

Annual General Meeting for year ending 31st December 2023

Thursday, 11 April 2024 at The Good Shepherd, Dockenfield

1. Introduction and Apologies

1.1. Roger welcomed everybody to the AGM.

1.2. Roger explained the process of the AGM.

1.3. Present

- **Officers and committee:** Roger Holmes, Bruce Milne, Claire Beer, Penny Hearn, Paul Howard, Sharon Turner-Mumford, Lou Peddle
- **Staff:** Clive Bingle, Lisa Smith
- **Minutes Secretary:** Alison Lamb
- Residents of Dockenfield and Frensham

2. Approval of the minutes of AGM held on 13 April 2023

2.1. Minutes were handed out at the meeting. No questions were raised.

2.2. The minutes of the AGM for the year ending 31st December 2022 were unanimously approved by the meeting and signed by Roger Holmes as being a true and accurate record.

3. Shop Manager's Report (Lou Peddle)

3.1. Lou gave thanks to everyone and the volunteers for supporting the shop. Lou confirmed that she is enjoying the role after being in it for almost one year. Lou pointed out some of the valuable changes that have been made, particularly the wider range of bread products now available. This year has been difficult due to the inevitable price increases. Lou is always open to new product requests and encouraged everybody to let her know if they have any.

4. Treasurer's Report and Approval of Accounts (Claire Beer)

4.1. 2023 has been a year of financial challenges, a lot of which are beyond our control. We are very pleased to report a 3% increase in sales, which might not seem a lot, but we are managing to maintain the huge uplift in sales we enjoyed during the covid period. This year's sales of £279,046 are 50% higher than 2019, and more importantly show a 9% rise in gross profit from 2022, thanks to tight control on margins despite continuing food inflation. Unfortunately, the good news on the gross profit line hasn't been enough to compensate for increased costs, particularly our premises costs, IT and of course salaries – we wouldn't be able to function

without the very hard-working staff, and a small pay rise was well earned. As a result, we are showing a deficit of £1,241 for the year compared to an almost break-even outturn in 2022 (£90 surplus). Having said which, our original budget for the year was forecasting a loss of nearly £6,000 so we are delighted that such strong sales, particularly in the run up to Christmas, have greatly reduced what we originally thought to be a much worse case. Our reserves are able to cover this shortfall in the short term, but sadly once again there will be no Big Give Back to local good causes.

- 4.2. Net Income from the Post Office.** The good news this year is that the Post Office income has risen a little, from £16,559 in 2022 to £17,245 in 2023, but despite this it continues to be heavily subsidised by the shop. The committee believes that this remains a very important service nonetheless, but we have taken the difficult decision to cut back on the hours a little such that from March 2024 the Post Office counter is no longer open at lunchtime. In addition, all the staff are now “shop employees” with the necessary Post Office training, and crucially the authority to conduct shop business as well as Post Office. As we are now operating as one team, it will be impossible to allocate costs to either shop or Post Office, and so this will be the last year that the Post Office income and associated staffing costs are shown separately in the accounts.
- 4.3. Expenses.** In spring 2023 we noticed that the card reader charges had more than doubled, without any warning from our supplier, which was compounded by Fidelity (our EPOS provider) deciding to finish the 50% discount we used to receive as a CIC on their maintenance and support contract. As a result, the IT charges have rocketed from £1,311 in 2022 to £4,688 in 2023. We now have a new card reader contract with a different supplier which will help, but this category is likely to remain over £4,000 for 2024 as the proportion of card sales continues to increase. In addition, our premises costs have gone from £8,478 in 2022 to £11,700 in 2023, mainly after having had a bad year with issues with plumbing and the fridges. Having benefited from being on a fixed price electricity contract when prices rose sharply in 2022, this came to an end towards the end of 2023 and will adversely impact 2024.
- 4.4. Fixed Assets.** The new till was purchased in January 2023 and is included in this figure.
- 4.5. Current Assets.** These represent the total of bank and cash balances (£49,857), stock (£14,619), amounts owed to us in respect of card transactions and newspaper vouchers and other sundry prepayments (£6,364).
- 4.6. Current Liabilities.** These represent the total of amounts owing to suppliers (£6,227), plus PAYE and VAT owing to HMRC for the last quarter (£2,764) and sundry accrued expenses (£876).
- 4.7.** Claire thanks Karen Wales for the finance support she has provided this year.

4.8. Nick Houston asked why we decided to stay with Fidelity as our EPOS provider. Paul Howard said that we reviewed EPOS systems a couple of years ago and decided to stay with Fidelity – the pc and till were replaced and all software brought up to date and everything placed under maintenance contracts. There will be an opportunity in two to three years' time to review EPOS options again.

4.9. The accounts for 2022 were unanimously approved by the meeting.

Proposer: Penny Hearn

Secunder: Nick Houston

5. Chairman's report (Roger Holmes)

5.1. Roger confirmed that after 3 previous managers, the shop now has a successful manager with Lou joining. With the profitability concerns the shop has been experiencing this year, the recent restructuring that has taken place has helped the shop stay afloat and provided more financial stability. The increase in turnover this year has also helped sustain and keep the shop going. Roger confirmed it was unfortunate that there would be no Give Back this year but hoped this will change in the future. Roger gave thanks to the volunteers, committee and paid team, particularly Val who has left the shop after giving 17 years of service. Roger confirmed that he will now be stepping down as Chairman but will still remain a volunteer. He confirmed that Paul Howard has offered to take on the chairman role going forward.

5.2. David Monroe asked if the shop needed to make more money can we not just increase prices. It was confirmed that it has been a very difficult year with prices continually increasing; the shop has been very diligent in maintaining margins whilst mindful of price increases as there has to be a balance otherwise people will go elsewhere to shop.

5.3. Neil Mumford asked whether we should consider changing the supplier of fruit and veg as the quality has gone down and prices are high. It was confirmed that during covid there was more demand which helped the quick turnover of fruit and veg; when volumes reduce this causes a shelf-life issue. It was confirmed that we would look at other options, including editing the range to keep produce fresher for longer.

5.4. Mayonne Caldicott suggested there should be more bespoke ordering with smaller quantities to make it look more appealing and reduce food waste. Lisa Smith confirmed that Steve (fruit and veg supplier) would be happy to do this and that we would consider smaller baskets rather than large orders.

5.5. David Munroe confirmed that he was impressed by the quality of fruit and veg when it first comes into the shop, but this does not last long as it is there for too long.

5.6. Adrian Lamb asked whether the high Xmas sales were related to the sale of hampers. It was confirmed that it was due to various factors, including hampers, specialised chocolates and jams as people liked buying something more special.

5.7. Introduction to changes in the Committee

5.7.1. Vote on re-election of committee as a group was voted as a yes.

Proposer: Mayonne Caldicot

Secunder: Martin Beer

5.7.2. Paul Howard to take the role of new Chairman was voted as a yes.

Proposer: Penny Hearn

Secunder: Bridgette Wilson

5.7.3. There are 3 vacancies to fill – IT, HR and Marketing. These will be advertised on the website and if people wanted to make an application to contact Lou or Paul. Deadline to apply was confirmed as 30 April 2024 (applications to be reviewed at next committee meeting).

6. AOB

6.1. Paul gave thanks to Penny and Roger. Penny has been a great asset to the committee and dealt with lots of recruitment and changes. Pleased that Penny will remain a volunteer. Roger during his time has overseen a major shop refurbishment; Covid and the recent inflation period. He has handled everything calmly whilst always maintaining a considered approach. Pleased that Roger will remain a volunteer. There was a vote of thanks from everybody. Gifts of wine were presented to Penny and Roger.

6.2. Paul accepted the role of Chairman with the primary objectives of ensuring the shop continues to support the local villages as a community hub with its services and products and remains viable and thrives. Whilst leading the committee to support the manager, staff and volunteers to successfully run the shop.

6.3. Penny proposed a vote of thanks to Martin for all his work in organising the volunteer rota.

6.4. Roger thanks everybody for attending and closed the meeting.