

Minutes of the Sixth Annual Members' Meeting of the Chalke Valley Community Hub Ltd held on 21 March 2019 at 7.30pm

35 shareholding members attended.

The Chairman, Will Hillary, welcomed everyone to the 6th Annual Members' Meeting.

1. **Apologies** were received from: E Jolly, P Abbott, R Abbott, A Stutchbury, M Tomkies, B Jones, R Sykes, M Seymour, L Seymour, J Roe, C Pilkington, B Gilbert and C Lamb.

2. **A quorum** was declared.

3. **The Minutes of the Fifth Annual Members' Meeting** held on 7 March 2018 were accepted as being correct after a proposal by D Jeans, seconded by C Rothwell and carried unanimously.

4. **The Society Accounts for the year ending 30 September 2018** had been tabled and were presented by the Treasurer, Linda Walton.

Linda extended thanks to Henry Flint, Liz Brown, the bookkeeper, the Management Committee and the Staff and Volunteers for their help and assistance during her first year as Treasurer and to all for maintaining the success of the Hub.

Much was achieved throughout the year some highlights being the installation of new tills, software and payment systems. A review of the Hub's banking arrangements was undertaken making them more secure and achieving better returns. The Financial Services Compensation Scheme covers deposits up to a total of £85k in any bank. Due to this we moved £80k of the Hub's reserves to the Nationwide from our current bankers, Co-op, giving us the benefit of the cover and to receive more interest in one month than had been earned in one year. We are also moving the main account to HSBC bringing an end to our relationship with the Co-op.

Over 2000 different items are available to buy from and enjoy in the Hub many of which are locally produced and sourced. Details of a range of items were given illustrating the impact of the local supply. The Hub's busiest period occurs each day between noon and 2.00pm. The average card spend is £14.20.

To illustrate the Hub's financial achievements, Linda presented a series of slides covering Sales, the Profit and Loss and the Balance Sheet.

Shop sales for the year were slightly down on the previous year with the Coffee Shop continuing to grow. There were only 2 months where coffee shop sales did not exceed every month since opening. Total sales for the Hub were slightly down on last year, £331.4k compared to £331.9k in 2017.

In the profit and loss assessment, overall margins were down (shop 20.9% down from 21.3%, coffee shop 59.8% from 65.3%). The improved coffee shop sales mentioned earlier helped to compensate. Our ongoing and future strategy will be to concentrate on margins to ensure we remain profitable and able to re-invest in the Hub and the wider community. The private grant has ended, and the Government Grant has under 2 years left. These coupled with the ongoing pressures in the retail sector will mean it will be tougher to achieve profit. Nevertheless, a surplus, before tax and interest received, of £9.9k was achieved for the year. Tax will be £305.

The Hub has assets of £165.9k, net £132.9k after liabilities. Share capital is unchanged at £46.5k with an increase in reserves to £86.4k. Since the accounts were completed an additional share issue has been undertaken.

Questions were invited from the floor. Michael Scott raised the following; how many new shareholders are there? Are there any plans to seek further grants? How will margins be increased? Linda responded by advising that the share details will be revealed in the Management Committee report

which follows. There are no plans to seek grants at this stage, but they will be considered when the need arises. We will look to improve margins through several measures including different purchasing options and price reviews.

5. The Management Committee Report

The Chairman flagged the formal report in the Accounts, hardcopies of which were in the room and which can also be found on the website.

He highlighted that last year had been a challenging one with a major supplier, Palmer & Harvey, ceasing to trade putting great pressure on Ellen and the staff to find alternative suppliers, ensure stock levels were satisfactory and keep everything else working. The coffee shop was busier than ever, and volunteer numbers were difficult to maintain.

Appreciation of their efforts was voiced from the floor.

In this current year, growth in sales of 3.5% is targeted and good progress is being made so far.

With Ellen having recently given in her notice of resignation, Will expressed fully his appreciation of all her efforts and hard work in developing and growing the Hub from its start 6 years ago to the very successful enterprise it is now.

The Floor echoed their full appreciation of her superb contribution.

The search for Ellen's successor is on and as the initial response was a little disappointing it has been decided to extend the application deadline to the 5 April with interviews taking place during the following week commencing 8 April. Both full time and part time/job share scenarios will be considered to ensure the best candidates can be accommodated and the needs of the Hub are fulfilled.

Ellen is willing to be available into May to ensure an efficient handover. Will was pleased to confirm that an appropriate send off event will be held for her.

Following a short period of notice we were advised that the existing Post Office franchise will be finishing in early April. Through excellent work by Caroline Dutson a replacement has been found. The Tisbury PO will be taking over with its Post Master, Ed Rigg, being forward thinking and proactive in business matters. It will continue with the existing 3 day opening but hours will be 9.30am to 1.30pm. Ed will be running our PO himself for 2 days initially.

Regrettably, the extension of the lease has still to be concluded despite the very best efforts of Jackie and Nick Lowe. However, there are some positives that have come out of our discussions with the URC. When the lease is extended or renewed, the rent will remain at the existing rate of 1.5% of annual turnover. Consent was given to the kitchen refurbishment work. This has now been concluded and many thanks are extended to Chris Rothwell for project managing this operation. Our lease has just under 18 months remaining on its term.

The new membership initiative took place from November of 2018. As part of its promotion, approaches were made to people new to the Valley during the last 5 years or so i.e. since the Hub first opened. We are pleased to advise that 29 new members have subscribed a total of £2120 new capital. We now have 294 members with a total share capital of £48570. Share applications are ongoing so anyone wishing to have additional shares or are aware of Valley residents who would like to become members then the opportunity is still there.

6. Appointment of Financial Auditors was recommended by Linda Walton. The service being provided by Clifford Fry & Co continues to give excellent value for money albeit there is a small increase in their fees plus they have an acknowledged expertise in supporting the 'not for profit' sector.

Due to the Hub accessing a line of public funding and it being in the public interest we continue to consider it desirable for the accounts to be audited.

The motion to appoint Clifford Fry & Co was proposed by N Lowe, seconded by A Jeans and was carried unanimously.

7. Elections to the Management Committee

Caroline Dutson, Chris Rothwell and Will Hillary retired by rotation. Both Caroline and Will were willing to stand for re-election. Following proposals from J Lowe and seconded by R Hitchings both nominees were voted in unanimously. Due to other commitments Chris stood down and Will expressed his sincere thanks from all for his very valuable contribution to undertaking the facilities management of the Hub

8. Any other business and points raised by members from the floor

Jenny Truluck asked when the other toilet in the Hub is likely to be repaired. Chris responded that due to prohibitive costs of this, it is unlikely for the moment.

Hugh Pickford asked how important the Post Office is in relation to overall Hub operations. Will expressed the view of the Management Committee that there is a wider community need for the facility and that there will be mutual benefits to both businesses especially as we believe that the new PO management will be proactive to customer needs.

Michael Scott pointed out a misspelling of Alvediston in the title slide of the Treasurer's presentation. It may be that this erroneous spelling has been in place since our first AMM!

Hilary Brown suggested that future AMMs be held at other locations in the Valley e.g. Bowerchalke, Bishopstone, Ebbesbourne Wake bearing in mind the Hub is for the benefit of the Valley as a whole. This proposal was welcomed by the Chairman.

With there being no further questions, the meeting closed at 8.10pm after which refreshments were provided.