

HOTV Management Committee meeting (Zoom) minutes | draft

17 August 2020, 7:30pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer), Nick Sloan (Secretary), John Davison, Chris Reah.

2.1 The minutes of the last meeting were unanimously agreed to be accurate.

Update on purchase of Royal Oak

3.1 GG: We can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. A Deed of Priority has to be signed and returned to Triodos Bank. On receipt of this, they will release their loan which is the last piece of the jigsaw. Both contracts have been signed, and we hope to complete on Thursday or Friday of this week. **Deed of Priority to be signed by GG and NS, witnessed by MB and delivered to Adrian.**

3.2 Informal discussions have taken place on having a (socially distanced) open day in the Royal Oak once it has passed into HOTV ownership. This was agreed by all to be a good idea. The date of Saturday 29 August was mooted, but no definite decision will be made until completion. Plans of the layout proposed will be made available.

3.3 GG has received offers from several volunteers to work on the garden. JD would appreciate offers to help with other work inside the building once we have access.

Work Groups

4.1 Shop and shop plan

NS has circulated a plan, showing the shop on the left, to the MC and to Jo and Carolyn, but no firm decisions can be made until we have full access to the Oak.

4.2 MB has held regular meetings with the shop group [Jo and Carolyn, Marilyn Clarke and SallyTyalor]. Jo and Carolyn are voluntarily doing quite a lot of extra work over what they are paid for, and once we get into the Oak ways should be found of cutting down on their workload.

Operations

4.3 JD has put all the contractors on hold until we have full access to the Oak and have been able to decide about the layout. Increasingly, the presumption is that we have switched to having the shop on the left. GG likes the fact that the garden room becomes common to shop and pub. JD says that shop-on-left eliminates the cellar and disabled access [to shop] issues. NS likes the idea of an outside retail area in the patio.

4.4 NS raised the question of whether it would be beneficial to take professional advice on layout and appearance. The general feeling was that community feedback (especially the current invitation to tell us your three favourite pubs) was more relevant than what a consultant from outside the area might come suggest.

Member liaison

4.5 GG: CR volunteered at the last meeting to field any queries and complaints, and was agreed by all to be doing an excellent job.

Finance/Systems

- 4.6 DC: following a meeting with Sally Taylor and MB it became apparent that improvements were needed to the system for reconciling shop card payments with Xero and the bank account. These are in hand, but DC feels that a small working group to handle similar issues in the future is needed. GG: if not a work group as such then certainly DC has identified an important “work stream” that needs to be covered. All concur, though no specific action was agreed.
- 4.7 MB: should work group reports be posted on the public HOTV documents page or be kept for internal circulation only? DC felt that reports of ongoing discussions should be circulated internally, but only significant decisions should be published publicly. All agreed. NS agreed to be more scrupulous in populating the Internal Documents page in future.

Social Investment Tax Relief

- 5.1 GG: “A shocking story of alacrity on the part of HMRC.” The Revenue has responded with uncharacteristic speed to our SITR submission, with an SITR3 form and a UIR [Unique Investment Reference] number. NS is to process SITR3 certificates for distribution to the 109 Members who stated that they wish to claim. There were 9 late applications which will be included in a fresh submission to HMRC. **GG to submit.**

Marketing the Business

- 6.1 JD and NS had a meeting last week with Emmy Batten, who very kindly offered to take on our social media publicity. They are currently waiting for Emmy to come back with a strategy, developing some ideas she had proposed at the meeting. **NS to follow up.**

Management Organisation

- 7.1 GG: We need to set up a long-term management structure that avoids conflict between the two sides of the business, shop and pub. MB: Our initial thinking was to have a shop manager and a pub manager, but we want HOTV to work as a single entity not as two independent [and potentially competing] entities. In the short term the bar staff may just be volunteers. There needs to be one person in overall charge—which could be the MC, though it will involve a lot of administration. JD concurs; things have been further complicated by the need to hire two shop managers to help us through the pandemic. NS points out that because of Covid-19 we have short-medium- and long-term scenarios to plan for, and that we should be careful not to compromise the long-term arrangements by whatever we set up in the short term. GG: There is a perception that an overall manager might compromise the activity of the shop managers, whereas it should enable them to concentrate on what they do best. CR: We have to be realistic about what HOTV as a business can afford in terms of salaries. This has to drive our decisions on management structure. GG: MB has drafted a good analysis of what we need to sell in order to be profitable. We need to be clear about the objectives we set the managers. DC concurs with MB’s suggestion of having a general manager. JD: This may be a solution, but still implies an additional salary. MB: Maybe in the short term the general manager has to be the MC. **Options to be researched and discussion to be continued.**

- 7.2 GG: Irrespective of what we decide about our long-term structure, we need to do all we can to maximise revenue in the short term, including selling beer in the Royal Oak in some form or other. All agreed.

Pension Plan

- 8.1 DC: AC Mole have recommended an employee pension plan with National Employment Savings Trust. Subject to the clarification of some details, such as starting date, **DC proposes that we accept the recommendation, seconded by JD, all agreed.**
DC to clarify details and instruct AC Mole to proceed.

Use of Function Room as a Gym

- 9.1 A proposal has been received, and circulated by NS, to use the function room as a permanent gym, to be managed as a third party business. Both GG and JD think this is an excellent *idea*, but have reservations about giving up such a large area so early in the process of planning the building. JD wonders whether it could be made to work in half of the function room, with access from the top end. NS points out that some regular revenue would be welcome but that the nature of the enterprise means that only a long-term contract would be viable. DC suggests the applicant works up their ideas in more detail for further consideration. GG reminds us that the function room was provisionally earmarked as a space for young people. **NS to write to applicant, and further discussion to take place.**

Meeting closes 8:25 pm (55m)

The next meeting will be a public HOTV meeting on Monday 7 September, at 7:30pm