

# FITTLEWORTH COMMUNITY SHOP

## MINUTES OF THE FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

25 JANUARY 2018 at 7 pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Management Committee

Alison Welterveden (Chair), Sammi Leese (Treasurer), Mick Foote ( Vice Chair), Shelagh Morgan (Secretary), Colin Datchler

Approximately 70 shareholders

### 1. Chair's Report

1.1 The Chair identified the highlights of the first year up to August 2017:

- planning permission granted in March 2017;
- Charity Commission approval for the leasing of the land owned by the Parish Council;
- adoption of name and logo;
- monthly email letter, Facebook page and dedicated page on the village web site launched;
- market research visiting similar shops in the area before producing the business plan which sets out the vision for the shop, projected costings and financial forecasts;
- creation of a funding plan identifying the various sources of funding - share offer, grants, fundraising events and donations;
- launch of the shareholder offer in June 2017 with the result of 250 shareholders.

1.2 The shareholders were informed of progress since August 2017:

- eleven applications for grant funding were prepared and submitted;
- review and validation of the cost model;
- invitation to tender issued and the subsequent appointment of Agincourt as the contractor;
- negotiation with Agincourt, reviewing the original specification to reduce costs;
- estimated total cost for the building of the shop (including fees) is £276,000;
- the project includes the provision of a new playground and youth area. These will be owned by the Parish Council but fundraising has been co-ordinated for the combined projects. The total costs for both projects is £403,000;
- £376,000 has been raised through a combination of grants, village fundraising events, the share offer and donations. A further £14,000 is anticipated from grant applications submitted leaving a shortfall of £12,600.

- 1.3 Thanks were expressed to all those who had made donations. £192,650 had been donated by individuals and businesses. Without these donations the project would not have been able to proceed.
- 1.4 Thanks were also expressed to everyone who had contributed, whether through the purchase of shares, participating in fundraising events or otherwise. As a result a truly wonderful shop, playground and youth area will be created that will provide many benefits to the community for years to come.
- 1.5 Attention is now being focussed on the fit out of the shop and the set-up of all the suppliers, systems and processes required. Construction will commence in April and the shop opening planned for October.
- 1.6 The Chair expressed her thanks to the members of the Management Committee.

## 2. Treasurer's Report

- 2.1 Accounts for the year to 31/8/2017 had been previously circulated. They had been reviewed by Cadwalladar & Co and formally approved by the Management Committee.

The resolution that there was no requirement for the accounts to be formally audited this year was **approved**.

- 2.2 The Treasurer provided an update on the financial situation since 1 September 2017:

- the total amount received from grants to date is £134,000;
- the initial share offer had raised £41,400. The share offer is being re-launched to give an opportunity to those who did not purchase in the first round to do so;
- fundraising events had raised £3,470 for the shop. Thanks were expressed to all those who had organised and attended. It is intended to hold another event later in the year.
- £192,650 has been donated to the project. Thanks were expressed to all those who had contributed to this amount.

- 2.3 The Treasurer reminded the meeting of the funding gap of £12,600. It is essential that this amount is raised in order for the project to progress. She asked everyone present to consider any help they could give in making sure that this final hurdle is cleared.

## 3. Benefits of a Community Shop

- 3.1 Rev Colin Datchler began by stating that there are many healthy aspects of the community in Fittleworth. When the shop closed several years ago a gap was created and this has been one of the main topics of conversation he has had with individuals during his time in the village. He emphasised that the community shop will provide a range of benefits to the community including opportunities to meet friends and neighbours, volunteer and any surplus ploughed back into the community.

## 4. The Year Ahead – Build and Launch

- 4.1 The Vice Chair confirmed that the build is due to start at the beginning of April with the shop, café and playground opening in October. Using a plan he described the layout of the shop and café.

4.2 He emphasised that the area will be a construction site throughout the build and will therefore be fenced off. Access to the site will be via gates from the recreation ground.

4.3 During the construction period the following will be considered and agreed:

- Look and feel of shop, layout, shelving, chillers
- Lease, insurances, licences, card systems, security
- Deciding range of stock and suppliers, cafe
- Setting pricing levels
- Recruiting staff and volunteers
- Policies, Payroll, Pensions and Training

4.4 The Vice Chair advised the meeting that no decision had been taken as to whether to provide post office services in the shop. When the initial survey was undertaken 80% of respondents stated that they wanted a post office. However since then a mobile service has been provided on two mornings a week. If the services are provided in the shop the mobile service will be lost.

The advantages of providing post office services are they are likely to encourage people to use the shop, the full range of services will be available every day and the Post Office will provide the safe and other security. However they are not profitable and a minimum of six volunteers who are trained to Post Office standards will be required.

## 5. Membership Strategy

5.1 The Chair confirmed that continued engagement with the community will be the focus of the Management Committee. This will be achieved by continuing to produce newsletters for shareholders and regular updates on the web site page and Facebook. She stressed that volunteers will become very important over the next few months as we prepare to open – volunteers will be asked to give two hours per week on duty in the shop.

## 6. Management Committee

6.1 The Secretary advised that the existing members of the Management Committee were standing for re-election en-bloc.

It was **agreed** that Alison Welterveden, Mick Foote, Sammi Leese, Shelagh Morgan be re-appointed and that Colin Datchler be co-opted.

6.2 Three nominations had been received.

It was **agreed** that Sally Tanner, Catherine Guylar and Katy Warner be appointed to the Management Committee.

## 7. Questions Raised

7.1 In asking for additional funds is the preference for existing shareholders to purchase more shares or give a donation? Response – donations attract gift aid and this is therefore preferable.

- 7.2 Will you be looking to appoint the Manager and Assistant Manager from the community? Response – the posts will be advertised. These are essential roles as they will be the ‘face’ of the shop. They will also need to be good with volunteers.
- 7.3 Is there a deadline for a decision on the inclusion of post office services? Response – no but it would be helpful to know prior to the start of construction because additional security features will be needed and the arrangement of the counter will be different.
- 7.4 Are there any disadvantages to providing post office services? Response – it is a serious commitment with the requirement for fully trained staff and the shop would be responsible for any shortfalls. The books would be balanced every night and a report sent to the post office on a daily basis.
- 7.5 Is there any feedback about the use of the mobile post office service? Response – we believe that the mobile service is well used. The Committee felt that the use of the mobile service will be very different to use of a post service in the shop. This is because a post office in the shop would be open for more days/hours than the two mornings a week currently provided by the mobile service.
- 7.6 On a show of hands the majority indicated that they were in favour in principle of providing post office services in the shop. It was agreed to take this forward if the required number of volunteers came forward.
- 7.7 It was confirmed that food hygiene training will be given.
- 7.8 What will be the range of goods sold? Response – food, alcohol, crafts, pharmaceuticals, newspapers, local produce, fresh meat and dairy products.
- 7.9 Would we please take account of packaging when ordering goods? Response – yes.
- 7.10 What is the definition of membership? Response – shareholders.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm

