

The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Shop Association Ltd

Notes of Committee meeting held on 14 April 2025 at Cruck Cottage

Present: Committee members - Peter Head (Chair), Richard Killer, Chris Miller, Jo Neudegg, Cindy Read and Lesley Wilcox (Secretary). Also present for items 3 and 4 Leonora Sheppard.

1. Apologies for absence: Peter Martin (Treasurer).

2. Notes of last meeting on 3.3.25: approved.

3. Working Group with other parish organisations

The first meeting had been held with representatives from the various community organisations setting out their purpose and hopes for collaboration. Each group has a different status, ie the Village Hall is a charity, the Social Club is a private club, the shop is a Community Benefit Society. This makes any formal collaborative arrangements in running the site difficult. However, a second meeting is due to be organised. The Community website is being refreshed partly in order to make the groups more visible.

4. 2026 Calendar and related issues

i. Various ideas for themes for the calendar had been received and were discussed. The decision was 'Wellingtons'. Entries are to be submitted by the beginning of August. There had previously been some criticism of the format of the calendar as some had torn when being hung up. However, alternative formats, ie spirally bound, resulted in less space for writing and/or the pictures so it was felt that, on balance, the current format would be maintained.

ii. A suggestion had been put forward for bespoke shopping bags to be purchased for sale in the shop. A logo had been designed and was agreed subject to a few changes. Committee to consider the various types of bags available together with costings. Aim to have bags for sale by the start of the summer season.

iii. A publicity leaflet had been produced some years ago. Agreed to update this, re-print, and deliver to each house.

5. Treasurer's Report

The accounts for the end of March had been circulated. Peter M had reported that sales for the month had been strong, so far second only to December this year. This had fed through to the shop's strongest month this year, despite high overheads, in particular wages with 5 weekends in

the month. So far the shop had made a net profit for the YTD of £1,718 on sales of £30,555.

Overall, margins for the month were very good, mostly due to the timing of purchases, although the rolling 3 months' margins were also strong. Sainsbury's, Fruit and Veg and Butchers all showed strong margins which was encouraging.

Cash remained strong with a net inflow of £1,450 so far this year.

6. Replacement for Postmistress

The applicant will spend some time in the PO with Eve Badcock whilst their application is being processed.

7. Replacement Treasurer

Peter M is likely to be moving away from the village. He will be a big loss to the Committee as the monthly accounts and analysis he produces has informed decisions which have turned the shop round from making a loss to making a profit. A recent call for replacement help from the community had produced no response so, without volunteer help, we face having to pay for professional help. Hopefully Peter will be willing to carry on until the end of the FY (end of October).

More information about the likely costs involved was needed. Agreed to discuss with members of the community who run their own businesses about the accountancy or bookkeeping help that they have. Richard will also see whether any advice is available from the Plunkett Foundation. Pool all information and discuss by the end of May.

8. Maintenance Plan

Peter H and Chris to agree an annual maintenance plan with David Neudegg (Parish Council Chair) as required by the MOA.

9. Volunteers and operations

i. We are likely to lose 2 counter staff in the near future and a further volunteer has stepped down for a while. Jo and Lesley are covering weekends at present but we now need more counter staff.

ii. The Italian Bakery gave us only 2 weeks' notice of their decision to withdraw from supplying retailers at wholesale prices. As this would have greatly increased prices to our customers we stopped buying from them at the beginning of April and have since been trying to find a replacement supplier. It has proved to be very difficult to find a supplier who can supply the range of goods that

we would like at a reasonable cost and either deliver or be within a reasonable distance for volunteers to collect. There are two possible suppliers in Dorchester/Poundbury but, if neither of those proves to be suitable, we may have to rely on offering additional produce from Sainsburys.

10. Step into shop

Work should be carried out in the following 2 weeks. Some dates need to be avoided due to planned deliveries and, once the work has been carried out, the steps will be cordoned off overnight.

11. Steve Smith's retirement

The fund for a retirement gift currently stood at just over £1,000. A presentation will be made to Steve on Saturday 17 May at 10.30am in the village hall.

12. Security

Richard will be meeting a PCSO and a Crime Prevention Officer at the shop on Wednesday 23 April.

13. Social Event for Volunteers

Agreed to leave this for now as a similar event may be organised for all volunteers in the parish.

14. Raffle

The required licence had been purchased - £40.00 for the first year and £20.00 pa thereafter. This allows the shop to hold an unlimited number of raffles. Agreed that the shop would bear the cost of the licence.

The Easter raffle had made a minimum of £100 for Weldmar Hospice. The draw will take place on 16.4.25. A further raffle in aid of a different charity might be planned for Christmas.

15. Additional IT help

This may no longer be required.

16. Shop phone

As part of the switchover from analogue to digital, the PO had installed a new phone which sits in the PO 'office'. Consequently, the 'old' phones which sat in the shop and PO no longer functioned. During weekday mornings this was not a problem because the new phone could be passed between the PO and the shop. However, out of hours and at weekends the shop may not have access to a phone.

The shop makes and receives very few calls but access to a phone is required. Peter H will look into this.

17. Any Other Business

Cindy will continue as the Shop & PO Rep on the Village Hall Committee.

18. Dates of next meetings

Mondays – 7 July and 8 September 2025.

Lesley Wilcox

Secretary