

# **The Friends of Briantspuddle Post Office and Shop Association Ltd**

## **Notes of Committee meeting held on 8 September 2025 at Cruck Cottage**

Present: Peter Head, Richard Killer, Peter Martin, Chris Miller, Jo Neudegg and Lesley Wilcox (Secretary). Also: Leonora Sheppard (for item 3) and Julie Shorter (for item 7).

1. **Apologies for absence:** none required.
2. **Notes of last meeting on 22.7.25:** approved.
3. **2026 Calendar:** mock-up of the calendar tabled and agreed. Many thanks to Leonora for all her hard work particularly as the content of one of the entries had been challenging and best displayed by moving to an A3 format, spirally bound. Quote for 125 copies of £487.50, ie £3.90 each. Some rigid A3 envelopes for calendars to be posted will be purchased separately.

2027 will be the Shop and PO's 25<sup>th</sup> year. One theme for the calendar could be the best of the last 25 years although this would require a lengthy selection process.

4. **Working group with other parish organisations:** no progress to report.
5. **Treasurer's report**

Peter M and Jo are satisfied that FreeAgent will be a more suitable system for the accounts and so will be used from now. Peter M is gradually moving historical data onto the system. Sales for August were £5,978, 10-15% above the monthly average for the year to date. Cash in the current account £5,118, an increase of approx £450 from Aug 24. Approx £15k in savings account.

### **6. Replacement Treasurer**

Jo will take over the bookkeeping but could not be designated as the Treasurer as she did not have the necessary qualifications. To be discussed further at the next meeting.

Peter M will check the FCA rules concerning who is authorised to file the accounts.

Richard will report back to the Plunkett Foundation idc.

## **7. Replacement Postmistress**

The PO had taken a significant time to process Julie Shorter's application making repeated requests for information seemingly with a misunderstanding of the status of 'our' PO, even during her interview. Although Julie had finally been approved by the PO as being suitable to be the new postmistress there were only 3 weeks left before the date of Eve's retirement. The PO now require Julie to carry out both on-line training and 3 days classroom training (in Plymouth and at her own expense) before she takes up the post. There would then also be in-branch training. There is therefore a strong potential for 'our' PO having to close until this process is completed. Richard had contacted both our MP and the CEO of the Post Office with our concerns over the implications of the delays. The PO had responded quickly to Richard's e-mail and proposed a timetable for the training which would enable Julie to take up the post on 7 October. So keeping 'our' PO open now depends on:

- i. Eve agreeing to staying in post until 7 October – she has agreed;
- ii. Julie being free to carry out the classroom training on the proposed dates – she can do this;
- iii. Julie signing the PO's proposed contract by 12 September. The contract is extremely lengthy, much of it irrelevant to the circumstances of 'our' PO, contains a requirement for the postmistress to have personal tenancy of the premises and refers to 'our' PO assistants as 'employees' and the postmistress as the 'employer'. Richard will go back the PO explaining (again) why these contract terms are unacceptable and incorrect. (Post meeting note: this was done on 9.9.25 and a substantive reply from the PO is awaited).

It was agreed to cover Julie's costs of attending the training and her accommodation in Plymouth.

Assuming all this happens according to plan the PO also requires 'our' PO volunteers to have their DBS checks renewed.

## **8. Maintenance Plan**

The lease allows for the Parish Council and the Committee to agree a maintenance plan for the coming year. The Parish Councillor due to deal with this had resigned from the council. David Neudegg will now deal with it and Chris will take this forward with him.

## **9. Volunteers and Operations**

Richard will take over the ordering of newspapers and oversight of the newspaper vouchers.

## **10. Security**

Richard had researched various panic buttons and alarms. It was agreed to purchase a personal alarm and keep this behind the counter for the shop volunteers to wear if they chose.

## **11. Any Other Business**

- i. Chris had made arrangements with the new contractor to inspect and service the fire extinguishers but was having great difficulty in establishing contact with the previous contractor in order to terminate the contract with them.
- ii. Peter H has renewed the insurance contract. It was agreed not to include cover for legal advice.

## **12. Dates of next meetings**

27 October and 8 December 2025.

Lesley Wilcox

Secretary