Mustard Seed

MUSTARD SEED 32nd AGM
13 November 2026
6.30pm: Barber Rooms

Present:	**Present:**	**Apologies:**	**Apologies (contd):**
Sjoerd Vogt (Chairman)	John Seedell	Brenda & David Barber	Mark & Suzanna
Katie Foot (Manager)	Maureen Courtney	Angela & Mike Barrett	Greenwood
Karen Vogt (Manager)	Rocel Rogadon	Tim & Sharon Gerry	Jess Duarte
Dave Headey	(13 attended)	Margaret & Eric Gutsell	Peter Foot
Jill Headey		Ann & Derek Jerome	Ruth Seedell
Lois Chell		Geoff/Muriel Loosemore	Libby/Michael Smedley
Andrew Chell		Ann White	David/Lyn Williamson
Helen Jackson		Sue & Keith Thrower	
Richard Bolter		Jeni Summerfield	
Jill Bolter		Liz Kilpatrick	

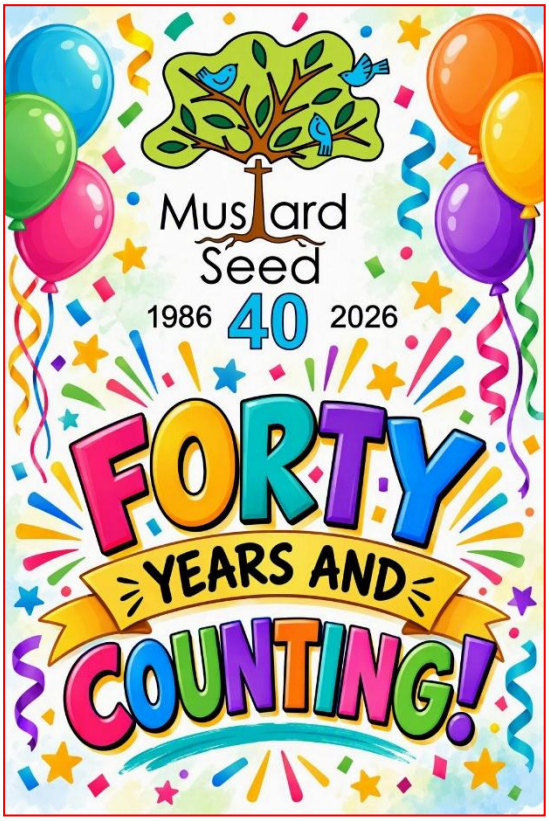
The meeting was opened with reading and prayer .

Minutes of the 31st AGM were signed as a correct record of the meeting held 14th Nov 2025 in the Church Hall of Blessed Hugh. No items outstanding that are not discussed below.

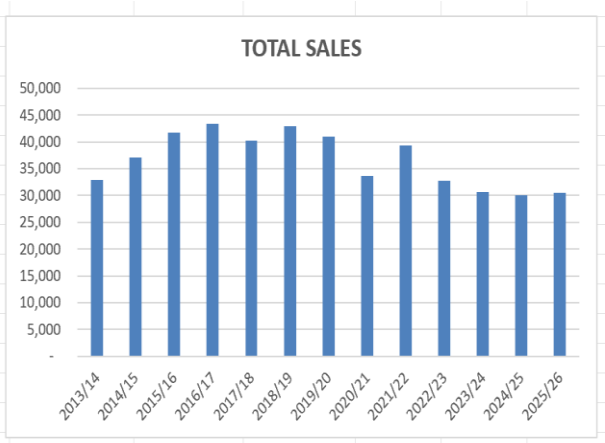
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES

Even though we're now a full four years out of lockdown, we continue to face a raft of lockdown-related challenges. Instead of having a single reliable supplier for our fairtrade goods (previously Traidcraft) we now have to work with more than a dozen suppliers – ALL of them less reliable - meaning significant frustration and extra work for Karen, and empty shelves in the shop. Basic goods such as sugar or coffee can be impossible to get hold of for months on end. 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! This is perhaps all the more surprising when we see what's happened to other fairtrade shops and Christian bookshops in the area. This makes us acutely aware of the many challenges that we continue to face.

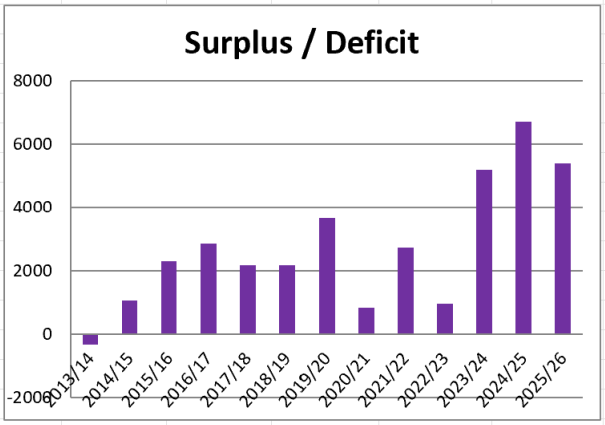


In May 2026, we celebrated an amazing 40 years since we first opened our doors on the other side of the Narrows. This makes us the third oldest shop in Faringdon (only Pat Thomas & Lilian's are older) .
We all need to continue to rally together to ensure that the Mustard Seed will still be around for another 40 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.



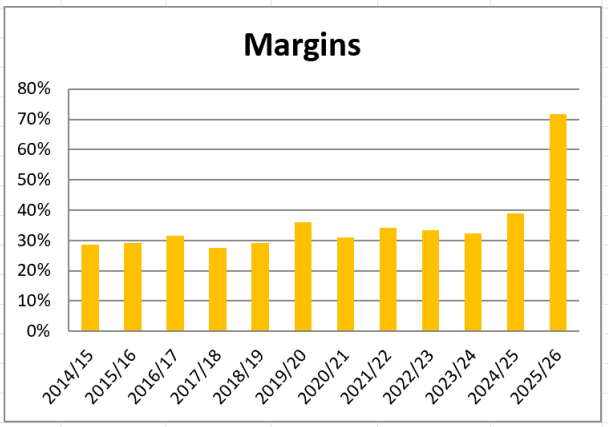
SALES & COSTS

Sales very slightly up on previous year; with margins up also and costs under control. Therefore, we are still able to pay our bills and our cash flow remains healthy.

Nonetheless – we cannot be complacent. Going forward, our new five year lease means that our rent is increasing from £4400 to £6000 per year. This is still a very competitive rent – and we are grateful to our landlords for this.

CHARITABLE DONATIONS

£1000 each to Faringdon Foodbank and to Sanctuary Faringdon.



THANKS

We have Katie & Peter Foot's generosity to thank for the ***warehousing arrangements*** (their garage!) - which have been in place for almost six years now, and continue to be working remarkably well.

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

We thank the Committee, representing all the Churches Together.

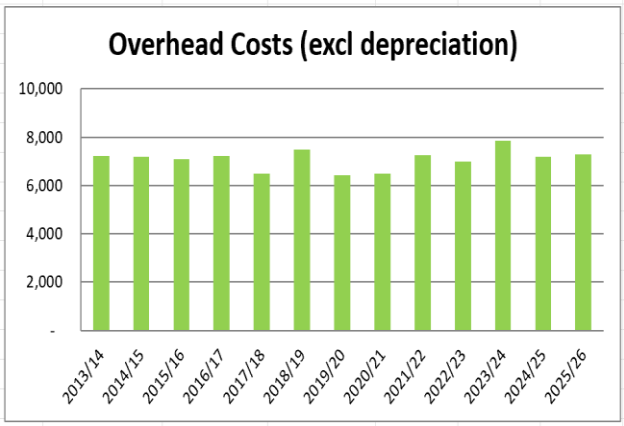
And we also get support from the wider community, for which we are very grateful.

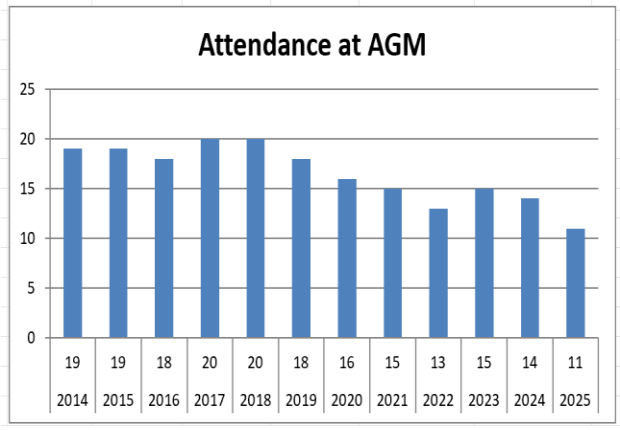
We have our annual accounts fully audited by Anthony Akers (from Alder Demain & Akers) free of charge. Thank you.

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 2026

Managers' Report – Katie Foot and Karen Vogt

Once again, the shop was open all year, from 9am to 1pm Mondays to Saturdays, and in December we were again able to remain open until 4pm Tuesdays to Saturdays, thanks to our super-helpful team of assistants. We were delighted to welcome Adele Vincent during her break from the Town Council and she did some excellent marketing social media for us during the first half of the year. Rocel Regadon from the Baptist Church has also been incredibly helpful with holiday cover during the year. We were very sorry that Rosalind Burns felt unable to continue, but grateful to Maureen Courtney who now covers every Tuesday morning.

However, the balance across the churches is not great at the moment – from January, we will have one RC (Maureen), two Bap sts (Gill and Rocel) and all the rest are from All Saints'. Of course we are hugely grateful to all, but if anyone else from Blessed Hugh, Faringdon Bap st Church, Faringdon United Church or the Quakers would be interested in joining the team, please do contact Ka e. It need only be one morning a fortnight at the most! Thank you.

Sarah Shewring, at Cornerstone Christian Centre in Grove, continues to be wonderfully supportive during the year, ordering books, providing cards, calendars, diaries and other items for us, and Katie, Sue and Karen have been able to go over when the card reps come every few months to help order new stock. We now have our own account with the extremely popular Green Pebble cards.

Keeping the shop supplied with fairtrade foods continues to be a challenge, but crafts and gifts are easier to source. Toilet rolls can be ordered in boxes of 45 and are now also available in the shop in bags of 4.

The highlight of the year, as Sjoerd has said, was the 40th anniversary celebration in the Corn Exchange in June, at which he gave an excellent presentation with some poignant photos!








2nd May 1986
Mustard Seed
First day goes well





The shop would not have been able to start, let alone continue for 40 years if it wasn't for our wonderful band of volunteers. A VERY BIG thank you to all of them!

A stall was held in the Corn Exchange on Faringdon's Big Green Day in June and at the Farmers Market immediately after Fairtrade Fortnight in October. Blessed Hugh church also has a sale after Mass on the first Sunday of each month.

Once again, if anyone would like to have a 'Christmas shopping morning/afternoon/evening' at home and invite friends and neighbours, Karen and Katie would be happy to bring some appropriate stock for a stall. Please arrange a convenient date with them.

We are pleased to say that our landlords, Robert and John Loosemore, have agreed to get the damp sorted in the storeroom and lavatory area, which will finally happen during November. We appreciate the patience of all volunteers who have had to tiptoe through flaking plaster into a less than charming loo for the past several months. We look forward to the refurbishment, although it does mean that the loo and basin will be out of action for a week or two while the work is in progress.

More advertising required! Although some of our community still don't seem to be aware, we have now been selling stamps successfully for over 10 years. Unfortunately, owing to the reduction in mail posted and the consequent regular rise in prices, we are no longer able to stock stamps for overseas mail, but still do a steady trade in 1st and 2nd class ones. By the time you read this, the 2026 Christmas stamps should have arrived.

We are always very appreciative of our window dressers for their attractive displays throughout the year. Lois Chell is to be highly praised and thanked for her hard work keeping the books in order and arranging for the accounts to be audited by Alder Demain Akers free of charge.

Approaching our 12th year as co-managers, we and the Management Commitee remain very grateful for the support from members of all the churches and community in Faringdon and the Vale, both as volunteers and customers – long may that continue!

KV and KMF/21.10.2026

- Treasurer's Report for 2025/26: See separate Year-End P&L
- Expenses under control – and cashflow fine.
- Income steady – and margins healthy.
- Still able to show a surplus. This year just over 5K – (vs 2.2K last year)

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, John Seedell. Total= seven . Keith also copied in on Meeting notes.

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

Proposed: John Seedell. Seconded: Helen Jackson . 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)

Charitable donations summary on noticeboard very useful; impressive 54K .
Leaflet explaining the MS – that we're a charity and that all profits also go to local charities. KF will circulate and produce copies.
"Last Shop Standing" presentations in the various churches still having an effect
Andrew Chell – as new chair of CTIF wanted it minuted that CTIF is proud of the Mustard Seed and what it continues to achieve…

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