



MUSTARD SEED 30th AGM
15 November 2024
 6.30pm: Barber Rooms

Present: Sjoerd Vogt (Chairman) Katie Foot (Manager) Karen Vogt (Manager) Peter Foot Rosalind Burns Sue & Keith Thrower Dave Headey Lois & Andrew Chell Ann White Helen Jackson (12 attended)	Apologies: Gaynor & Nigel Archer Brenda & David Barber Angela & Mike Barrett Tim & Sharon Gerry Margaret & Eric Gutsell Jill Headey Ann & Derek Jerome Geoff/Muriel Loosemore Bruce & Carol Garfield	Apologies: Denise Monk Jim & Helen Mynors Ruth Seedell Libby/Michael Smedley David/Lyn Williamson Jonathan & Barbara Mapley Maria Jukes Jenny King Emily Smith	Apologies (contd): Fr Claro Liz Kilpatrick Maureen Courtney John Seedell Mark & Suzanna Greenwood Jess Duarte Richard & Jill Bolter Taiye Ojo-Osagie
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The meeting was opened with reading and prayer .

Minutes of the 29th AGM were signed as a correct record of the meeting held 17th Nov 2023 in Blessed Hugh Church Hall. No items outstanding that are not discussed below.

CHAIRMAN’S REPORT

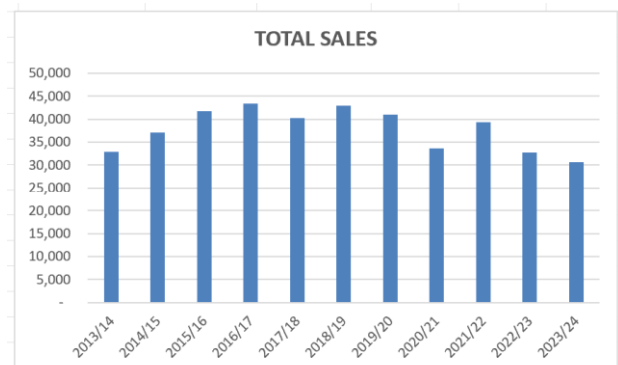
CHALLENGES

Even though we’re now a full two years out of lockdown, we continue to face a raft of challenges. Instead of having a single reliable supplier for our fairtrade goods (Traidcraft) we now have to work with more than a dozen less reliable suppliers – meaning significant frustration and extra work for Karen, and empty shelves in the shop. On the Christian books side, it’s meant significant changes. Lower footfall in the town generally still means mornings only for most of the year; and inflation/increased prices translate to increased customer cost-sensitivity. And yet – we continue to survive!

We all need to continue to rally together to ensure that the Mustard Seed will still be around for another 38 years!

FOOTFALL

Faringdon is much better off than many Market Towns of similar size – with new retail businesses continuing to take the plunge. It’s a town centre that continues to evolve and we can help in steering the direction, but we certainly can’t take anything for granted. We thank our amazing team for their resilience and their flexibility.



SALES - A perfect storm of negative factors conspire to drive down our sales. In spite of that

– we can still pay our bills and our cash flow remains healthy.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS – see Managers’ Report

THANKS

We have Katie & Peter Foot’s generosity to thank for the **warehousing arrangements** (their garage!) - which have been in place for almost four years now, and continue to be working remarkably well. This year, we had to be particularly creative in distributing the Bali crafts, and we thank not only Katie & Peter, but also Blessed Hugh for use of the Organ loft!

Special thanks go to our joint managers Katie and Karen; and our unflappable treasurer Lois.

We thank the Committee, representing all the Churches Together.

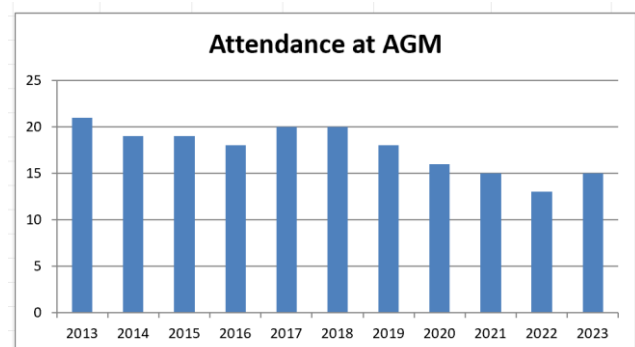
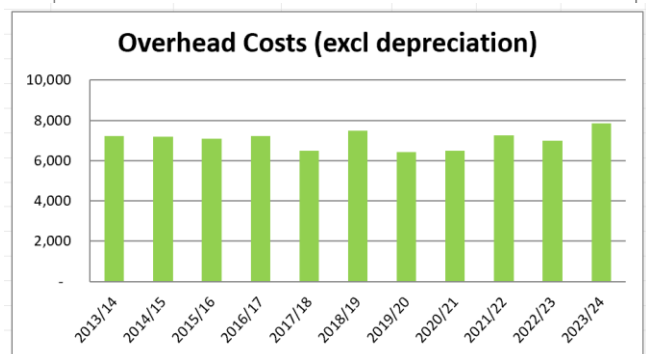
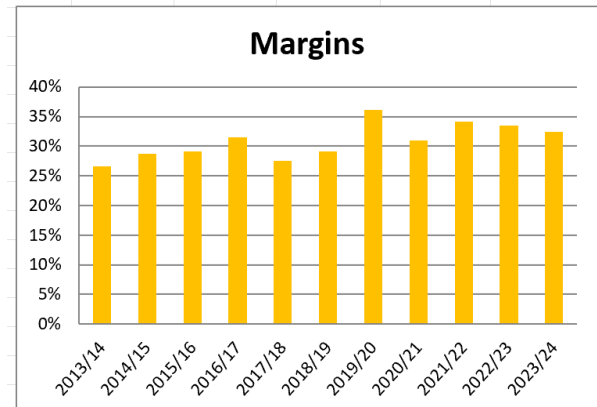
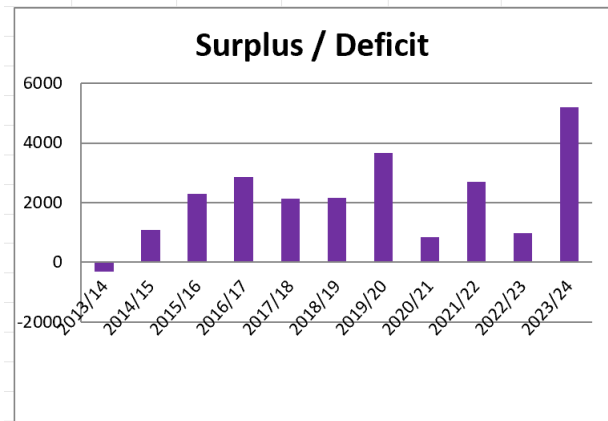
And we also get support from the wider community, for which we are very grateful.

We have our annual accounts fully audited by Anthony Akers (from Alder Demain & Akers) free of charge. Thank you.

On behalf of the committee, our warmest thanks go out to all those volunteers and members of the community who support us in so many ways.

And last but not least, we also warmly thank our loyal shoppers.

As always, the team of volunteers need your constant support and prayers.



*Sjoerd Vogt
Chairman, The Mustard Seed
November 2024*

Managers’ Report – Katie Foot and Karen Vogt

The shop was open all year, from 9am to 1pm Mondays to Saturdays, and in December we were also able to remain open until 4pm Tuesdays to Saturdays.

We were very sad that, having supplied us with books and cards I think since the Mustard Seed very first opened, The Lighthouse in Highworth closed at the end of January 2024. We greatly miss the help and advice we received from Malcolm and Val Swift over nearly 25 years since Malcolm became manager. We were, however, able to buy some closing-down stock and re-use some of the shop

fittings, so our customers soon noticed the re-vamp, which has made our shop much more colourful. We have made a new arrangement for ordering books and cards through the Cornerstone Centre in Grove, which has worked to both shops' advantage, as Karen has been able to order some fairtrade food and gifts for them, which all helps with minimum orders. Our thanks to Sarah Shewring, the manager at Cornerstone, for being so helpful.

A stall was held in the Corn Exchange on Faringdon's Big Green Day in June. Blessed Hugh church also has a sale after Mass on the first Sunday of each month, and St Denys, Stanford in the Vale has held several this year again as well. The Big Bali Bonanza in the Corn Exchange last November was a great success and made up for us not being able to offer hampers since Traidcraft closed down. This will be repeated on Saturday 16th November 2024, 10am-2pm, so please do come along and stock up on Christmas presents!

As agreed by the Management Committee, one grant was given from the charity account to a particular case of local medical need. There is also a grant still pending to All Saints' for 50% of the cost required for planting one or two new trees in the churchyard, but a decision is awaited from the District Council/Town Council about this work.

Our shop staff are wonderful and so reliable – as is Kath Thacker, who keeps us in clean towels each week. We were delighted to welcome Jessica Paixão Duarte to the Monday (and occasion stand-in) rota, as Katie Dyet decided it was time to step back for a while. We are also very appreciative of our window dressers for their attractive displays, and of Lois Chell for her hard work keeping the books in order and arranging for the accounts to be audited by Alder Demain Akers free of charge. Thank you all!

We remain very grateful for the support from members of all the churches in Faringdon and the Vale, both as volunteers and customers – long may that continue!

Katie Foot and Karen Vogt

Treasurer's Report for 2023/24: See separate Year-end P&L

- Apart from blip in electricity bill - expenses under control – and cashflow fine.
- And still able to show a surplus. This year 5K – primarily due to healthy stock levels
- P&L cleaned up – now showing all the different suppliers separately.

*Lois Chell
Treasurer*

Election of Trustees, Directors & Committee Members

Trustees (Mustard Seed Oxon.): Sjoerd Vogt, Richard Bolter, John Seedell

Directors (Mustard Seed (Faringdon) Ltd.) : Dave Headey, Katie Foot .

Chairman: Sjoerd Vogt ; **Managers:** Katie Foot/Karen Vogt ; **Treasurer:** Lois Chell

Committee members: The above four - plus Dave Headey, Richard Bolter, Malcolm and Val Swift, John Seedell. Total= nine . Keith also copied in on Meeting notes.

All existing officers and committee have agreed to continue in their current roles.

Proposed: Rosaland Burns. Seconded: Keith Thrower . No dissent.

Appointment of Auditor/bookkeeper:

Antony Akers from Alder, Demain & Akers have kindly agreed to provide their services as our accountants. Will be presented with their usual Christmas Hamper.

AOB and Open Discussion (will be taken forward to next committee meeting)

Bali Bonanza raised almost £1000 in 2023 – and almost £400 in 2024– all of which goes directly to bottom line. Well done & thank you to all!

RB: Flipping till roll always v difficult to put in. Can we perhaps include this in training?

KT: Christian Witness: how much are we in danger of diluting this? Discussion followed.

Agreed that IF we can get pple over the threshold – THEN the witness can follow!

BUT – would be really good idea to have a short leaflet (perhaps even just a postcard) – explaining the MS – that we're a charity and that all profits also go to local charities. KF will work on something & circulate.

Would ALSO be good to show charitable donations over past ten years on the notice boards.

SV will collate.

KT: Malcolm mentioned that he's still got masses of cards - stored in the back of their church in Highworth. We can have them for nothing. Discussion followed. VARIETY of cards is important.

Carried over fm 2023:

KF: Still need to rewrite till buttons (fading) .

KF: Repeat training needed on card machine.

SV: Damp in toilet – but clearly *rising* damp. KF speculating that it's the Westbrook & groundwater that's particularly high @ the moment.

The meeting closed with the grace and was followed by shared supper.