

The Braishfield Pantry AGM Tuesday 8th October 6pm in the Pantry

Meeting Notes

The following were present for the Pantry AGM: -

Pantry Directors -
Ian Barrow (AGM Chairman/spokesman)
Meri Knights
Gemma Quarendon (AGM note taker)

Pantry Committee Members –
Iain Coleman
Sharon Fielding (Pantry Supervisor)
Lin Hughes
Joy O'Dell

Members of the Public (including several Pantry volunteers) –

Anne Edwards
Margaret Pallant
Angela Bevan
Malcolm Ayres
Nicky Ayres
Ian Knights
David Robinson
Viv Robinson
Elizabeth Elliott

Apologies were received from: -
Wendy Quarendon
Peter Quarendon
Mary Mortimore
Mike Edwards

Ian Barrow welcomed everyone to the Pantry's second AGM. And as a thank you to everyone there was a glass of wine and nibbles to munch during the meeting.

Ian Barrow, before moving to the main agenda items thanked Roz Taylor for her work both on the Committee and as a Director, but noted that she had now stepped down from both roles, though she continued to be a keen volunteer.

Moving to the AGM agenda, Ian then went through the 2 actions from the previous AGM. The first action – to make more financial information available to all, and easier to read. The Pantry published last year's AGM report and minutes and plans to do so again this

year. It also worked hard to improve the layout especially of the financial section in order to make it as transparent as possible.

The second action from last year's AGM was regarding improving signage to the Pantry from the main road. It is still very clear that some people don't know the Pantry is here when driving through the village since the Pantry isn't visible from the road. Ian Knights spoke on behalf of the Parish Council and said that, though keen to take this forward, in the end funds weren't available from their point of view. However, the Pantry will continue to investigate and when the issue was raised again at the meeting by Nicky Ayres who felt it was important to reassess. Ian Barrow agreed to speak to Hampshire Highways to understand what we need to do and any cost implications.

Moving to the main agenda item – our annual report, Ian handed over to Iain Coleman to talk through the Financial section of this year's report.

Iain set out the main points from the figures –

The trading profit was nearly £5K last year and thus very healthy.

The daily takings were largely the same as last year.

However, the first 3 months of this year suggest that the margin has gone down (the margin being sales – costs). Iain noted that this could be put down to both a rise in the cost of items to us and an increase in overheads. This has led to a profit in these first 3 months being closer to £1k compared with £3k this time last year.

As a result of these recent trends, the Pantry team has looked at options to combat this and bring in more income. The option of opening more hours was seriously considered, however after a survey of volunteers and discussion amongst the committee/directors, it was felt that at the current time we didn't have quite the number of volunteers to make this a viable option. It should be noted though that the Pantry will look again at this option in the future.

The second option investigated was to increase some of our prices. This was felt an option we should take forward and as such cakes and hot drinks prices were put up (they had been their current price for over a year), and also to look at upping other prices from the usual margin of an average of about 30% to 35%.

And finally, the Pantry has also looked at how best to increase any income through events. After much thought and discussion, the Pantry has felt that going forward the Pantry would work to support other village events rather than put on our own (with the exception of tasting events and Christmas open evenings).

Ian Knights also raised the issue of how the Village Hall, the BVA and the Pantry perhaps could do more together to raise funds, as all are chasing a finite audience and an even finite number of people working to raise funds and run events.

Iain then opened the floor up to questions and points...

David Robinson thanks the Pantry and Iain for a very clear report. He also asked if it would be possible to see a comparison with last year's figures. Iain felt that would be very feasible.

David also asked how the Pantry was preparing itself for Brexit. Iain noted that we record our weekly takings so that we can see monitor changes in trends quickly and react.

There was general concern regarding the price of milk in the Pantry and how that might impact on people's perception of prices in the pantry more generally. Margaret Pallant suggested that milk could be sold at cost so as to negate this potential issue.

A suggestion was made to undertake another price comparison with Waitrose and the Co-op to see where the Pantry is with regards to general prices.

Another point raised was to perhaps run another survey to see what people want from the Pantry, what would entice them in etc.

Ian Knights made the point that increased prices isn't going to work long term and we are likely to need to look at other options to raise income in the longer term.

And finally, on finance, Iain noted how the shop has now repaid its loan from the Village Hall in full and so is debt free.

Moving on to volunteers. Meri began by passing on the Pantry's very big thanks to Anne Edwards who is stepping down from the committee. Meri noted Anne's many years of service to the Pantry and how her work has left us in a much stronger position, particularly with regards health and safety, hygiene and volunteers with many procedures in place. Meri's thoughts were echoed around the room. Thank you Anne.

Meri moved on to thank all those who'd contributed to the more than 3,000 volunteer hours over the course of the year to help in the shop. This figure didn't include the many hours spent on tasks outside of the shop hours – cleaning, sorting the petty cash, stock taking, ordering supplies, keeping the website up to date, advertising various events, keeping the gardens outside looking beautiful etc. And a special thanks to Sharon for driving us all on and leading the way, with the help of our lead volunteers to support her.

Elizabeth Elliott asked about the younger generation and whether the Pantry to encouraging younger volunteers. Sadly, the answer is largely a 'not yet'. But as Meri pointed out, she didn't start to volunteers until she retired at 60 – so perhaps we shouldn't expect too many. However, with the rise of a state pension age to 67 – this may well have implications in the coming years as people are having to work longer.

In terms of community events – as mentioned, the Pantry is moving to a more supportive role of other village events in future rather than holding its own (with notable exceptions). An example of this is the addition of an advert to accompany village hall bookings to make bookers aware, firstly that the pantry is here, but also to enable them to pre-order any bits for their event if required.

Our local charity collection pot – currently Hampshire and IOW air ambulance. There was discussion with attendees as to which charity we should support next. There was agreement for a local charity and Meri agreed to speak to Jumbleance to see if they would like it to be them.

With a final word on where next – the Pantry is very keen not to stand still and will continue to monitor where we are at and react as well as plan for the future.

The report was agreed by all present.