

# Report from Community Shop (Axel Goodbody)

For Westbury sub Mendip Parish Council meeting, 10 April 2022

1. Financial position: after a year of higher sales due to the lockdowns in 2020-2021, the Shop is again making a small annual loss. This is not an immediate threat, but it needs to be addressed.
2. Staff turnover: Penny Colwill is stepping down in May for a well-earned retirement. She has been Shop Manager for the past five years, and we'll miss her greatly. We're delighted that she has offered to continue to support the Shop as a volunteer. We are in the process of appointing a successor. This gives us an opportunity to introduce some changes. We are analysing sales and developing a Stock and Trading Policy which will enable us to set targets and work more systematically towards getting the Shop into making a modest profit. As you may know, it's a community business association, and any profits made go towards projects which benefit the community.
3. Volunteers: Without volunteers there would be no shop, and we were living hand to mouth to fill the rota last year. So we had a recruitment drive in December - the Westbury Friendly Society kindly distributed a leaflet for us to all homes in the village. As a result we have gained some new volunteers and the situation has improved. But we could still do with a few more! We've introduced an App for organising the volunteer rota, called Three Rings. This is specially designed for managing volunteers, and it will help us organise the rotas for counter volunteers, drivers, newspaper deliveries and admin jobs more efficiently.
4. Committee: we have co-opted two new members during the year and will be putting them forward for election at the AGM in June. Most of our seven committee members volunteer in the Shop, but we have also been busy doing things behind the scenes. We have filled some important gaps in the Shop's documentation: we now have a Risk Register and an Employee Handbook, and are working towards a Business Plan. I'm very grateful to the Committee for the time and effort which they've put into these things, which we really need to ensure the future of the Shop.
5. New developments: Finally, two new initiatives in the past year. The Shop garden has been underused for some time. We're very pleased that West Hill Landscaping is now looking after the garden maintenance in return for permission to display an advertising banner, and we hope to use the garden more often for events. The other project, which is just beginning, is preparation for the sale of bulk dry goods and refills from the back room of the shop. Apart from saving waste, this will make goods like cereals and detergents cheaper. Last November the Parish Council very kindly gave the Shop a grant of £1040 towards the cost of buying and installing dispensers. Shop staff conducted a customer survey and have been clearing space for the dispensers, but the project was held up because we needed to move a doorway. I'm delighted to say the necessary carpentry work has just been completed. We hope our Zero Waste project will be up and running soon.