**Annual Members’ Meeting**

**Friday 3rd October 2025**

**6.30 for 7pm at Winford Village Hall**

**Agenda**

**Present:** Pippa and Joe Herring, Denise Poole,Dave Pearce, Rosemary Holdman, Carol House, Stuart Mackie, David Ryan, Noah Abbott, Dick Whittington, Jan and Pete Longden, Phil Febrey, Andy House, Jane Thompson.

**Apologies:** Jane Spanner, Catherine Hunter, Yvonne Chapman, Mary Douglas-Jones, Angela Britton, Miranda Roberts, Simon Martin, Celia Martin, Elaine Gibbinns.

1. **Chairman’s Report**

Dick Whittington introduced himself as Acting Chair and read his report:

**Good evening and welcome to our Annual Members’ Meeting.**

**First of all thanks to Jane Thompson who has been our Chair for the last several years – Jane stood down earlier this year, after playing a key role in getting the community shop established, refurbished and running successfully.**

**The last twelve months have been rather difficult , as I’m sure you will be aware, with the sword of Damocles looming over us for much of the time. For the last year we have been on a very short-term lease arrangement while Helen, our landlord, has been trying to sell the property. The latest position appears to be more hopeful, but I’ll leave Dave Pearce, who has been keeping in regular touch with Helen through the year, to give you a fuller update a little later.**

**Operationally and financially we kept our head above water, which given the circumstances was probably all that could be expected. Our staff did a great job –I think we can be proud of the service our village post office gives. We did occasionally have to close owing to sickness and other issues, Phil is our only ‘volunteer’ who is qualified to work in the post office, and he gives a huge amount of his time. This is something we need to address.**

**We are now working on the assumption that the shop should be safe for at least six months, and hopefully longer. So there is at least some light at the end of the tunnel. That means that rather than looking over our shoulders all the time we can now think about taking the shop forward, including some key priorities:**

**- Securing the future of Winford Shop and Post Office, whether as a community run shop, or as a commercial business. If the former this may mean we need more investment, eg if there is a need to separate services from the attached dwelling.**

**- Getting more people to use the shop (and getting those who do to spend more) – so more publicity, but word of mouth is even better. We also need to review our product range and display.**

**- Recruiting more volunteers – we are too reliant on a small number of people, which isn’t sustainable in the long term. Serving on the counter – but other essential tasks too, such as ordering and record keeping.**

**- Getting more back-up resource for the Post Office – it needs to be volunteer(s) because we can’t afford to increase the wage bill**

**- Recruiting new committee members – most of us have been there since day one, new ideas and enthusiasm are needed after six years.**

**- Succession Planning, including the committee, and key roles behind the scenes.**

**We always welcome members’ ideas, but especially at this stage. If you know anyone you think might be able to help please encourage them to get involved – or let us know. We really do need your support. Please let is know what you think, all questions and idea are welcome this evening.**

**Finally, our thanks to all involved, and to everyone who has supported the community shop, whether as employee, volunteer, supporter, supplier or customer.**

**We know how important the shop and post office is to the village, we will do our best to keep it there, at the heart of the community.**

**Dick Whittington**

Jane thanked Dick for taking over as chair and said although she was standing down but that she would continue to help in the future.

1. **Treasurer’s Report**

Stuart Mackie read his report:

**The financial statements for the year to 31 March 2025 are presented in the format which we are required to file with our regulator, the FCA. These have again been independently reviewed by our Accountants, Stanley Joseph, to provide members with assurance on their fair presentation.**

**As a community benefit society of our size, we are entitled to an exemption from full audit, which would be a more rigorous examination. We have always asked members to waive the requirement for audit on cost-benefit grounds, and we will again ask for members to vote for this tonight.**

**Details of the trading results can be seen on pages 10 and 11 of the Report and Accounts which members have received. The Shop Turnover this year was £195,045, which was almost 10% lower than the prior year, as trading was perhaps adversely affected by the continuing uncertainty over the long term future for the shop. The retail gross profit margin percentage was maintained at a level similar to prior years, and so the profit contribution from the shop was lower by just over £3,300 year on year at £44,636.**

**The Post Office contract income did improve significantly this year by about £3,300 as the Post Office introduced new pricing structures to try to help the viability of small franchises. Although staff costs rose in line with the Government’s adjustment to minimum wage rates, and sharp electricity price rises were incurred as we moved out of a previous 3 year fixed rate contract, some other cost savings were achieved, and so the net overhead costs of the shop overall were about £3,100 higher than the year before.**

**The reported profit for the year of £668 was therefore lower by £2,591 than the previous year’s £3,259.**

**In this financial year there was no new capital expenditure, and the company’s cash balances on 31 March 2025 were £52,210. Total balance sheet net assets were £55,417 (of which £10,611 is the depreciated value of the fixtures and fittings of the shop) which provides a healthy surplus over the members capital contributions of £29,650.**

1. **Vote to agree accounts** - proposed by Denise Poole and seconded by Andy House. Passed by all.
2. **Vote to disapply audit** – proposed by Denise Poole and seconded by Jan Longden. Passed by all.
3. **Election of Management Committee** Joe Herring proposed the re-election of the existing committee (without Jane who is stepping down). This was seconded by David Ryan. Passed by all.
4. **Moving forward: the future of shop.**

Dave Pearce described our landlord Helen’s latest plans for the building, which will allow the shop to continue:

**Since our meeting last year Helen has explored various options for her ownership of the Cottage and Shop premises. As you may be aware, her attempts to sell, including at auction, were unsuccessful.**

**Helen has therefore decided to separate the shop from the cottage and for us to enter into a rental agreement for a period that we can decide on which could be the continuation of the current rolling one month arrangement or for a longer period.**

**In separating the shop from the cottage we understand there will need to be some adjustments to the floor plan of the shop as some space will be lost at the back of the shop as well as the wooden side storage area.**

**Once Helen has received the quote from her builder, and assuming it is within her cost estimate, Helen will share the plans with us so we can consider the implications in detail and decide how the floor area will be reconfigured along with how to replace the lost storage space.**

**This is a positive move to secure the presence of the Community Shop and Post Office in Winford.**

1. **Noah Abbott: thoughts from a member of the team**

**My experience and involvement with the shop started 4 ½ years ago at the age of 14. My friend and I wanted to help the community as part of our voluntary skills for the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, so we started up a paper round service *(for the shop*) delivering on our bikes to the village. After the three month period came to an end, we decided to continue doing the paper round on Sunday mornings and along with this we were offered a job (*in the shop*) on Saturday mornings. It didn’t take long for Saturday morning shifts to become one of the highlights of my week. I loved the fact that I had the opportunity to continue to give back to the community, to have my first proper job and also earn my very own money! The shop gave me the platform to develop my social skills through meeting new people and gaining confidence in unfamiliar settings. I also developed organisational skills – from basic things such as stocktaking, checking dates, and also punctuality skills like making sure I was up in time and there for 8am (which maybe I wasn’t every time!)**

**The opportunity I was given by the shop is the reason I have got to where I am today, having started an apprenticeship as an audit associate last month. Everyone who knows me** **would say** **how much of an advocate I am for the shop, and it’s great to see that the shop is continuing to provide working opportunities to young people in the village. While I may not have as much time to volunteer/work at the shop anymore, I’ll always remain an advocate and supporter of the work they do to serve those in our community who need it most, along with all the others that rely on our community shop. Thank you.**

1. **Volunteers**

Pippa Herring described the value and enthusiasm of the volunteers, who are the shop’s most valuable asset. She explained how we need to attract more people to volunteer, to spread the load and continue to always have two people working in the shop at all times. Pippa appealed to all present to spread the word and pass on the benefits of volunteering in the shop, as evidenced by Noah’s contribution.

Discussion followed including a proposal to contact Chew Valley, Backwell and Churchill Schools, and the parents, to explain the benefits of volunteering eg through the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, and put an article in the Chew Valley Gazette telling Noah’s story.

1. **Q and A - none**

Andy House thanked the committee and all the volunteers for their hard work.

Dick Whittington thanked everybody for coming.

The meeting finished at 8pm