electricity charges showed our bills would move from some £3,500 a year to around £9,500 disregarding any government help.

While sales are lower it is still a commendable performance for a small business serving the village and surrounding area and a huge vote of thanks has to be given to all the volunteers and Carolyn our shop manager for keeping the shop operational through very difficult times.

Finally, a thank you to everyone involved in the shop's operation and that includes those you don't see who maintain it, bank the takings and do a whole host of other things in the background - 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

There were no questions to Howard Painter. The approval of the accounts was proposed by Paul Bussey and seconded by Richard Temple Cox and duly accepted by those present. There followed a formal vote not to appoint auditors, which was proposed by Sheila McIndoe, seconded by Neil Smith, and approved by those present. The appointment of Cadwalladers as independent accountants was proposed by Sandra Gellert, seconded by John Brookes, and approved by those present.

Operational Reports

Customers and products

At the start of the year (April 21) covid restrictions were still affecting process and procedures of the shop, especially the Café.

It was clear customers wanted to be able to use Café, the outside tables being very popular. Once we were able to open up inside, we have gradually increased the covers at tables from 2 to 4, making sure both customers and volunteers comfortable with the process.

The extension has been a fantastic bonus to the shop allowing us to grow the interior space in the shop itself as well as having a purpose-built storeroom and office. A huge thanks must go to the team who built and finishes the extension, high standards always being top priority!

Last Xmas (Dec 21) the extension was not finished but it did allow us to use the space to store excess Christmas stock and be able to pack all the orders received which hugely increased from the previous year.

I will forever have in my memory the empty dark store space full of lots of boxes of Fladbury Pies and Freeman's Meats, and Lisa and I with bags numbered popping items into all of the bags – not sure how we would have coped without this space!

The extension allows us to easily see the stock position of consumables as well as shop items, so no more going up a ladder to find coffee cups!

Volunteers have also said how thankful they are that there are no more ladders!

Keeping accurate stock positions to aid with stock take has been a big focus this year and I would like to thank Julie Bott for her help with this.

Our shop cannot run without our fantastic volunteers' team and this year we have some new volunteers join us. The feedback from them is positive and with the new training we can continue to keep shop fully staffed whilst maintaining the legal training requirements, and at a pace specific to each volunteer.

During the year we held a Volunteers event - "sausage with a view" - and also a Big Breakfast raising c.£750 for a Breast Cancer Charity.

As we move towards Christmas we will once again be decorating the shop and displaying Christmas products ready to present on November 14th.

Finally, a big thank you to all volunteers, Committee, and customers who keep the shop going, especially Anna Denne who has held the reins in my absence during sick leave.

Carolyn Bull, Manager

There were no questions asked. Mia Parslow registered that she felt Carolyn had done a wonderful job with Mary Rollason agreeing. All present agreed and thanked Carolyn for her hard work.

Risk Management

- It's been yet another 'interesting' year but one in which we have been returning to normality - whatever that may be
- The Shop has continued to stay open only having to close on a couple of occasions due to volunteer shortages
- Yet again our volunteers have been brilliant throughout and are incredibly supportive of the Shop, Carolyn (our Manager) and the Management Committee
- Our behind the scenes team of volunteers continue to monitor Government guidelines (even though COVID rules were scrapped in February) and translate any changes into the Shops Risk Assessment whenever they occur. This Risk Assessment will be a permanent fixture of our Health and Safety toolkit and available for all volunteers to read via 3Rings (our Rota and Data storage system) and in the Shop.
- When Lateral Flow Tests became the norm for ascertaining if anyone's symptoms were indeed COVID the Shop became a registered hub supplying tests to whoever asked for them. People came from far and wide when it became known the Shop was on the list of suppliers. We did however try to ensure our community took preference.
- Volunteers continue to sanitise all surfaces mentioned last year on a regular basis including 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 Velux windows caught us (me) out during a wet spell when rain started pouring in – a lesson to be learned that even though we still want to keep a good flow of air we do need to monitor the weather!
- As we did throughout the pandemic hand washing is still an important practice with volunteers frequently doing so during a session and always washing or sanitizing their hands after taking a cash transaction. If a customer inputs their pin number rather than use contactless then the card machine still receives an additional clean.
- The limit of numbers allowed in the Shop at any one time is no longer an issue the café now being in full swing with two tables of four and one of three ready for anyone to partake in a meal or indulge in a cuppa and piece of Lisa's cake.
- There is no longer the obligatory rule for wearing masks although some customers do continue to do so which is absolutely respected by all our volunteers.
- The customer toilet is another area which is cleaned regularly during the day and even though this is for café customers use only we do sometimes frustratingly get people walking in to use it without making purchases. Hopefully the new facility at the side of the Platinum Hall will overcome this for us
- Service from the window remains for any customer who is unable to personally enter the shop and also as an extra service area on busy Saturdays during the football season. A bit of patience is required if there is a queue but most of our customers are accepting of this.
- As always our request is for people to be patient with our volunteers if they are busy or dealing with other customers. They are the lifeblood of our Shop and are passionately committed to the ensuring the Shop is kept open during all our advertised hours. Without these wonderful people

(whatever they do for the Shop) we would not have been able to maintain this incredibly safe and valuable village facility both during the pandemic and into the future.

Duke of Edinburgh Volunteers:

- We continue to have enquiries about DofE candidates returning (or starting) to gain experience in the Shop.
- Sadly, when COVID hit our opening hours were revised to earlier closing and not opening on a Sunday. The decision to temporarily cease supporting the DofE scheme unfortunately remains unless they are free on a Saturday morning before opening (8.00 – 9.30) or during school holidays. This would be dependent on availability and the volunteers on duty being comfortable with an additional person in the Shop
- We hope at some time we will be able welcome them back and we look forward to their return whenever that may be.

Finally....

- My thanks go to all our volunteers for continuing to maintain the necessary Due Diligence required in order keep the Shop safe for everyone.

Trish Hartley, Secretary

Neil Smith asked how many volunteers would be required if they only do one session a week. Trish Hartley stated that would mean 52 active volunteers would be needed.

Richard Temple Cox enquired if there is a possibility of employing a 'number 2' to support the Shop Manager. Howard Painter advised that at the moment the Shop could not financially afford it.

Volunteers

If you have attended previous AGMs, you will be aware that one of the key challenges that we face at The Shop is the recruitment and retention of our volunteer workforce. Despite this challenge I can report to you that in the year ending 31st March 2022 6 new volunteers completed their training. Volunteer recruitment was difficult during the various lockdowns; however, I can report that there has been a marked upturn in volunteers coming forward since that time.

We warmly welcomed some of the Ukrainian people who have found themselves in the vicinity of Crowle due to the political situation in their homeland. They volunteered at The Shop to have the opportunity to gain work experience in the UK and to improve their English and I am sure we all commend them for their bravery and resilience. Some of them are now in paid employment and some have left the area, finding homes in other parts of the country, meaning that they are no longer available for shifts but I am sure you will all join me in wishing them the very best for their future wherever that might be in the world.

If you know of anyone who might be interested in joining our happy band, please do urge them to get in touch with Jean Morris or Carolyn. The first step couldn't be easier – just come in and watch us in action to see what an average shift looks and feels like and if you like what you see we can take your training forward. Most volunteers do express a degree of trepidation, especially around the till and coffee machine but I promise you will get the hang of it, and, in the meantime, there are always lots of other jobs that you can help with which are less technical. We are a very friendly and supportive group and help is never far away.

The recruitment of volunteers is key to the sustainability of The Shop at Crowle – nothing stands still for ever; we need to keep moving forward with new faces on board.

Anna Denne, Relief Manager

Premises

At the time of the previous Premises Report the main interior construction work of the Shop extension has been completed. Since then, the office has been fitted out, complete with new printer, shelving installed in the storage area and the delivery lobby has been brought into use. A screening fence for the waste bin storage area was also constructed. The team then set about removing the partition walls to the old office and previous staff loo. This was quite a challenge since demolition of the walls had not been in Paul Bussey's mind when he built them. As you will have seen, that area has now been completed and is providing extra retail space as was planned.

Looking to the future, there are plans for a partial covering for the outside café seating area to provide protection against the vagaries of the English weather. We await publication of our planning application on the Wychavon portal.

Finally, so many thanks are due to those involved with all the work done - no names, but they know who they are!

John Brookes, Premises

Management Committee for 2022/23

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 members of the Management Committee who served during the year are as named below. Odette Green stood down from the Committee during the year.

Stephen Denne, Howard Painter, Trish Hartley, Jean Morris and Nick Brett have indicated their willingness to remain on the Committee; they do not require re-election this year.

Name	Office 2021/22	First appointed
Stephen Denne	Chairman	22 March 2017
Nick Brett	Vice-Chairman	29 September 2019
Howard Painter	Treasurer	20 February 2020
Trish Hartley	Secretary	29 September 2019
Jean Morris	Committee	11 April 2021
John Brookes	Committee	30 January 2022

Stephen Denne advised the meeting that Odette Green had decided to stand down from the MC. John Brookes had been proposed by Paul Bussey and seconded by Ivan Treloar. The vote was carried with John Brookes being duly elected to the Committee.

Any Other Business

Sheila McIndoe asked if there are any plans to change the coffee machine. Stephen Denne replied that there wasn't but if the machine is not performing it would be looked into.

Neil Smith asked if the accounts could be submitted prior to the AGM. Howard Painter advised that they should be available 3 weeks prior in future.

Mary Rollason asked about covers for the outside cafe tables. Stephen Denne confirmed that the Shop has had them before and he has discussed this with Ivan Treloar. The issue has been that water has gushed off them when raining. Any suggestions for addressing this were welcome; the shop at Feckenham has done something which appears to be all weather/temperature covering. Richard Temple Cox mentioned that if we were to have a permanent structure then planning permission would be required unless it is taken down for a month each a year when it would not be necessary - neither would it be required if the structure was permanent but the covering not. It was agreed to look into this.

Sandra Gellert asked if there comes a point when the reserves could be put back into the Community rather than the Shop. Stephen Denne replied that this has happened with the Shop sponsoring kit for the Football Club in a small way, but it needs to be considered on a more structured basis. Howard Painter mentioned the need to look at who wants the support, with people needing know what they wanted and to ask for the support and then the Shop can look at it. He also confirmed that the Shop is not a charity but if support is needed it will be looked into.

Neil Smith raised a laugh with a comment that the Shareholders could always be given a dividend – Howard responded with a definitive NO!

Lee Turner thanked Stephen Denne for everything he does for the Shop, who replied that it is a team effort and it's great to see people's combined efforts. Mary Rollason added that it was Stephen who started everything who replied that actually it was Nick Brett who started the Shop project when a member of the Parish Council.

There then followed a presentation to Carolyn Bull to recognise her two year anniversary as the Manager of the Shop.

All in attendance were then invited to share a glass of 'bubbly' in recognition of the success of The Shop

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

Registered office:

Crowle Parish Hall

Church Road

Crowle

Worcester WR7 4AB

October 2022