

Trading Secretary's Report Financial Year – January 2020 – December 2020 (Inclusive)

It's been a funny old year!

One could say it has been a year of four parts.

- Part 1 – Trading under the stewardship of Roger Wilkins
- Part 2 – The National “lockdown” which closed all retail units with very limited exceptions.
- Part 3 – The easing of “lockdown” restrictions which implied the need for a new trading format.
- Part 4 – The recovery and establishment of new trading partners and contracts.

I will leave Part 5 – Implementation of 2nd “Lockdown” in the crystal ball for next year's report.

Part 1

After many years of service to the “shop” and the allotment site in general Roger Wilkins made the decision that the trading format brought about by the restrictions imposed to control the spread of Covid19 was not something he wished to be involved in.

Roger's unique trading arrangements will be missed. He spent many selfless hours seeking out bargains both near and wide to pass on to the membership. You knew that every weekend come rain or shine you would find him manning the shop not only with seasonal wares but a bevy of horticultural advice.

The “shop” Roger inherited was very much a makeshift affair with different committee members taking their turn to serve in the shop and cobble together a basic stock with, it must be said, little interest at times. He bravely took on this responsibility providing a reliable stock base – plus many of his “specials” – and in doing so more than tripled the turn over and therefore the benefits to the membership as a whole.

Thank you Roger for the 13 years you gave us.

Part 2 – Lockdown1

Following a survey of all current members it was decided to explore the possibility of trading using a click and collect and cashless protocol as required by both the law and the council.

Our alternative was to close the facilities offered by the shop.

Whilst the strictest lockdown rules were in place the recently re-instated online bank account proved invaluable in instigating two forms of cashless card companies with associated investment in hardware and software.

The original Click & Collect menu systems were set up.

In parallel with these actions, accounts with trading partners both local and distant were created for potential re-stocking when transport and supplies were made available.

Interim trading partners were sought to provide stock, especially compost, which had been completely exhausted in the pre-lockdown purchase period. These replacement stocks were sold mainly at cost in order to provide an interim service for plot holders.

The planning for Electricity throughout the administration buildings was set in motion. This initially was to be by generator but with solar power and generator backup our “long term” aims. These plans were presented to the committee and approved.

Part 3 - New trading format

The easing of the lockdown saw the now established click & collect system running in parallel to the browse and tap system.

A compost compound was approved and constructed to assist in the storage of 11 pallet orders of compost and other growing mediums.

Online trading accounts were accepted and we received our first delivery.

This policy enabled us to stack ‘em high and sell ‘em fair – providing extremely competitive mix and match bundles and multi-bag deals.

The new ranges of compost and growing mediums were given very favourable reviews by the membership in both quality and pricing.

Part 4 – Recovery

From September to December saw the benefits from the now established trading partners both local and online. A second bulk delivery was ordered and received towards the end of the year as it was feared that another “lockdown” was on the horizon. Trading continued both

online and via “Shout and Collect” – Stock at the end of December remained high in anticipation of hopefully making up for this year’s losses in the peak trading periods.

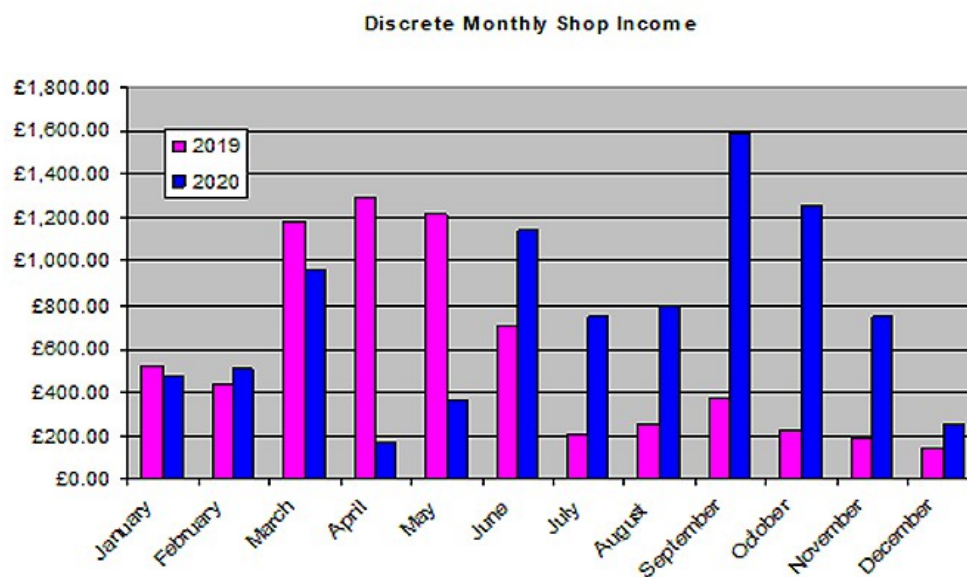
The bar chart below provides a representation of the shop’s monthly incomes for **2019** and **2020**.

The first two and half months January to Mid March reflects pre- “lockdown” standard trading and shows, under Roger’s stewardship a consistent pattern between the two years.

The following two and half months Mid March to May reflects the effect of the “lockdown”.

The next three months June – August displays the recovery when restocking of an empty shop reflected the difficulty of acquiring stock and selling it at cost in order to provide a service for the membership.

The last four months September – December reflects the recovery and the establishment of new trading partners.



The cumulative figures below show that the trading secretary has spent more and made less in the first 8 months of trading.

This period included expenditure on major interventions and developments – for a more comprehensive breakdown please refer to the treasurer’s report (full version – online) but in summary the items that were included in the shop expenses were miscellaneous component requirements associated with improvements required in the shop.

The last 4 months reflects a balancing period but I would be wary to make any judgements or forecasts based on any of these figures for next year. Until the Covid situation is resolved I expect to see further fluctuations caused not only by customer restrictions but difficulty in obtaining stock.

The stock delay/difficulty is further exacerbated by teething problems with new paperwork regulations on the borders – hopefully this too will be resolved in the fullness of time.

Shop Trading Accounts - Based on sales/purchases ONLY				
	First 8months		Last 4months	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
Expenditure	£3,496.39	£4,494.39	£1,318.61	£3,356.53
Income	£5,205.50	£4,779.01	£833.50	£4,187.35
Profit/Loss	£1,709.11	£284.62	£-485.11	£830.82
	32.83%	5.96%	-58.20%	19.84%

In conclusion I would like to express my thanks to David Carpenter for his assistance in storing the 11 pallet deliveries of compost, turning a two day job into less than a half day one. Thanks to Goff Gleadle for his help in the shop and generously sharing his horticultural knowledge.

Thank you also to fellow committee members for their support and time through a very difficult period.

And last, but very much not least – a sincere thank you to every plot holder and garden member for their good cheer, patience and company. May your plots and gardens flourish.

Peter Cheyne
February 2021