



Annual General Meeting 21st March 2021
via Zoom

Present:

Management Committee

Committee Members

Andy Carty
Adrian Nagle
Bronwen Barnes
Debbie Tomkins
James Richards
Kelly Hall
Louise Amond
Vikki Malcolm

Claire Carroll
Sophie Harrison
Linda Carty
Vic Tomkins

AGM Business

This was our third AGM, carried out by digitally via zoon due to Covid 19 restrictions, and was attended by 18 members. Meeting opened 11:00
No apologies were received.

Introduction and apologies

Chair Andy Carty welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlining the procedure that the AGM will follow and introduced all committee members to the meeting.

1. Chairman's Report

A very warm welcome to our 3rd AGM and annual report of the Society's activities.

It has been another exciting year seeing our shop, café and walled garden all finally open, and despite difficult trading conditions managing to make a small profit in our early months of operation.

Firstly I should thank all the people who have got us this far, the past and present members of the Management Committee (MC), and everyone who has helped over the years you should all be proud of our achievements to date. We have a shop and café that's managing to operate at a small profit and a Walled Garden that is really starting to resemble its former Victorian glory. But as you all know we are still at the start of our journey and it is only with the continued help and support from the Volunteers, Management Committee staff and customers that we can ensconce this venture at the centre of our community.

We continue to get tremendous support from our Parish Council as well as Broadland District Council and our partnership with Broadland Clinic at Little Plumstead Hospital is a great example of our Community reach. Since our last AGM we have continued to seek support from a number of sources and have received £10,000 from the Coop foundation, £5,000 from the Geoffrey Watling Trust, £5,000 from the Ivy Trust and £4,890 from Norwich Union crowdfunding for solar panels. We also raised £26,060 through our Community Share Issue and without that real expression of support from our community much of our other funding would not have materialized. Finally, we raised £1000 from people sponsoring fruit trees and when you next pop along to the Garden for a visit or coffee you can see the fruit trees growing up the walls.

Grant Applications are likely to be a continuing area of support that we will need to maintain and enhance the facilities we currently have. For instance, we are currently applying for grants that could supply much needed shade on our patio area as well as looking to raise funds for a Victorian style greenhouse.

The Shop and Café now employ 3 staff members on a part time basis, all of whom are settling in well and doing a great job. However our whole venture could not succeed without the significant number of volunteers who freely give their time each week in the shop, café and garden. So a big thank you to all of them and a message to anyone out there thinking they may be able to lend a helping hand, please come forward and talk to anyone on the committee or at the shop – you will always get a warm welcome.

Before I finish, I would like to thank James Richards who has stood down as a member of the Management Committee but I know will continue to support us in every way he can, we wish him well. And course I have to give a big thank you to Adrian Nagle who has relieved himself of the Chair role after many years of stalwart effort but thankfully is still immersed in the project.

And finally, we have made a fantastic start and it is in all our hands now to create a community asset that we can be proud of and I look forward to doing this with you.
Thank you

Andrew Carty
Chair
Plumstead Community Shop Ltd
21 March 2021

2. Accounts for the year ended 31st October 2020.

All members have been given access to the formal accounts via web link. Debbie Tomkins gave a report of the important points contained within the accounts. Full accounts have been maintained by the Treasurer during the year, the accounts reflect 11 months of expenditure in the preparation & delivery of the shop, café & community buildings to the community and 1 month of trading following the shop opening on 5th Oct 2020. The key highlights are that the project has been delivered on budget using only those funds raised through share subscription, grants obtained & donations made. Our first month of trading produced a small profit for the society and at the year end the society has a fantastic community facility fully paid for with an asset value of £225.7k and has no debt. At the close of the year the stock valuation was £12.1k and the society had cash at bank/in hand of £61.3k inclusive of a £50.0k interest free loan from the Co-op Society. Within the accounts, attention was drawn to balance sheet item creditors falling due after more than one year at £257k. It was explained that accounting convention requires the grants received, used to provide the facility, be held in the balance sheet and released into the profit & loss account over the period of the life of the assets purchased with those grant monies, £207k. In addition there is £50k of loan money due to be repaid over a 4-year period. The society has made full use of the tax allowances available to it and consequently has no corporation tax to pay and retained profit in capital & reserves of £2.0k. Such profits are not distributable to members and as Community Benefit Society profits are retained, for the future development of the Community facility. The society has engaged the firm of professional accountants, Lovewell Blake, to prepare an independent accountant report a copy of which can be found here : <https://thewalledgardenshop.co.uk/perch/resources/final-dated-accounts-2020.pdf>

There were no questions from members regarding the accounts.

3. To disapply section 83 (duty to appoint auditors) of the Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (the Act)

Provided that the society turnover does not exceed £5,600,000 in the prior financial year and that the value of assets does not exceed £2,800,000 it is not necessary to appoint auditors, provided that a resolution to this effect is passed at a general meeting. The Management Committee have engaged Lovewell Blake to undertake the preparation of an unaudited independent accountants report and retain Lovewell Blake for the current financial year in order that they may continue to undertake this role. The Management Committee confirm that the financial criteria for the excise of the power conferred by section 84 of the Act will be met and are of the opinion that it is unnecessary to undertake a full audit. The Management Committee are confident that full and proper accounts are maintained and that engaging Lovewell Blake to undertake an independent accountants report is wholly appropriate for the society.

4. Election onto the Management Committee

The management committee members are required to step down by rotation & seek re-election, should they desire, every 3 years. Also any members co-opted onto the MC during the year are required to seek election by the members at the first AGM following their joining the MC, and any members seeking election to the MC are required to do so at the AGM. This year we have 3 members stepping down, Vicki Malcolm, James Richards & Debbie Tomkins. Vicki has been with the project in a marketing/publicity/communications role since the project started in 2017 and is seeking re-election to the MC, Debbie joined the project in 2018 as Treasurer and is also seeking re-election, James has for personal reasons decided not to seek re-election at this time.

All present thanked James for his commitment & valuable help over the past years in bringing the project to fruition, and all gave their best wishes for a full recovery back to full health.

Andy Carty was co-opted onto the MC in November 2020 and has taken on the role of Chair and seeks election to the MC at this AGM.

Vic Tomkins has been on the committee since joining the project in Feb 2019 and has been membership secretary since that time and Company Secretary since March 2020 and seeks election to the MC at this AGM.

5. Resolutions:

a. Adoption of the accounts for the year ended 31st October 2020.

The resolution was voted on by a show of hands, there were no votes against and no abstentions, the resolution was unanimously passed by the members. 1 vote was received by proxy in favour.

b. To disapply section 83 (duty to appoint auditors) of the Co-operative & Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (the Act)

The resolution was voted on by a show of hands, there were no votes against and no abstentions, the resolution was unanimously passed by the members. 1 vote was received by proxy in favour.

c. Re-election/Election of the Management Committee

The members were asked to vote in turn for each nominee, each member was unanimously elected with no votes against and no abstentions. 1 vote was received by proxy in favour of all nominees to be elected.

Each of the following were hereby re-elected/elected to the Management Committee.

Vicki Malcolm
Debbie Tomkins
Andy Carty
Vic Tomkins

6. Garden

Louise Amond gave an update on garden progress; the text of her message is below.

I'm sure when you've visited the garden you've seen the fantastic progress made that has far exceeded our first-year projection and this is all thanks to our passionate team of volunteers.

It was around late summer when we started our first regular volunteer days on Wednesdays and Saturdays and began the daunting task of digging the whole site in preparation for planting.....we have excellent diggers! and slowly each bed is welcoming new plants which have generously been donated from the community, and from our volunteers own gardens.

As Andy mentioned our initiative of 'donate an apple or pear tree' was hugely supported by the community and has added 55 beautiful heritage trees which are nearly all-in situ against the walls with the names of their donators, there is just a few still to plant - due to the unfortunate hole in the wall.

We have also introduced other trees including a medlar, quince, mulberry, crab apple and plums and will be inviting Orchards East Anglia to visit the site soon as they are keen to record this new orchard to their local records.

Against the walls we have also planted some climbing roses, including varieties dating from the 1850s as a nod to the gardens history and a Wisteria to grow over the middle archway. Our garden will be full of flowers and shrubs and our hope is to provide cut flowers to sell.

You will have noticed our sales bench with plants and other items for sale, these are all donated by our volunteers. Sales are going well, and I wanted to say a big thank you as purchasing a plant you are directly contributing to your community garden.

That brings me on to all our wonderful volunteers, their passion deserves full praise. Come rain or shine they're all working together on this wonderful project. I must just give a special mention to local resident Richard Hobbs, he is a consultant on our project and his knowledge has been invaluable so a special thank you to Richard.

7. Q&A / Any Other Business

As has been mentioned on many occasions, it is the volunteers working tirelessly on both the Shop & Café, and in the Garden, that bring the project alive and make it what it is. Some of the garden volunteers have been kind enough to share their feedback

and we thought it fitting that we could close the meeting with some of their comments.

The walled garden project has been a lifeline over the past year, for obvious reasons really.

A fascinating project which provides a focal point and something to look forward to every week.

The opportunity to be involved in creating something for the local community, which should provide interest and enjoyment for years to come. And in a way it is a lasting personal legacy.

Outdoor physical activity, which is brilliant. Always go home on a high, as well as being exhausted!

Helping to bring something back to life, which has local historical importance.

And most importantly, being able to interact (socially distanced of course!) with a great bunch of likeminded people.

“A walled garden is a special place – self-contained and a step away from the outside world. Both having been interested in plants and gardens from a very early age we were thrilled at the chance to be involved with the restoration of the walled garden in Little Plumstead. A favourite childhood book was ‘The Secret Garden’ and this seemed a similar opportunity to bring some of the magic back to this unloved and neglected site.

Little and Great Plumstead have lost both Post Offices and accompanying shops and there was not much sense of a community within the two villages. The new shop and café were just what was needed. It is a chance for us to meet other like-minded people and although the task seemed a bit daunting at first, the huge amount achieved so far is thrilling.”

Good to be involved in the development of this amazing walled garden, it's such a therapy at this difficult time.

For me being able to work in the garden is fun and it's good to do something collectively, with a common goal which benefits my local community. Being a single, retired person who moved to the location only a couple of years ago, it has given me the opportunity to meet a great bunch of new friends, participate in an activity that enables me to be outdoors, and learn new skills as everybody is willing to contribute and share whatever skills they have. It is also lovely to think that the garden is an important part of the whole project to provide a social hub for our local community. When talking to visitors to the Walled Garden they often express great interest in the garden and comment favourably on the progress being made and look forward to the time when it is complete - whatever that might be!

For my part volunteering at The Walled Garden has been about taking part in something that I love - gardening. Even though I haven't been volunteering as long as

some of my fellow volunteers, I have learned a lot about plants, identifying trees and planning a garden. There's so much combined knowledge among the volunteers that even an amateur gardener like me can't fail to pick up a few tips. The icing on the cake has been keeping sane during the lockdowns. Hard work and persistence is now reaping benefits and the garden is now really coming to life. It's been a thoroughly enjoyable experience and long may it continue!

There be no further business all attendees were thanked for giving up their Sunday morning to attend the AGM & the meeting closed at 12:00.