

## Somersham Annual Parish Meeting Wednesday 6th May 2026

## Somersham and District Community Shop April 2025-April 2026

### **Introduction**

This report gives an update on the recent and planned changes happening at Somersham Community Shop. Overall, the aim is to keep improving how the shop is run, make it more sustainable, and keep it at the heart of the local community.

### **Committee and Directors**

There is a proposal to bring in more committee members and potentially increase the number of directors. This will help spread the workload, bring in new ideas, and make sure the shop is well supported when making decisions about the future.

### **New Manager**

After stepping in to help the shop after Covid, Jennie Hutchinson has stepped down and we now have a new manager (Becky Jones) who has joined the shop and has already started making some small but positive changes. They are very approachable, proactive, and genuinely excited about what the shop can become. There is a real sense of positivity and fresh energy about the direction things are heading in.

### **Customers and Products**

We are seeing more regular customers placing orders and engaging with the shop. The manager has been very responsive to what people want, which is helping improve the overall customer experience. The range of products has also improved, especially with a wider and better selection of alcohol, including low and no alcohol options. Our pies continue to be a big success, and we are also selling more snack items than before. We are now looking into the possibility of making our own cakes, although we need to carefully think through how that would work in practice.

### **Community Events**

Community events are a really important part of what we do. Regular activities such as Meet Up Mondays, Petrol Heads, and the Macmillan Coffee Morning are well supported and enjoyed by the community. There is real enthusiasm to build on these and run even more events like them to help bring people together and strengthen community connections.

Additionally, we are planning a event in July to celebrate the shop's birthday and the wider Somersham community. The details of which are still in the planning stage. The hope is that this will become an annual event, bringing people together each year alongside other local projects such as the scarecrow trail. We are also hoping to have our own scarecrow entry this year, which will add to the community spirit and involvement.

### **Local Links**

We are also developing stronger links with the local pub and the primary school. These partnerships are still in progress but are expected to help bring more people into the shop and

increase both footfall and income. They also help strengthen the shop's role in the wider community.

### **Improvements and Sustainability**

Some operational improvements are also being explored. This includes upgrading the till system so we can produce better sales reports and keep a closer eye on stock levels and changes. We are also looking at installing solar panels on the roof, which could help reduce ongoing running costs and support long-term sustainability. We are also hoping that potential new benches on the playing field will encourage customers to enjoy ice-creams and drinks bought from the shop.

### **Planters Project**

A new project is being considered to build planters outside the shop. These would include plaques in memory of staff and loyal customers who are sadly no longer with us. It is hoped this will create a meaningful tribute while also improving the look of the shop's entrance. There is also potential, with the support of the Parish Council, to have additional benches in the field outside the shop to encourage customers into the shop and enjoy drinks and ice-creams they have purchased. It will also develop a more social setting to the shop.

### **Volunteers**

The volunteers continue to be an amazing, loyal, and enthusiastic team. They are always keen to help the shop grow and succeed, and they regularly share ideas and suggestions, which are very much appreciated and taken on board.

### **Conclusion**

The shop continues to be financially viable, with steady income supported by regular customers and improving sales across key product areas. Careful management of costs, alongside planned improvements and investment in systems and initiatives, will help ensure this remains the case going forward. There is a strong sense of positivity and teamwork, and the focus remains on keeping the shop sustainable, welcoming, and a valued part of the community for years to come.