

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

From the Chair

As Metfield Community Stores celebrated its tenth anniversary in April this year, it was a further endorsement of the support and hard work that has been so selflessly given to ensure its continuing success. Indeed the get-together in the shop grounds on April 30th reflected the strength and spirit in the community which continues to back this special venture.

This year has been a reasonably successful one in commercial terms although we have been faced with a number of challenges, some more anticipated than others. It is encouraging to see an increase in turnover in a year when we have been faced with road closures, power cuts and the loss of a telephone connection, not to mention necessary improvements and changes required by Health and Safety legislation.

We have also worked hard, with the support of our landlord, to improve the décor and state of repair of the shop, particularly to give the shop an anniversary coat of paint!

I am indebted to the hard work and commitment of the Board in meeting these challenges; Tessa and Jan for their considerable efforts, with Bridget and Sylvia, to ensure the success of the Anniversary celebrations; Chris for keeping us abreast of the innumerable Health and Safety requirements; Wendy for keeping an expert eye on our finances; Lynda for her invaluable support in the day to day running of the shop and, of course, Barbara, for her most efficient and faultless secretarial work. The shop could not function without people such as these giving their time and energy and it is with considerable regret that Lynda and Tessa have decided to stand down after many years' service to the shop and the community.

Once more we have relied upon the splendid efforts of our willing band of volunteers, organised so patiently and painstakingly by Miranda. Jacqui has continued to serve us so well as part time manager and it is with sadness that we said farewell to her as she moves onto challenges anew. Jacqui's welcoming and warm approach to all customers and volunteers alike will be much missed and we are actively seeking a replacement.

All these people deserve our thanks and praise for working so hard for the shop and it is a timely reminder to state, once again, that such a community store only survives if every member of the community is prepared to make a contribution either as volunteer, Board member or customer.

We look forward to the next ten years with a positive optimism and a firm commitment to stay true to the community ethos of the original concept.

Paul Smith

From the Company Secretary

Over the past year 2015-16, we have welcomed 5 new shareholders giving a total of 69 Co-operative Shareholders and 23,909 Equity Shares. Only Co-operative Shareholders have voting rights at the forthcoming AGM but we hope that as many shareholders as possible, both Co-operative and Equity, will be able to attend the meeting on Monday 20th June 2016. Members of the public are also welcome to attend and show their support for Metfield Stores. Refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

During the year, we have had some changes to the Board of Directors. Jan Rusted re-joined after a period of absence from the Board, and Wendy Abbott, who has been book keeping for us for some time, agreed to join the Board too. Both Bridget Morley and Eddie Buckle resigned having done sterling work over a number of years on the Board.

The current Board of Directors is

Paul Smith – Chair

Chris Osborne

Lynda Austin

Tessa Harding

Jan Rusted

Wendy Abbott

As the Board ideally should have at least 5 Directors (and preferably 7), we urgently need new Directors to join the Board in order to keep the shop open. Any member of the Board will be pleased to chat with you about becoming a Director and answer any questions you might have.

Barbara Bailey

From Tessa Harding..... one of the founder members of Metfield Stores!

On Saturday 30th April 2016, Metfield Stores celebrated its tenth anniversary as a community owned and community run village shop.

The fact that Metfield Stores exists at all is down to some remarkable events and many remarkable people. Initially, there was a public meeting when the village shop was threatened with closure. An action group was established. Rachel Kellett, a local resident, bought the building at auction and a group was formed to run the shop. Over the first three months, the shop was completely stripped and renovated by Gordon Lee and a determined group of helpers. Money was raised from the local community through the sale of shares. Ten years ago this month, a hard working group of villagers was putting the finishing touches to a revived and restocked village shop.

Since then, Metfield Stores has been through many changes. It has weathered some substantial difficulties and overcome them. It has consolidated its important role in village life. Not only does the shop offer a useful service to village residents and travellers passing by, it also helps to stimulate the local

economy, and is an important outlet for the Metfield Village Kitchen and Pie Company and other locally produced goods. It depends on the work of dozens of loyal volunteers who staff the shop, stock the shelves, order goods and generally enable the shop to function, and has a part time manager, who helps to oversee and co-ordinate all this work. It is an important social centre for the village and beyond, and many friendships have been forged amongst customers and volunteers.

Metfield Stores is part of a much wider movement: according to the Plunkett Foundation, there were 325 community-owned village shops across the country by the end of 2014, as well as community owned pubs, bakeries and the occasional book shop. Having reached our tenth birthday, we look forward to welcoming old and new customers alike and will be raising a glass to the next ten years of Metfield Stores.

We urgently need new volunteers to help on a day to day basis in the shop and people to stand for the Board of Directors (The Directors meet every month). It isn't necessary to have had prior experience for either of these positions but, of course, anyone with retail or other business experience would be very welcome.