**xxxx COMMUNITY SHOP LIMITED**

**MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY**

* xxxx Community Shop Limited (“BWCS”) is a member owned organisation that seeks to provide benefits for the community of xxxx. Membership is voluntary and open in order to ensure we have a truly democratically controlled member owned organisation.
* Membership is encouraged in such a way that no sector of the community is excluded.
* Members are all stakeholders in the enterprise and every opportunity is made to reach them and invite them to be involved. The real ‘return’ on the shares, however, is the value to our community of having a sustainable village shop.
* Members help decide how profits are distributed which may include donating to other community projects. This can only happen if funds allow – this is at the discretion of the Management Committee and is unlikely to be possible for at least the first three years of trading.
* Voting is on a ‘one member, one vote’ basis. This means each shareholder’s vote has equal weight, irrespective of the size of the shareholding.
* Shares are not transferable, except on death or bankruptcy.
* Members:
* Have a direct interest in the running and success of the enterprise.
* Have a say in the overall direction of the business.
* Provide a pool of people to draw on for running the Management Committee, and for volunteering to help run the business.

***Our BWCS Rules require a membership strategy to ensure ‘membership’ remains at the heart of the enterprise, to grow membership, and engage members.***

 Our Strategy is as follows:

• **Community:**

* Since opening we have engaged with the community both through our website, leaflet drops, questionnaires, facebook updates as well as regular articles in the Parish Pump.
* During the original share offer members of the “steering group” could be seen under a gazebo on the village green almost every weekend with information about membership.
* In 2019, before opening, we held several tasting events, a summer BBQ and a Christmas event to engage everyone in the village. We aim to continue holding such events.
* An Opening Event (to involve the whole village) and several other community events had been planned for 2020 but, due to COVID restrictions, none of these could happen.
* Members are informed directly about community events via e mail or post.
* To be a vibrant “Community Hub” is one of the main aims of the BWCS. Hub events will be frequent and regular as soon as COVID restrictions are lifted. The aim of the Hub is to involve people of all ages and circumstances in the Bishop Wilton community.

• **Sustaining and developing membership:**

* Following our successful share offer last year we had 227 shareholders in BWCS.
* We believe it is important that we continue to seek new members either from those that already live in the area but missed out on the opportunity to apply for shares under the original time limited share offer or from those who move into the area.
* In June this year (2020), five months after opening the shop, we reopened our membership and have since gained seven new members.
* Membership of the society is accessed by buying one £10 share.
* Membership is now always open and we actively encourage anyone over the age of sixteen to join. An increasing membership is advantageous to the success of the business.
* Our membership application form is on the BWCS website and is also available as a hard copy in the shop. Potential new members can also get information by talking to any member of the Management Committee.
* Volunteers in the shop are encouraged to become members and to encourage customers to join.
* Posters in the shop invite new members.

• **Formal Member communications:**

* Formal communications, for example the AMM documentation, are made available to Members through email or post and, where appropriate, on the website.
* Formal notices are also displayed in the shop premises.
* Contact details of the Management Committee members are published on the BWCS website. The are also available in the shop and are included in all of our communications to ensure that Members can ask questions or raise concerns.
* There are currently 5 members of the Management Committee. We would hope to see this increase a bit after the AMM
* Members receive periodic updates by e mail throughout the year.
* Participation in the AMM was to be encouraged by having a Cheese and Wine session with information displays allowing members to browse and to chat to committee members before the meeting commenced. This had to be cancelled due to COVID but such an event will be held in future years.
* Minutes are made of all members’ meetings, management committee meetings and other sub-committee meetings. These are available to members on request along with access to our complaints procedure and information on how a member can call a special members’ meeting.

• **Volunteering:**

* The shop now has one full time paid member of staff (shop manager) and a part time paid cleaner. These two paid members of staff are supported by a bank of volunteers.
* Volunteers who signed up in 2019 received 5 two-hour group training sessions and a handbook before the shop opened in January 2020. New volunteers receive personal training as well as the handbook and support on the shop floor from the Shop Manager or experienced volunteers.
* A large volunteer base is crucial to the success of the shop: there is a working party, led by the Management Committee, which focuses on the recruitment and retention of volunteers.
* Many volunteer events were planned for 2020 but we have been unable to hold them (although we have held two Zoom meetings). Volunteer events will be a regular occurrence in 2021. The aim of such events will be to thank existing volunteers and to recruit new volunteers.
* Volunteers receive a “Sunday Supplement” e mail each week
* Most volunteers are members of BWCS. New volunteers are encouraged to become members when they are trained.

***We recognise that a strong and growing membership is vital to the success of the BWCS and that engagement with the community (including new residents), volunteers and with the existing membership, underpins the strength of the membership. Communication and engagement strategies have been severely impeded throughout 2020 as, due to COVID 19 restrictions, we have been unable to hold any “live” events. We hope this will be different in 2021.***