

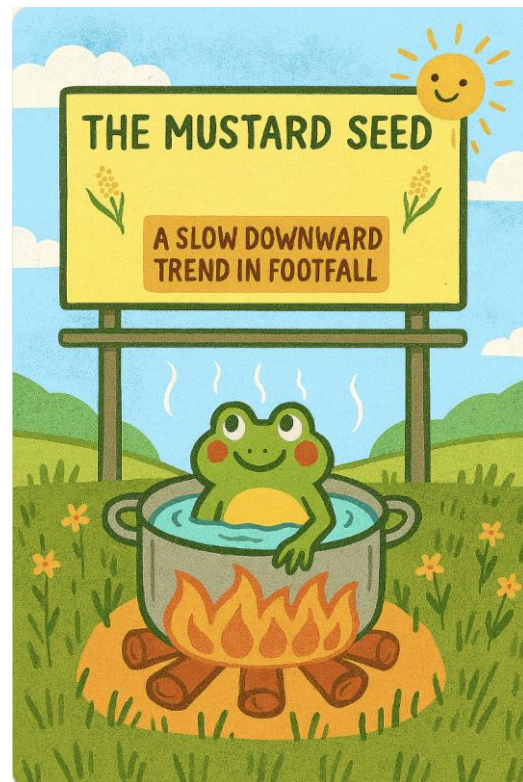
MUSTARD SEED AGM 2025

Friday 14th November - Blessed Hugh Church Hall

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

CHALLENGES

Even though we're now a full three years out of lockdown, we continue to face a raft of challenges. Instead of having a single reliable supplier for our fairtrade goods (previously Traidcraft) we now have to work with more than a dozen suppliers – ALL of them less reliable - meaning significant frustration and extra work for Karen, and empty shelves in the shop. Basic goods such as sugar or coffee can be impossible to get hold of for months on end. Lower footfall in the town generally still means mornings only for most of the year; and inflation/increased prices translate to increased customer cost-sensitivity. And yet – we continue to survive! This is perhaps all the more surprising when we see what's happened to other fairtrade shops in Oxfordshire. The closure of all three FT shops in Oxford (including Fairtrade at St Michaels) over the past two years makes us acutely aware of the many challenges that we continue to face.

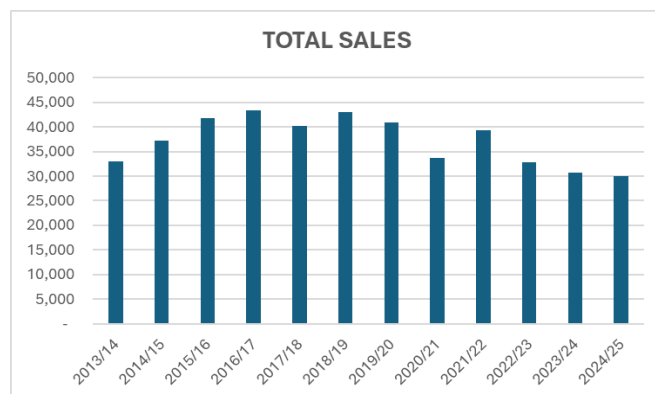


In May 2026, we will be celebrating an amazing 40 years since we first opened our doors on the other side of the Narrows. This makes us the third oldest shop in Faringdon (only Pat Thomas & Lilian's are older) .

We all need to continue to rally together to ensure that the Mustard Seed will still be around for another 40 years!

FOOTFALL

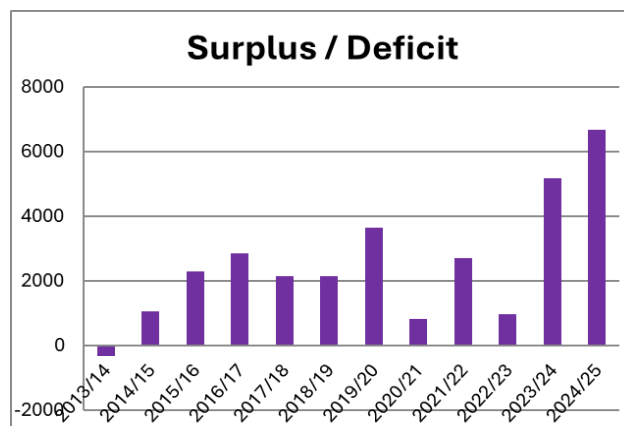
Faringdon is much better off than many Market Towns of similar size – with new retail businesses continuing to take the plunge. It's a town centre that continues to evolve and we can help in steering the direction, but we certainly can't take anything for granted. We thank our amazing team for their resilience and their flexibility.



SALES

Very slightly down on previous year, but margins are up and costs are down. Therefore, we are still able to pay our bills and our cash flow remains healthy.

Nonetheless – we cannot be complacent.



CHARITABLE DONATIONS – see Managers' Report

THANKS

We have Katie & Peter Foot's generosity to thank for the **warehousing arrangements** (their garage!) - which have been in place for almost five years now, and continue to be working remarkably well.

Special thanks go to our joint managers Katie and Karen; and our unflappable treasurer Lois.

We thank the Committee, representing all the Churches Together.

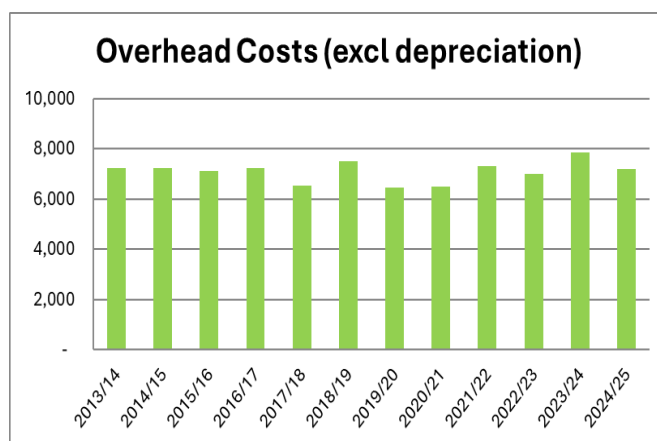
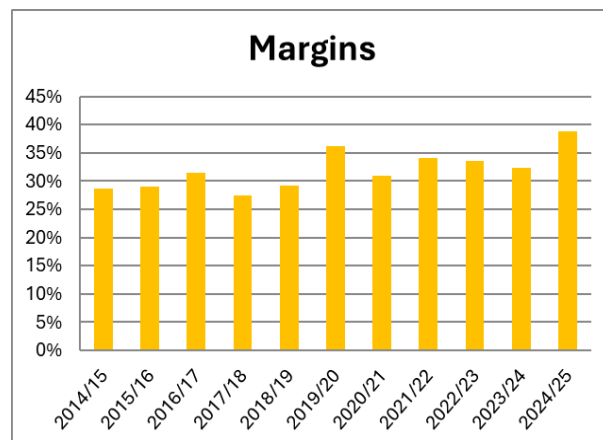
And we also get support from the wider community, for which we are very grateful.

We have our annual accounts fully audited by Anthony Akers (from Alder Demain & Akers) free of charge. Thank you.

On behalf of the committee, our warmest thanks go out to all those volunteers and members of the community who support us in so many ways.

And last but not least, we also warmly thank our loyal shoppers.

As always, the team of volunteers need your constant support and prayers.



Sjoerd Vogt
Chairman, The Mustard Seed
November 2025