



Chair's Statement 2022-23

I am pleased to report to our members the results for our financial year 2022-2023, and to briefly summarise the key points, along with details of current trading and our future plans.

A year ago, I reported that trading had been “more challenging than we would have wished” and in the subsequent financial year to March 2023, this represents something of an understatement – particularly when combined with two break-ins over Christmas and the lack of a full time manager for nearly 3 months.

Shop sales did grow to £193,412 and gross profit did improve, but against a background of high inflation and massive energy price increases the reported loss was a disappointing £13,464 for the year.

However I am pleased to report that in the first five months of the current financial year, sales, margin and profit and loss have all improved significantly. Sales are 22% ahead of last year, and we had our best ever May, June and July, surpassing the peaks of when the Proms were held in the Butty. This means we are exceeding all our stretch targets and are trading at a break-even position or slightly better.

While this gives us good cause to be positive, we know from last years' experience that there is no guarantee that this improvement will be maintained. As a result, the staff and volunteers remain fully focused on striving to maintain this significant improvement – which if continued, would allow us to achieve a break-even position.

In other news we successfully applied for to Wychavon District Council to amend our plans to extend the shop. We were recently awarded planning approval for a simplified design, which will help to materially reduce the build costs. Work has to commence within two years to retain planning consent. However, in view of the uncertain trading conditions the committee is not intending to commence fund raising until there is clear evidence that the Shop trading is stable and sustainable for the foreseeable future.

In terms of stability, the shop continues to maintain a healthy cash position, but continuing losses have reduced our reserves. At the time of writing, the surplus cash – after all known liabilities are settled is around £6,000, a noticeable reduction on the £14,000 reported in last year's statement.

Looking forward, your committee has set a clear focus for 2023-24:

- Trading: Ensure at least a break-even trading position by meeting our stretch sales and margin targets for the year.
- Grant applications: To be actively pursued.
- Fundraising activities - e.g. monthly quiz, raffles etc. To be actively pursued.
- Sponsorship by local firms: To be investigated.
- New Members: Essential that there is a renewed effort to significantly increase the number of Shop members.
- Strengthen Committee & volunteer numbers: Vital to underpin all the above.

During the next few months your committee will work with the village to achieve these objectives, and in view of the uncertain market conditions, will look to provide an interim update to members and the village as a whole in the first quarter of 2024.

I would like to conclude by thanking Amber, Pat, our committee and the team of volunteers for their sterling efforts and commitment to the Shop that collectively has led to the impressive sales performance for the half year.

And finally - on behalf of the members and village as a whole - we would also like to thank David Miskin for his 10 years of unstinting support for the Shop as he steps down from the committee - although we are delighted that he will continue to serve and support the Shop as a volunteer.

Chris Buckham

Chair – Bretforton Community Shop Ltd – Community Benefit Society