

Minutes of the Green Gram Committee Monday 14 April 2025

North End Cottage, Damerham

Present

Paul Harding

Helen Harding

Judith Plumley

Jo Anderson

Sue Woolcott

Suzy Simmons

Wendy Reid

Ann Dennis

Louise Tonkin

Tania Baker

- 1 Apologies - none
- 2 Minutes from Feb - agreed
- 3 Action log

From September

9.1 Storing documents on Wix

JA has investigated and created a password protected web page. However, anyone can access the URL directly so questioned if this was useful. PH to investigate further

From October

10.3 Resilience plan

JA to re-circulate as not everyone had received.

From February

2.2 Sort almond request from Belinda's JA

JA will pick this up with Belinda's after Easter as there has been insufficient time and we have only just received the tool to enable cleaning

From March

3.1 Easy funding social media post JA Complete

3.2 Dishwasher operating comms to volunteers JA On the agenda

3.3 Reformat fire risk assessment JA In progress

3.4 Requirement of leads to do a lead shift every 3 months JA Completed

3.5 June social 'save the date' comms to volunteers SW Completed

3.6 Final proposal on click and collect trial for April JA/TB On agenda

- 3.7 Six inches of soil documentary WR
In progress
- 3.8 Community Benefit Society address JP
Completed

4 The committee received updates from

4.1 Treasurer

HH reported that March trading was strong and broadly in line with expectations. Over the six months since JA has been working full time we have delivered the required revenue and margin to cover the additional salary costs. By value during March, peanut butter was the top selling food item and non bio laundry liquid the top non food item. It was also noted that mini eggs had sold much better than last year possibly due to a more competitive price.

PH indicated that April trading had also started strongly.

4.2 Shop Management

JA reported that the annual stock check had been completed and showed a minimal and non-material discrepancy of £45.60. JA thanked those that had helped and will take the learning from completing this year's exercise into planning for next year.

SMC had discussed late opening vs drop and collect and generally favoured the late opening option. The late opening would be on a Thursday perhaps between the hours of 6 and 7.30/8. The idea would be that a separate team of volunteers could be recruited who maybe work during the day but are keen to help out. There was a lengthy discussion about the feasibility of recruiting such a group and whether customers would use the shop during those hours. JA has prepared a questionnaire to go to members asking about volunteering on a Thursday evening and whether they would use the service. While the committee supported the questionnaire it was felt that the information gained might be of limited value There was a suggestion that if we could find a group of 6-8 participants who are non-customers but would potentially like to use the shop a 'focus' group possibly run by Padua Comms might provide some useful information. The challenge would be 'recruitment' of such a group. PH agreed to talk further to Nikki at Padua about JA's proposed questionnaire and the idea of a focus group. It was also felt that there was no need to implement any new services quickly given the current strong trading trend.

JA then moved on to discuss the dishwasher and washing of donated plastic containers. It was suggested that many of the donated plastic containers will be okay in the dishwasher and the JA test different types of containers to see if they maintain their shape. There will still be an issue about drying containers especially plastic ones as the heat produced during the dishwashing process will be less effective than with glass or metal. It was agreed to meet environmental health standards if an item can't run through a dishwasher, we can't accept it and that over time we will get to know which items are acceptable and which aren't. In addition, we need to ensure that washing of non-food plastic containers or other items (such as funnels) is done separately from items used with food such as scoops. And we need to ensure that all donated containers are completely dry before they are placed in the box for customer use. All of this will need to be explained to all volunteers and lead volunteers will need to ensure that the correct procedures are followed on their shift. In addition, we need to be especially mindful of support volunteers so that they can see their role remains just as important as pre-dishwasher days.

Finally, JA's report covered a couple of sessions she had held with organisations/people running or hoping to set up community refill shops. It was agreed that a more efficient way to deal with these enquires was to put together a generic presentation which could be available to interested parties as required.

4.3 Grants

JP reported that she is seeking a replacement chair for JA as the current one is leaking fluid.

4.4 Volunteers

SW reported that the last few weeks had become increasingly difficult to fill critical slots. During the last month 42 volunteers had worked shifts compared with nearer 50 over the previous periods. While there are some explanations due to volunteer illness and holidays, the question was raised as to whether there was an issue with volunteer fatigue. It was felt that this was probably not the case but something we should continue to keep an eye on. Previously we had agreed not to actively pursue recruitment of new volunteers as there was competition for slots but the committee agreed that we should now actively pursue further recruitment especially for particular slots mainly in the afternoon. Given the best recruitment is most likely to come from existing customers it was agreed to promote opportunities for volunteers prominently within the shop.

4.5 Education/outreach

WR reported on a successful evening with Sandleheath Beavers. Four new young volunteers have been recruited though one has had to drop out due to a peanut allergy. As a result of this experience WR will place more emphasis on allergies and any disabilities with all new potential volunteers.

WR is exploring the use of TikTok to communicate with younger age groups. She has an upcoming meeting with the Burgate Eco Group and this will form part of the discussion.

5 VE Day – Thursday 8 May 80th anniversary

The shop will join the town celebrations of VE Day with a window display, bunting and appropriate recipes. JA is looking for any relevant photographs and recipe ideas. The date will also mark the 3rd birthday of The Green Gram.

6 Neighbourhood plan meeting – Thursday 1 May

The shop has been asked to attend with 2 places available. JA and SS will attend – HH in reserve.

7 Lease renewal

The lease is due for a review in March/April 2026. It was agreed that PH should contact the landlord now to explore options.

8 Ethical consumer magazine

It was agreed to continue with the magazine subscription. Questions had been raised about whether it was political and therefore not appropriate. The committee believe there is a difference between political and party political. The Green Gram is not party political and neither is the magazine.

9 AOB

JA raised the issue of supplying cosmetics and period products in the shop. The committee agreed this was worth exploring. WR will raise with the Burgate Eco Group for the young demographic and JA will explore potential suppliers.

To maximise availability of members the next meeting will be on Monday May 12 in The Green Gram.

Action log

From September

- 9.1 Storing documents on Wix PH
JA/TB to discuss

From October

- 10.3 Resilience plan JA
JA to circulate document

From February

- 2.2 Sort almond request from Belinda's JA

From March

- 3.3 Reformat fire risk assessment JA
3.7 Six inches of soil documentary WR

From April

- 4.1 Late opening proposals PH
PH to speak to Nikki at Padua
- 4.2 Dishwasher/plastic donated containers JA
Trial different plastic containers in the dishwasher
Finalise instructions for volunteers and customers
- 4.3 Volunteers JA/Volunteer committee
Actively seek new volunteers with the shop
- 4.4 Neighbourhood plan meeting JA/SS
- 4.5 Lease renewal PH
PH to contact Landlord
- 4.6 Use of TikTok to engage younger consumers WR
- 4.7 Investigate potential suppliers of period products JA
and cosmetics – linking with feedback from younger consumers