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Lower Broadheath Community Shop Ltd

Annual Report

Financial Year 4

For the year ended 30 September 2021



LOWER BROADHEATH COMMUNITY SHOP LTD

Chairman's Report for the year ending 30 September 2021

At the start of the financial year, we were still very much in the midst of the Covid pandemic. While this provided ongoing issues and obstacles for us to address and overcome, it undeniably cemented the shop as a crucial service and hub within our village community.

The main issue that the pandemic brought was a reduction in the number and availability of volunteers as many needed to isolate or felt more comfortable withdrawing from the team. It is only thanks to the small but dedicated team that we were able to continue to open each day, our ongoing recruitment drive for new and returning volunteers continues in a bid to be able to increase our opening hours to pre-pandemic levels.

Throughout the year, in response to changing Covid related legislation, we continued to have to review our operating practices to safeguard the health of our customers and volunteers. These included limiting numbers of people in the shop at any one time, continuation of encouraging mask-wearing and taking measures to ensure good air flow. Gratifyingly, these measures were welcomed by the vast majority of the community who followed them with grace and humour.

I would like to thank our wonderful team of shop and Post Office volunteers and to Monica Longley and Paul Furber for coordinating the teams to ensure we have adequate cover. Without our volunteers we simply would not be able to open. A highlight of the year was hosting a small (Covid compliant) alfresco get-together at The Bell Inn in the early summer, as a small token of appreciation to thank the small, stalwart cohort of volunteers who saw us through the most difficult periods.

The summer months saw a temporary change in Shop Management as Jess Ronan took maternity leave and in August welcomed her second son into the world. We were fortunate that Graham Hill, with many years of retail experience, applied for and was successful in filling the temporary position. He and Vic Howells continue to be a great team. We are truly grateful for their hard work and commitment which consistently goes over and above their job descriptions!

Thanks also to the Management Committee for their ongoing support and hard work. However, it is a disappointment that despite numerous requests, that no new nominations for committee membership have been forthcoming, having increased our number from 8 to 11 last year in order to ensure room for new talent, we currently hold 4 vacancies including that of Secretary.



Financial Results

Sales in the year, £111K, were £10K below the figure for the previous year, impacted both by the reduced opening hours and there being no repeat of the strong tendency to “shop locally” seen in the first lockdown period. Although we incurred extra costs as a result of the Covid requirements these were offset by a second grant of nearly £5k from The National Lottery (for which we are grateful), which meant that we broke even for the year. We also continued to benefit from government funding (channelled through the Post Office) to support the provision of vital postal and banking services in rural communities.

Trade in the new financial year (from October 2021) has shown some signs of encouraging growth over the same period a year earlier, particularly the key period running up to Christmas, perhaps helped by the steps we have been able to take to increase opening hours in the mornings and two afternoons a week.

Accounts

This year the accounts have been reviewed by independent accountants David Cadwallader & Co Ltd for the first time due to our turnover exceeding £90K in the previous financial year.

Copies are available on the web site and paper copies are to be posted on request.

Location

Regarding our current location at The Bell, we have always seen this as a temporary arrangement with the hope to move to a more permanent site in the village. Our endeavours to find other appropriate locations hasn't borne much fruit to date, with a lack of suitable, affordable options. We have been in discussions to extend the lease where we are for a further number of years due to this lack of viable alternatives. We are grateful for ongoing support from Ian and Lyndsey at The Bell Inn and also local villagers and shareholders who continue to offer their specialist support and advice, it is really appreciated. We do continue to ask that if anyone knows of any land available near the centre of the village to let us know as it is increasingly becoming a really urgent consideration for the viability of the shop's future.



Election

The following committee members are up for election this year as their terms come to an end, this covers the members below and the proposal is for the next term which is 3 years in duration:

- Anthony Bedborough
- Mark Glossop
- Graham Hill
- Vic Howells
- Monica Longley
- Rachel Tedesco

Steve Smith our Treasurer elected last year, will remain on the committee.

Jessica Ronan has retired from the committee after serving her term and we would like to thank her for her many years of service and support as one of the founding members. We sincerely hope that she will return to her post as Manager after her Maternity leave comes to an end in the summer.

We would like to expand our committee and are currently holding four vacancies including that of Secretary. We would welcome anyone to join us with a genuine interest in the future of the shop and would urge you to get in touch to find out more.

Finally, thank you for your ongoing support, in particular for continuing to visit the shop as customers and for adhering to our ongoing imposed Covid-related requirements. We sincerely hope that as this year progresses that we take further steps back to normality.

Rachel Tedesco

Chair, Lower Broadheath Community Shop Management Committee

3rd March 2022