

HOTV Management Committee meeting (Zoom) minutes

29 June 2020, 7:30pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer), Nick Sloan (Secretary), John Davison, Dave Evans, Heather Venn.

The meeting was recorded, for the purpose of verifying the minutes.

- 2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were unanimously agreed, with one minor modification from the draft, and will be posted on the website.

Finance

- 3.1 GG: as a condition of their loan, Triodos require a statement minuted by us, to the effect that the committee agrees to accept their terms. There are some conditions on how the loan is spent, but nothing we cannot work with. DC to seek confirmation that as a CBS we are qualified to make early repayments without penalty.

GG to check with Triodos tomorrow and report back.

HV: if we are all signing off on the loan, we should all have access to the terms.

DC agrees to circulate the PDF. GG asks for any comments to be made before 6 July.

JD: we need to be sure of having money in the solicitor's client account ready for the purchase of the Oak. GG: Triodos can act quickly, and we have sufficient funds ready to be transferred to cover the purchase of the Oak, plus £100K from the Somerset Social Enterprise Fund to cover conversion costs.

We will vote on accepting the Triodos clause at the next meeting.

- 3.2 DC is liaising with Sally Taylor. Sally is handling supplier bills and bringing the books up to date in Xero. DC aims to issue a quarterly trading statement by June 6.

- 3.3 DC: the Shop-in-a-Box is eligible for small business rate relief, and this has been applied for. The amount saved is £886/year. The same should apply to the Royal Oak'
DC to discuss this with SW&T.

- 3.4 JD asked about the status of our long-standing application to HSBC bank for payment cards since the lack of these has been complicating the payment of some invoices. GG: HSBC have approved the issue of cards but we have yet to receive them. We are looking into opening accounts with Triodos. We are just waiting for confirmation that it would be possible with them to bank cash at N Curry Post Office.

Operations plan

- 4.1 JD had circulated a brief plan for managing the preparation of the Royal Oak to receive the shop. The Ops Group has already had three meetings and has another scheduled. JD has contacted most of the contractors needed to do the work and will have much more to report soon. Chris Reah has agreed to join the Ops Group. The aim is for contractors to start on the 3 August and have the shop transferred by the end of August.

- 4.2 MB: we need to remember to cancel the hire of the Shop-in-a-Box. **MB to check notice required.** GG: Brent Knoll are interested in taking it on for their community shop.

- 4.3 JD: Liz Bennett has kindly offered to help advise on the Health & Safety aspects of the construction work on the Oak.
GG suggests that Chris Reah might be asked to work with Liz on this. **JD to ask Chris.**
- 4.4 GG reports that Jo Bown and Carolyn Dauncey had sent a suggestion via HV that they would be interested in operating a café in the Oak. The idea is welcomed. HV reports that they are working on a business plan, which will be put before the MC in due course. DC offers to help with budgeting side. GG: the plan needs to be consistent with any proposal we submit to external funders.

Email addresses

- 5.1 NS had circulated a proposal on the rationalisation of HOTV email addresses.
GG: the original hotvssg@gmail.com account has become a mess and needs to be retired. NS argues that there needs to be an account dedicated to receiving questions and suggestions, and that this should be regularly monitored by one or two people. DE suggests that this should be NS as Secretary, with one or two backups to take over if he is unavailable. We need to optimise security, transparency and information sharing within the MC.
Unanimously agreed that we adopt contact@hotvssg.org as our primary contact address, that NS will monitor this with DE as backup, and that messages from hotvssg@gmail.com will be automatically forwarded to it. NS to set up account, and GG to set up forwarding from Gmail.
- 5.2 HV: experience with FLAG shows the importance of a consistent approach to monitoring email. It needs to be clear who has responsibility at any one time. DE suggests that Vice-Chair might be a better choice for backup. MB willing to take it on. Agreed to see how we get on pending further discussion.

Role definitions

- 6.1 A provisional list of officer roles had been circulated by NS.
NS: this is very much a work in progress: a resource to be maintained and expanded, defining the responsibilities of all officers and work groups so that we all know what we are supposed to be doing. Invites comment.
HV contests the suggestion that the Shop and Pub Work Groups might later combine. NS concerned that we should not inadvertently set up a structure in which pub and the shop find themselves in competition, since there are so many ways in which they will have to work together and benefit from working together. DC cites joint bulk ordering as an example. Agreed that the formation of groups will evolve naturally.
GG proposes that NS's document is accepted as a starting point, seconded by JD, all agreed.
- 6.2 HV: when are we going to "put the meat on the bones". NS: as far as the officer roles are concerned the meat already is on the bones. Work Group definitions may need more self-definition. HV has already circulated a document about her role as leader of the Shop Group. **DE proposes that we adopt this; all agreed.**

Human Resources

- 7.1 GG has spoken to AC Mole, who offer a service to set up workplace pensions for small organisations for £500, which are then self-administered for three years. GG has

specified ethical investments only and Louse Wheaton from AC Mole will be coming back with options soon, at which point we need to take an early decision. HV suggests this may be good value, but asks if we can add further employees without extra cost. GG: yes. **GG to report back from AC Mole, and to check date from which HOTV is liable to pay workplace pensions.**

- 7.2 DC: second point on pensions is balance of employer/employee contribution. The minimum employer contribution is 3%, with the employee paying 5%, though the employee can choose to pay more. **HE proposes we pay the full 8%, seconded by JD, approved by all.** DC adds that we will be able to recover employer's National Insurance from HMRC, up to £4000 per year.

Landlord search

- 8.1 **GG to draft a role description and to research salaries for the next meeting.** HV suggests discussing with Chris Reah and Sara Sollis.

Meeting types

- 9.1 A discussion is led by DE on the different frequency and type of HOTV meetings. It is agreed that we hold three normal types of meeting:
- Annual Members' Meeting, for Members of HOTV only
 - Regular monthly HOTV meetings on first Monday, open to anyone
 - Management Committee closed meetings, held as required
- It was agreed that if confidential matters needed to be discussed at regular monthly meetings, this could be done at the end after non-MC members had left. [The Rules also allow for Special Members' Meetings to be held if required.] **All agree that we should proceed with meetings on this basis. NS to confirm this on website and Nextdoor. Agendas to be published on website before monthly meetings.**

Press Officer and social media

- 10.1 **GG proposes, seconded by JD, that Tim Slattery continues acting as *ex officio* Press Officer for HOTV; agreed by all except DE.**
- 10.2 GG: our current handling of social media (Facebook, Twitter etc) is very poor, and it would be good if someone (maybe a younger person?) could be found to work on this. HV: we need to be sure that we can feed the right message to anyone who handles publicity on our behalf. DE's experience with early versions of the village website was that technical difficulties made it difficult for him to post content. NS: unlike information on a website, social media is two-way: as well as putting a message out you have to respond to messages coming in. This is a responsible job, and we need to find the right person to take it on. We could start looking for volunteers? HV suggests that Dave could take on FB and Twitter, and offers to assist; Sara Sollis has details of HOTV accounts for both. **Dave to contact Sara.**
- 10.3 DC: we need a clear communications plan for the next 6 months to generate publicity. DE: our website works well as an information source for HOTV, but not for the shop. NS: it was set up when HOTV was a project that needed support; as the project moves towards fruition, the shop and pub businesses will take precedence and the rest can fade into the background. All agreed that publicity for shop and pub needs to be ramped up as operations on the Oak get underway.

Other

- 11.1 HV raises the question of the naming of the businesses: presumably the Royal Oak will keep its name, but what about the shop? GG highlighted a problem that Karen Upshall's mail is being diverted to the shop because her house is still called The Village Stores. NS relayed a suggestion that when the shop is in the Oak it be called the Acorn Stores. **Agreed to defer further discussion to another meeting.**
- 11.2 GG: there have been questions about how we respond to lockdown guidance in planning potential gatherings at the pub, but both the guidance and the status of operations are so variable that there is currently no point in discussing. All agreed.
- 11.3 GG: the principal item on the agenda at the next (public) meeting should be our operating plan. DC will also issue a trading update.
HV to publicise the meeting on FB, NS on Nextdoor.
- 11.4 DE argues that there should be a group parallel with JD's Operations Group to work on generating custom for the businesses in the Royal Oak. All agreed that this is a very valid point. **To be discussed at next meeting.**
- 11.5 HV: any update on license for shop? GG: should be ok from July 4th. The pub on-sales license can be transferred with the building, and off-sales can be added fairly simply. Both should be in place for 1 September. **GG to check with licensing authority about the continuation of the Oak license.**
- 11.6 JD: it is essential that we complete the purchase of the Oak on 31 July. **HV to contact Adrian Stables to ensure this happens.**

Meeting closes 9:07 pm (1h, 33m)

The next meeting will be the regular HOTV open meeting on 6 July.

[Minutes edited 16-10-22 to correct numbering anomalies.]