

Chair's Report
to the
Community Shop Annual General Meeting 2025

The shop continues to provide essential services to the community. As always, we aim to offer affordable goods, locally sourced where possible, and create a welcoming social space in which to meet.

Even though we are staffed and run by volunteers, the shop faces a number of challenges, mostly due to our small size. The fact that we are a small shop means that we are limited in the choice of the suppliers who will deliver to us and makes us more vulnerable to stock volatility and product wastage. The management committee is constantly looking at ways to keep our costs as low as possible while providing our products and services at reasonable prices. In these efforts we have been largely successful and the shop continues to trade on a financially sound basis, despite the steadily increasing cost of products and energy and a consistent downward sales trend. Specifically, while year-on-year sales revenue was down by 21%, our costs associated with running the shop were reduced by a similar amount. Overall, although the shop made a small loss on paper, if depreciation of assets is taken out of the equation, we actually made a small profit.

Supplier reliability has continued to be an issue for some products and in order to improve the situation, we now stock Maryland butter, crème fraîche from Riverford, and clotted cream from Rodda's. We have also introduced new products such as Starbucks Frappuccinos, Spice Tailor sauces and alcohol-free cider and beer.

Work continues on the shop extension project. Our plans have been approved by North Devon Council planning and building control departments and we are now in a position to obtain a quote from a builder. Once that's done, we can apply for a share of the section 106 monies and break ground, weather permitting. We plan to keep the shop open and trading while work on the extension progresses. Thanks to Dave Ball for his hard work on this project.

Finally, and as usual, we need to thank our volunteers without whom we would not have a shop. We have welcomed some new faces to our ranks and to the management committee with the co-option of Lorna and Monica Maxted-Jones who are standing for election. But we have also said goodbye to others. Lin Briggs recently left the village and was a valued and hard-working member of the management committee. Malcolm Neal has been our Treasurer and accountant since the shop was established and is sadly planning to move out of the area. We thank Malcolm and Lin for their hard and diligent work over the years. Malcolm's imminent departure leaves us looking for somebody to fill his shoes. We are always looking for more volunteers so if you have some spare time and would like to contribute to the community, please let a member of the management committee know. There are a variety of ways to help – not all are behind the till. We would welcome further new members to the management committee and are still looking for someone to fill the secretary position full-time, so please let us know if you'd like to take part.

Andrew Coupe
Chair
Chittlehamholt Community Shop Management Committee