**Winford Community Shop Ltd**

**First Annual Members’ Meeting**

**3rd December 2019**

1. Phil Febrey, Chairman, welcomed everybody (28 people ), and introduced the members of the steering group who were present: Liz Weaver, Denise Poole, Dick Whittington, Sue Johnson , Carol House.
2. **Apologies:** Pavla Sammut (steering group), Jane Thompson (steering group), Glenis Shiner, Jean Pearce, Pippa Herring, Veronica Hinton.
3. **Chairman’s report:**

**Can I first remind you about the journey we have been on so far.**

**As you recall in August 2018 it was announced that the shop and post office was to be closed. However, there was a feeling in the community that there was a real need to keep the facility open if at all possible.**

**In September of last year the Parish Council instigated a consultation meeting to gauge the support that there might be. With an excess of 80 people attending the overwhelming consensus was that it would be a great shame to lose the facility and that there would be sufficient support to set up a community venture.**

**A Steering Group was formed from those residents who wanted to become actively involved.**

**In December the Parish was consulted to establish if there would be sufficient support to contribute to a community share issue to assist towards funding the project.**

**On the back of the response it was possible to go ahead with the share issue in the newly formed Community Benefit Society, Winford Community Shop Ltd.**

**Following the launch of the offer we now have 100 shareholders contributing £28,275.**

**Negotiations over a 5 year lease began in January and were finalised in June when we took over the day to day operations of the shop pending the finalisation of being awarded a new Post Office contract.**

**Part of the Business Plan was to undertake a minor refit as work had to be done to change the Post Office counter.**

**A grant of 80% has been received in the form of European funding from the Rural Development Programme For England LEADER Programme.**

**As you will all have seen the refurbishment was completed last week and a lot of positive feedback has been received.**

**All this would not have been achieved without the Steering Group working immensely hard and putting in a huge amount of unpaid time over the last year. I can confess that it has been very stressful at times but we have worked together to achieve so much.**

**Can I also thank the volunteers that have come forward to do all sorts of things to help us get this far and without whom there would be no shop. I would also like to thank Dawn and Carol for having faith in what we are trying to achieve and keeping the shop going before we finally took over.**

**If the business is now to thrive going forward we will need more volunteers to step up.**

**It is also important that more of the community uses the facility to ensure that it continues to be financially viable.**

**Phil Febrey**

1. **Treasurer’s report:**

**We took over the shop from John Gallagher at the end of May, we also took over his**

**existing till which was very basic and didn’t give us much idea of how we were doing, but**

**we did know that we were holding our own.**

**The new till was launched in October and we used it for a few weeks before we closed**

**for our refit. This new till generates many detailed reports. We can see:**

**What stock we are holding**

**What items we need to reorder**

**What stock is not selling**

**When are busy times**

**Number of customers per day**

**Average spend per person**

**Now we are getting a more detailed breakdown we will be able to get a better idea of**

**how we are doing.**

**On 20th November we took over the Post Office. We closed for one week whilst the Post**

**Office transformed the counter area and reopened us as a Post Office Local.**

**This was not our choice as we lost the Post Office salary and this was replaced by a**

**commission only payment, now an unknown figure, but it could be just one third of the Sub Postmaster salary they were paying previously.**

**This means that the shop is subsidising the Post Office, and as a result we must increase**

**both the Post Office business and the shop business in order that we can continue to run**

**the Post Office and pay the original Post Office staff.**

**When we have our next members’ meeting we will be able to give you a more**

**comprehensive idea of how we are doing.**

**The total cost of the refit is £20,190 with the Post Office contributing £2,040 towards this.**

**This leaves a balance of £18,150 of which 80% will be funded from a grant from Leader**

**(EU monies).**

**As well as the refit we will be getting a new ice cream freezer, coffee machine and a**

**machine for dispensing milk into glass bottles.**

**We have received of £28,275 from 101 shareholders in the form of shares issued, £1,150 in donations and a grant of £2000 from Winford Parish Council**

**We would urge you and your friends and neighbours to make full use of the shop and**

**Post Office, spread the word. Did you know that you can do most banking transactions at**

**the Post Office, just ask us next time you are in, you may be surprised.**

**Liz Weaver**

1. **Election of Management Committee**

There was a show of hands to indicate support for electing the current steering group to be the new Management Committee.

1. **Volunteers**

Denise Poole then put out a request for more volunteers to help in the shop and join the rota. Dick added his support for Denise’s request. We will also need more people to help with the post office as well, because we need people to cover Dawn’s absences.

1. **Q and A**

* Volunteers – there was a suggestion that we all ask people outright to come and volunteer – actually door-knock and speak to people. Phil explained that without more volunteers we could have to reduce opening hours
* New till – there was a comment that people in the village have complained about long queues when the new till was first used. Phil responded that we have to have confidence in the till and that long term, this issue will be solved. Phil has not had time yet to put all the stock on the till and this has been a huge task. This will be solved over time. The benefits of the new till and the potential it offers with for example ordering stock etc , will outweigh the initial teething problems.
* Suggestion - could we get some publicity to the school PTA to encourage the parents to shop in their own community. Denise replied that Veronica’s daughter is on the PTA and we have approached them.
* Can we get a contribution from the Airport community Fund? Hugh Gregor is going to a meeting on Friday and will ask about a contribution
* Can we produce cards to go out to the public to ask for volunteers?
* Question about knocking on doors – Rick said Winford choir used to do this to raise funds – and it was successful – the point being that one to one conversations are what produce results. Phil said that they would be asking people who come into the shop, but that he would also take up his offer to knock on doors.
* Volunteers – Hugh asked what sessions were difficult to fill – Denise replied that the 4-6pm session is always a problem. Sally commented that some people are afraid of the till but Phil said that it is empowering for people to learn.
* Hugh asked if Felton was not represented – but Denise replied that we have volunteers from all 3 villages.
* Hugh told the meeting that there will be a layby soon in front of the new houses opposite the shop – this should help customers to park.
* Dick commented that not everyone knows all the things that the PO offers – with cash machines and banks closing, the PO can be very useful.
* Dick told the meeting about the coffee machine and milk dispensing machine. We hope that this will attract new customers/younger people. Coffee brings in a lot of profit
* Maureen commented that that volunteers only doing one 2 hour shift almost have to relearn at the beginning of every shift.
* Jan Longden asked if more training could be offered – Phil replied yes!
* Hugh asked if we could get work experience students or Duke of Edinburgh students – Phil replied that we will be trying this.

The meeting closed at 8.05pm