



Chair's Statement – Financial Year 2025-2026

Business update

I am pleased to report to our members the results for our financial year 2025-2026, and to briefly summarise the key points, along with details of current trading and future plans.

Overall, our sales performance was a little below the previous year's, but thanks to a strong focus on improving gross margins, we reported a loss of £3,580, compared to a loss of £4,330 for the previous year. The full accounts can be found on the Shop website at www.bretshop.org.

Members should also note that we have taken a substantial stock reserve in these accounts. This is a conservative measure we have adopted during our first year with the new EPOS system, and we believe that it is likely that some or all of this reserve could be released when we finalise the accounts for 2026-2027.

Turning to the current year, I can report that trading in the first 5 months of the current year is following a similar level of sales to last year, but thanks to the staff and volunteer focus on margin, our management accounts are showing more than £3,000 net profit compared to a small loss at the same time last year. However, with 7 months of trading ahead of us, we know we need to deliver on our future plans if we are to grow and maintain this position.

A key focus of the past 5 months has been on implementing our £13,000 investment plan, which has been 70% grant-funded thanks to Wychavon District Council. This has seen us refurbish the shop with a new floor, new lighting, new pavement signs, the new coffee machine and oven and a new freezer. We are just completing the final elements of the plan and for the rest of the year we aim to build on this new foundation and grow our sales and margins while delivering more community impact.

Future plans

Our plan for the Shop for the next 12 months is all about building on the recent investment programme and covers four inter-related activities:

Volunteer recruitment and development

The Shop depends on volunteers and community support. While we have welcomed 10 new volunteers over the past 5 months and overhauled our induction and support process for volunteers, we recognise that we lose volunteers who move away or change circumstances, so there is a need to recruit new volunteers and ensure they are welcomed and enjoy the experience.

A strong band of volunteers helps the resilience of the Shop – and will allow us to develop the café offering of the shop and ensure that we can maintain our current opening hours. Volunteering is also very rewarding for the volunteers, who meet new people, learn new skills and build relationships in the village.

New member share offer

It is now over 12 years since our original fundraising share offer, and we now need to raise funds to pay off our bounce back loan and improve the Shop's financial position. Estimates suggest that around 30% of residents are new to the village, and this will give them an opportunity to support the Shop and potentially contribute not just financially, but by volunteering and filling roles on the management committee.

Development and refinement of café offer

We are currently providing training on our new café-related equipment while we finalise our offering, which we expect to initially be a simple coffee shop style service based on hot and cold drinks alongside products we already sell. Once we start to promote the offer we believe this will encourage more residents to use the Shop as a social meeting place and will further support our resilience and profitability.

More promotional and fundraising activities for the Shop and the Café

Finally, we plan to improve our marketing and communications to raise awareness of the “new” Shop and Café. This should help us attract new customers and improve the financial position of the Shop and allow us to support other village institutions and activities in line with our objectives.

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In terms of our community impact, our role as a social hub and centre for the village is well established. We continue to be a focal point for other village groups and activities and a place of support for more isolated residents or those with additional needs.

All of this would not be possible without the commitment and dedication of our managers, Sarah and Lisa, and our band of volunteers, who have helped ensure we can continue to provide a valuable service to the village

I would therefore like to thank you all, on behalf of the village and the wider community, for your support and efforts over the past 12 months.

Chris Buckham

Chair – Bretforton Community Shop Ltd – Community Benefit Society