

# METFIELD STORES Co-operative cic

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 5668382

## ANNUAL REPORT 2019–2020

As Charles Dickens wrote “ It was the best of times, it was the worst of times” and as I write this report in the fifth week of the lockdown for the Covid 19 virus, it certainly qualifies as the latter.

However there are many positives to report this year despite the challenging times we live in. Perhaps the most outstanding has been the tremendous commitment and selfless contributions made by Sue, our dedicated manager, and those volunteers who have kept the shop going in these difficult times.

We have known how fortunate we are to have such an enthusiastic and conscientious manager in Sue but during the corona crisis she has excelled even her high standards of commitment to the shop and with her family she has almost single-handedly kept us going and ensured that the shop provides for both the social and retail needs of the community.

It has been said before that the shop provides an integral hub to the Metfield Community and these past weeks have served to emphasise this as more people realise what an essential service it provides. We hope that when we come through this present crisis new customers will stay loyal to us as they realise what an invaluable asset the shop is.

However the shop is nothing without the people who serve it and once again I wish to acknowledge and praise the hard-working and sage Board we have who meet monthly to ensure that the shop remains on target to fulfil its commercial and social objectives as a cooperative community store. This is an ever more complex task and we are blessed to have a wide range of skills and expertise on the Board, including legal, technological, health and safety

and financial and secretarial knowledge.

As I said, it does seem strange to be writing this report in the midst of this unwelcome challenge to our lives but perhaps if it has any positive effects it will be to teach us to value what strengths we have in our local community and how we need to foster and nurture them. As ever we always welcome new blood onto the Board and helpers in the shop to assist our hard-working team, so please do not hesitate to contact Sue or myself if you would like to get involved.

**Paul K Smith** *Chairman*

### **From our Company Secretary**

Hello to you all again,  
How time flies! I have had another productive year with the company, it is lovely working with such passionate and hardworking people who are so willing to give their time and energies for the greater good..... and how all those generous spirited people have been challenged recently.

Over the past year we have increased our co-operative shareholders giving a total of 85, each holding a £1 voting share and our equity shareholding rests at 23,911 shares. In total, we have 232 shareholders (both co-operative and equity).

Of course with the world as it currently is our AGM may not be going ahead in the same format as usual but we aim to provide you with a clearer arrangement as soon as possible. In the hope that we can go ahead, the following applies:–

Only co-operative shareholders are entitled to vote at the AGM but the AGM on Monday 21st September in Metfield Village Hall is open to all shareholders and other members of the community

to attend, we hope you will do your best to come and support this valuable community resource. Refreshments will be available from 6.30pm and the formal proceedings start promptly at 7pm.

**Sarah Mossop**

Wow that year went so fast. Firstly I would like to thank all our wonderful volunteers and board members for your encouragement and help in the running of the store, I certainly couldn't do it alone. Bridget, Sue Oliver and I prepare all the paperwork for Wendy, who works very hard also and Miranda is a marvel with the rotas. It was a good year and we were chugging along and then, Wham, Corona virus and boy did the shop come into it's own! I think we already knew how important the store is but this pandemic proved it once again. We have not closed for a single day thanks to old and new volunteers.

To our very loyal older volunteers who were forced into lock down (some not very happy!), keep safe and we will welcome you back with open arms and maybe a small hug. Stock buying has been a struggle but we managed and going by the smiles on your faces when we had the simplest things, i.e.: flour and yeast, I think we did well. Suma shone through, can't say the same for Booker, and we now have a daily (if needed) fruit and veg delivery from Mister Fruity of Norwich.

If you offered your help and we didn't respond, it was purely because I was trying to reduce risk and limit numbers of contacts within the shop but we really appreciate the offer and would love some new volunteers when this is all over, full training if needed, 2 hour shifts are a great way to meet other volunteers and local people. **Sue Mead** *Manager*

## **Operations**

**Stock** Sue has continued to expand our range this year and again done much off-piste shopping, with Mike. Thank you Sue and Mike for your energy and dedication. Stock costs have risen this

year and we expect this trend to worsen with the economic effects of Covid 19. We will try not to pass all of these on to you. Some goods are still cheaper at MS than at local chains thanks to Sue's hard work, creative shopping and expertise.

We remind you that for stock requests please ask Sue or a staff member. We can place bulk orders for you at 20% markup – alcohol, sugar for preserves etc., During lockdown we have been taking phoned orders and buying in requested stock and making deliveries, this may continue if practical.

**Volunteers** Covid 19 is a brutal reminder that we have been viable all these years largely through the efforts of retirees. These hard-working over 65's are now mostly locked down and some volunteers have been forced to hide away for health reasons. We thank every one of you for your loyal service and we hope you are not missing the shop too much!

We are very grateful to those of you who have been able and willing to carry on working. Sue has almost doubled her hours to fill empty shifts and increase the scale and frequency of orders. We are indebted to Andy Townend who is making up to three deliveries a day. We thank Ann and Stephen (*thanks for the mushrooms!*) Mulligan, Malcolm, Jill, Cathy, Karen, Natalie, Fiona, "Sunday" John and the Coopers, Alan, Lynn and Andrew, who have all have kept calm and carried on. And last but not least, the other Meads, Sofia has done sterling work behind the counter and Dylan, unloading and pricing deliveries, as well as cleaning down the shopfront each week!

## **Thank you for keeping us open!**

We thank Chris Harvey (*recently helped by Jely*) who continues to organise and deliver food bank donations,

This year we have have been fortunate to gain some new (*and comparatively youthful!*) volunteers – Cathy Pitt, Lynn Cooper, and during lockdown, some who would normally be busy elsewhere – Natalie Hadingham and Karren Leonard.

PROFIT & LOSS ACCOUNT	2019/2020	2018/19
Sales	145,094.06	137,985.53
Cost of sales	109,053.21	100,708.75
<b>Gross profit</b>	<b>36,040.85</b>	<b>37,276.78</b>
Admin expenses	34,616.47	32,741.26
Other operating income	614.30	692.81
<b>Profit before tax</b>	<b>2,036.68</b>	<b>5,228.33</b>

ABOVE: As you can see, sales are up by £7,109, but costs up by £10,220, so operating profit is down to 24.84% from last year's 27.01%.

## Finance

This year our turnover was £155,495, our previous record as you can see in the table (top right) was £151,887 in 2013/14. What went wrong you may ask?

Lets recall what happened in 2014 – by May 2015 the press was reporting that “*The number of UK food suppliers and farmers struggling to stay afloat has leapt more than 50% in 12 months, as a bitter supermarket price war continues to take its toll. The industry has never been tougher for Britain’s smallest suppliers. There is a “new savage landscape” in food retailing and suppliers are bearing the brunt of the big supermarkets’ drastic turnaround plans, aimed at clawing back market share from discount retailers such as Aldi and Lidl.*”

As if this was not bad enough, Tesco bought Booker the UK’s largest (and our main) grocery wholesaler. Metfield Stores turnover has fallen during these years of continued price wars and we have only just started to recover that lost ground as customers have returned to us because of lockdown. We sincerely hope that as lockdown is lifted, these customers will continue to support and appreciate us. We think we are worth it and we know that you do too!

As you can see (*right*), March was the best month rather than the usual July or August when holidaymakers boost trade. Lockdown has favoured us by doubling and sometimes tripling daily turnover. Although we have had to cut trading hours our sales are not down. The board will confirm future opening hours. See page 4 for our current opening hours.

**Bridget Morley**

YEAR	TURNOVER £	YEAR	TURNOVER £
2006/7	128,728	2013/14	151,887
2007/8	135,362	2014/15	149,121
2008/9	131,262	2015/16	149,700
2009/10	131,765	2016/17	145,392
2010/11	130,887	2017/18	147,620
2011/12	150,338	2018/19	147,600
2012/13	143,408	2019/2020	155,495

ABOVE: MS till turnover end of tax year totals. These appear higher as they include VAT, unlike the Annual Accounts figures shown on the left.

## AVERAGE DAILY TAKINGS

30 April 2006 – 31 March 2020

YEAR 1	June 2006 – £426 Best month – July – £478 average over year – £396
YEAR 2	June 2007 – £390 Best month – August – £470 average over year – £369
YEAR 3	June 2008 – £379 Best month – August – £429 average over year – £359
YEAR 4	June 2009 – £410 Best month – August – £460 average over year – £360
YEAR 5	June 2010 – £367 Best month – July – £475 average over year – £359
YEAR 6	June 2011 – £431 Best month – August – £473 average over year – £411
YEAR 7	June 2012 – £398 Best month – August – £427 average over year – £395
YEAR 8	June 2013 – £434 Best month – July – £484 average over year – £420
YEAR 9	June 2014 – £429 Best month – August – £481 average over year – £415
YEAR 10	June 2015 – £456.85 Best month – August – £467 average over year – £414
YEAR 11	June 2016 – £444.05 Best month – August – £501 average over year – £407
YEAR 12	June 2017 – £411 Best month – August – £467 average over year – £410
YEAR 13	June 2018 – £400.64 Best month – August – £456 average over year – £407
YEAR 14	June 2019 – £439 Best month – March 2020 £512 average over year – £434

## Health and Safety report

2020 has been the most challenging year ever and we are indebted to Sue Mead for taking on the task of keeping the shop running during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have been following HSE guidelines which Sue has implemented. The shop is open every morning and customers are limited to two in the shop at any one time. Touched surfaces are treated with anti bacterial/viral solution regularly and frequently. Hand washing and social distancing are as per government guidelines. Sue has ensured a good through flow of ventilation in the shop. At present we have not advised the wearing of face masks but that advice may change. The board had an emergency meeting before lockdown and measures were discussed in advance of the government advice.

The shop provides an essential service and we are resolved to keep it open as long as possible.

We have had the usual testing of refrigeration equipment, checking of fire extinguishers, a new fire risk assessment, PAT testing (electrical equipment) and we have had a fire drill. We are to have additional emergency lighting in the shop which will proceed after the lockdown has ended. We should have

another practical demonstration of fire extinguishers and another fire drill, but that will have to be after the lockdown.

Sue has organised some additional ventilation over the main door. This should help keep the shop temperature at the correct level during summer and put less demand on the air conditioner.

Metfield Stores would not be coping without Sue's excellent management.

**Chris Osborne**

## Refurbishments

If you are a keen DIYer and/or have any related professional skills and would like to help us or make suggestions please do contact Sue or a board member.

## In conclusion

*As always, our priority is to continue to provide this unique service to our community, so please encourage your friends, neighbours and relations to shop here and/or become a volunteer.*

*At Metfield Stores you can chat, catch up on local news, find out about local events, borrow a book or photocopy a document. It is a social hub which we hope brightens the daily lives of all our customers.*

**Please remember that the best way to support Metfield Stores and ensure our future is to shop here.**

## METFIELD STORES c.i.c.

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER 5668382

*run by the community for the community*

THE STREET, METFIELD, HARLESTON, NORFOLK IP20 0LB

[www.metfieldsuffolk.com](http://www.metfieldsuffolk.com)

telephone **01379 586204**

## NEW OPENING HOURS

Monday–Friday, 8.30am–4pm

Saturday, 8.30am–2pm

Sunday, 10am–12.30pm

Bank Holidays, 10am–12noon

**You need us and we need you...**

**To become a volunteer, just contact the shop and leave your name and address and other contact details. Slots are usually 2hrs long during opening hours.**

### YOUR CURRENT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Smith  
Wendy Abbott  
Alan Cooper  
Gill Kingsley

*Chair*  
*Bookkeeper*  
*H & S, Operations*  
*Operations*

Nick Kingsley  
Bridget Morley  
Chris Osborne  
Jan Rusted

*Vice Chair, Legal advisor*  
*Finance, Stock*  
*H & S, Operations*  
*Stock, Operations*