

HOTV public Management Committee meeting (Zoom) minutes

3 August 2020, 7:30pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer), Nick Sloan (Secretary), John Davison, Chris Reah; in addition, up to 19 members of the public also joined the meeting.

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

Update on purchase of Royal Oak

3.1 GG: the target completion date was last Friday but completion was delayed by two unresolved issues: 1) a missing document from a planning permission in 1974 which is no longer considered essential, and 2) the loan from Triodos being delayed by their requirement for a re-evaluation of the property but is currently being processed.

3.2 GG: since the new valuation was done on behalf of Triodos it is confidential to them. The MC was given sight of it however, and can report that the value has risen by between 30 and 40 thousand pounds since the original valuation.

3.3 GG: All the other finance is in place, and we expect to complete later this week.

Shop trading update

4.1 Carolyn Dauncey read a brief report on how the shop is continuing to trade well, partly since people are reluctant to visit supermarkets during the pandemic. They are expanding the number of lines and have done a leaflet drop which has brought in new customers. There were 9 home deliveries this week. Most customers are wearing masks [now mandatory], but those who forget them can be served from the back window. It is intended to make the shop greener by reducing use of single-use plastics. Jo and Carolyn are grateful to volunteers who are helping with unpacking and deliveries and cleaning, and also to customers for their continuing support.

4.2 MB: Shop trading continues strong, thanks in large part to Jo and Carolyn.

DC: the best week yet was in early July; turnover generally is beating the forecasts.

GG: there has been a slight tail off in the last couple of weeks, probably due to people being away, so it does not represent a concern. CD agrees.

Shop work group

5.1 GG: the most significant issue at the moment is where the shop should be sited in the Oak. GG invites CD to comment.

CD: the main issues with siting the shop on the right-hand side of the Oak are 1) the different levels, which some customers and volunteers are worried about, 2) the cellar steps and 3) the limitation on wall space due to windows.

NS: Access to the different levels on the right is going to be a problem whoever ends up occupying it. The question of where put the shop has been reopened, and will not be decided until we have had a chance to get inside the building for a detailed inspection, and had extensive discussions with Jo and Carolyn.

GG agrees that any decision will be deferred, but makes the point that putting the shop on the left may delay things since most of the maintenance work on the building needs to take place there. Any delay may be expensive in terms of lost revenue.

JD [Ops team leader] thinks that the delay need not be that significant.

- 5.2 Marilyn Clarke asks if we are planning an event in the Oak to mark the fact that we will own it? GG says that Tim Slattery is planning some publicity, but nothing has been planned by way of a celebration. **To be considered.**

Operations

- 5.3 JD has put the contractors on hold until we own the Oak and have an agreed decision about the partition of it.

Social Investment Tax Relief

- 6.1 GG: we are eligible to claim SITR from 1 August. HMRC require HOTV to complete an online form listing those Members who have actively requested SITR. Claimants have to be tax payers in the UK. All Members have been contacted to invite them to be listed as potential claimants and 106 have said yes. A couple of Members remain to be contacted. **GG and JD to follow up, and GG to complete the HMRC form.**

Landlord search

- 7.1 GG has drafted a job description with a view to advertising the post, and Simon Dauncey has kindly suggested some amendments. We now have to decide whether to spend money on advertising in e.g. *Indeed* or *The Caterer*. MB wonders whether since what we are proposing is not so much the traditional pub set-up but a combined community enterprise, we should be thinking more in terms of pub and shop supervisors as part of a joint team. NS agrees that we need to have clearer ideas about the structure of the business, and also shares the concerns of CR about taking on a landlord before the pub can trade profitably.

GG agrees that we need to address these issues before advertising, and should not be constrained by conventional thinking. **Further discussion, to include Carolyn and Jo.**

Marketing

- 8.1 GG reiterates the point that we cannot expect customers to materialise but must go out and generate trade. Tim Slattery is covering the press, and we have had offers from Gavin Sadler and Emmy Batten to handle social media for us. **JD to hold a meeting with Emmy when he returns home.**
- 8.2 JD thanks Tim Slattery for his work as Press officer, and for agreeing to continue in post. Thanks also to Ann Finn for the introduction to Emmy.
- 8.3 [Later, during the closed meeting:] JD asks if we should have one person on the MC responsible for co-ordinating the different aspects of marketing. NS willing to take this on since he has been responsible for posters [and website]. **NS to discuss with JD.**

Elections

- 9.1 NS had circulated an email explaining that it is a requirement of the Rules that the re-election of the first members of the MC has to be staggered over three years according to the number of votes. The 7 elected members of the MC therefore need to be divided into three groups, but since 7 is not exactly divisible by 3 an agreement needs to be reached on the division used. **NS proposes 3/2/2 and this is agreed by all.**

GG invites questions before the public meeting ends. Paul Fielding asks who apart from JD is on the Ops Group. JD answers DC, CR and NS.

The public part of the meeting ends at 8:09 pm (38 mins).

The closed meeting began with a confidential item following which discussion continued.

- 10.4 GG: Adrian Stables has done a fantastic job with the conveyancing and deserves the highest level of praise. He has contested a contract that was heavily in favour of the sellers and achieved one that he can recommend us to sign. GG has circulated the current version. We will need a vote in favour of signing before completion which is anticipated later this week. **All to read the contract thoroughly and pass comments back to GG.**
- 10.5 GG congratulates MB on arranging building and contents insurance that is much better value than that offered by the current insurers. MB asks to be informed when the completion date is known so that he can initiate the insurance. **GG to inform him.**
- 10.6 DC asks if we need to apply for a premises license. GG replies that it is already applied for: we have applied for a transfer from the existing ownership, when that is granted we then apply for a variation for off-sales.
- 10.7 MB asks about the status of bank account and payment cards. GG replies that nothing much has changed, but that we need to send HSBC a mandate amending our security arrangements. **GG to circulate mandate for signing.**
- NS: can we not go straight to new current accounts with Triodos? GG: we will start the process after we have concluded the purchase of the Oak.

Meeting closes 8:32 pm (1h, 2m)

The next meeting will be a closed MC meeting on Monday 17 August, at 7:30pm