



## Report to Annual Parish Meeting 2026 Sproughton Community Shop

Sproughton Community Shop is based in the Tithe Barn buildings in what was once a tractor shed.

It has now been operating for 16 years and was set up as a Community Interest Company (CIC) in 2010 by a small group of tenacious volunteers based on information that the parishioners of Sproughton Village would like a local shop.

Since then it has been run by volunteers and employs a manager (12 hours a week) to oversee the day-to-day activity and stock etc.

The shop is currently open 7 days a week - 9-4 weekdays, 9-12 Saturdays and 10.30-12 Sundays. It also opens most Bank Holidays for a few hours except Easter Day and Christmas. Volunteers serve in the shop and complete daily cleaning and maintenance as well as coming together to do other tasks such as the decorating which took place last year. A team of volunteer directors meet every month and manage the business side of the venture.

The shop sells a wide range of items from baked beans to masking tape, locally smoked fish to WD40, local pies baked and delivered fresh weekly, local cheese, eggs, honey, basic essentials, gifts, cards and fresh bread. It offers friendly service, a place to stop and chat and a local information point. For some villagers it is a lifeline. We will take shopping to customers who are unable to get out, we will carry goods up the road for customers who struggle with mobility and we try to source goods that customers request.

We have lots of positive comments from visiting customers who comment on how delightful the shop is, what a gem it is and how it must be a real asset for the village. Some customers regularly travel from a distance to buy local fish and cheeses, local honey, eggs and good quality flour, porridge oats, etc.

The shop has been well-supported in the past by the Parish Council. Rent for the building is heavily subsidised. When fuel costs rose a lot a few years ago the Parish Council absorbed much of the extra costs. This helped the shop return to a profitable venture as it had been losing money post 2020 (after COVID) and was at real risk of not being able to continue.

In the current financial climate the shop is again struggling. Footfall has dropped considerably. Costs have risen. Our financial statement for the end of 2024 showed a loss of nearly £1000.

Turnover for 2025 was lower again, although the accounts for that year have not been filed yet.

The beginning of 2026 has been noticeably worse again. Sales figures for the month of April were just £4,100.00, April 2025 showed sales figures at £5,225.00. Sales for March this year were £4,900.00, March 2025 they were £5,450.00.

We understand that times are difficult for everyone at the moment and that the Parish Council are also facing increasing costs which has meant that some difficult decisions have to be made. Rent for the shop, whilst still being nowhere near market value, has increased this year by 1200%, fuel prices are likely to rise and the price of goods is also rising.

Whilst we try to absorb some of the extra costs it is not always possible, meaning that the cost to the customer is increased.

We are geographically close to several supermarkets and, whilst many of our prices remain competitive, we are unable to compete with the wide range of products available in supermarkets.

Some villagers use the shop for emergencies only - when they run out of milk on a Sunday morning, realise they've got no eggs when they're making a cake or when they want a last-minute gift.

For others the shop is a valuable part of their daily or weekly routine. They know they will find a friendly face, stop and chat and buy their daily milk and bread. These are the people who most benefit from having a local community shop which is much more than just a store.

The message to the village again this year very much has to be 'use it, or lose it'.

May 6th 2026