

UPPER TWEED COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE LTD

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL MEMBERS' MEETING (AMM)

THURSDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER 2023

This report covers the standard period of a year from April 1st 2022 until March 31st 2023, though as in previous years the narrative spills over into the first few months of the current year.

During this accounting period we finally emerged from the long shadow of the Covid pandemic, with no restrictions on the numbers entering the shop, and the removal of masks and Perspex screens.

The shop has traded well during this period – just how well I shall leave to our Treasurer Donald to explain. In broad terms I know that we have largely retained the spectacular increase in turnover experienced at the beginning of the pandemic. I am continually told by all sorts of people what an amazingly good shop it is, where you can buy venison and fresh vegetables for your supper, a warm pie and coffee for your lunch, and even top up your washing up liquid, facilities that would be hard to achieve in a shop twice the size.

We continue to provide local deliveries for those unable or unwilling to come into a busy shop. We have also retained the Broughton Village Store Welfare Fund, set up at the height of the pandemic, which is available in the form of free groceries to those who are struggling to meet bills. The Welfare Fund is supported by individuals who make entirely voluntary contributions, some occasionally, and others on a regular basis. We are grateful to those who contribute – please get in touch if you would like to help out.

A new initiative this year has been support of Broughton Primary School's breakfast club, which allows any child a hearty breakfast free of charge during term time.

The success of the shop is entirely due to the hard work of our manager Jen and her team, to whom I extend my gratitude on behalf of the Board, and indeed on behalf of our many appreciative customers.

THE PLAN FOR EXPANSION (continued)

The main focus of the Board during this period has been to progress plans to expand the shop by extending into the garden space at the rear. Part of this process has been to create viable temporary premises where the shop can trade during the extension work, which is expected to take around 6 months. Since the last AMM we have successfully raised the funds required to convert the cottage annexed to the Village Hall into a temporary shop, and the work has been effectively completed. Our thanks are due to the Village Hall committee for letting this happen, and for their patience as we wait for the opportunity to move the shop over the A701, which will happen shortly before the main building project is due to begin. We are also grateful to SSE Clyde Borders Wind Farm for comprehensive

funding for this stage of the project, both in the form of an initial grant of £41,000 and subsequently with a top-up to meet inflationary costs of £13,000. These grants covered all building costs and professional fees for architect, quantity surveyor and engineers.

While the building work in the Village Hall was in progress, we turned our attention to raising the funds required to extend the shop. All permissions and warrants are now in place, and we have a realistic estimated cost of around £210,000 for the build work itself, excluding professional fees at 14%.

SECOND SHARE ISSUE

A key element of the fundraising matrix was a second share issue, as this would not only provide funds but also demonstrate community support for the expansion plan. This was set in motion in early 2023 and over a period of around four months raised £32,000 from 155 subscribers, many of whom were existing shareholders coming back for more. (The first share issue raised £66,000 from 250 subscribers.) The email mailing list for shareholders and supporters now reaches around 360 individuals in Broughton and the surrounding area. We are grateful to Community Shares Scotland for their invaluable assistance with the share offer.

OTHER FUNDING

It is our hope to try and raise the bulk of the funding from external sources. At the time of writing three discreet funders have indicated their willingness to award grants of £100,000, £50,000, and £75,000, leaving a small deficit that can be filled from shareholder funds if need be. By the time we get to the meeting on 14th September, we may have more news. In any event we expect building work on the shop itself to start in the winter of 23/24, either before or after Christmas. We have been greatly assisted in the fundraising process by our consultant Sandra Macaskill.

ELECTION OF THE UTCE BOARD

I am grateful for the hard work done by Board members over the year. Existing Board members are Christopher Lambton (Chairman); Simon Edwards (Secretary); Donald Stewart (Treasurer); Bill Sheridan; Camilla Younger; and Jen McBeth (in her capacity as shop manager). All are willing to stand for re-election.

The entire Board meets monthly, and minutes are published under UTCE Ltd on the shop website <http://broughtonvillagestore.co.uk/>. Full contact details are available on the website – if anyone has any concerns they would like to address please let us know as soon as possible. In the meantime I commend to you the resolutions in the AMM agenda and hope these receive your full support.

Christopher Lambton