

## HOTV Management Committee meeting (Zoom) minutes

6 January 2021, 7:30pm

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

- 0.1 GG asked if 7pm would be a better start time for other members. All agreed, so subsequent meetings (after the next public meeting) will begin at 7pm.

### December/Q3 trading headlines

- 1.1 DC asks GG to share his table [Shop...Sales and Cost of Sales Summary](#). DC highlights the sales and gross profit for December: approximately £33.6K and £12.3K respectively which is highly impressive, and exceeds targets. JD asks a question about how stock levels do or do not impact the figures, but agrees to pursue this with DC later. CR asks why there is such a disparity in gross profit between weeks 38 and 39. DC explains that this is an effect of rapid stock build.
- 1.2 DC next asks GG to share the table *Analysis of Shop Sales for 9 months to 3 January*. Total shop turnover for Quarter 3 was £72K, and for year to date, £187K. DC explains how changes in stock levels have affected the figures. The closing stock value is approximately three times what it was when the shop was bought. The budget gross margin was 25%, whereas the actual gross margin to date is 30.8%. JD asks if budget figures could be included in subsequent tables for direct comparison against actual figures. DC: the items listed in the budget tend not to correspond to line items in the accounts, so only an approximate comparison could, be achieved. Energy consumption has been higher than we budgeted for. The principal unexpected expense was two effectively full time salaries for shop managers [forced upon us by the pandemic]. Despite this, the shop achieved an excellent trading profit in December.

### Financial planning

- 2.1 MB suggests that considering the difficulties currently facing HOTV and the wider economy, it would be worth reassessing our trading options, and looking for ways of bringing in more revenue from the kitchen (takeaways) and the flats (short lets). JD points out that we are unable to make decisions about the flats because whether or not they are available to rent depends on the choice of landlord.
- 2.2 GG: irrespective of their ultimate use, we will need to refurbish the flats. MB: the same applies to the kitchen. Agreed.  
GG: we need to explore "revenue-generating opportunities which we can realise in the short term, within the context of the current environment". **A team including MB and DC to be assembled to address this. GG to invite volunteers to contribute at the next public meeting.**

### Covid contingency planning

- 3.1 GG: we need to consider the scenario that someone who has tested positive for C-19 might walk into the shop and Caroline and Jo are then required to self-isolate. At the moment this would be disastrous, since there is no-one else familiar with operating the till and conducting the ordering procedures etc. We are very vulnerable to this eventuality, which is not unlikely. NS suggests that two or three substitutes need to be

trained. GG asks if there is a written manual for the EPOS system. DC says theoretically yes, though there are some quirks with the PayPoint terminal to learn. GG says that it would be impractical to train several people at once. NS suggests that much of the training could be conducted at home using written material. MB says that PayPoint publishes instructive videos, but thinks the biggest problem would be ordering procedures. JD suggests that much of this could be done by the managers from home.

3.2 GG proposes that we ask for volunteers who would be prepared to undertake essential training to step into the breach if required. DC replies to NS that he could work in the shop if he was refreshed in a couple of procedures.

3.3 MB asks if we would need to disinfect the shop in the events we are considering. GG: unclear, though probably a good thing to do in any case. We need to demonstrate that we are taking the danger seriously and preparing for it. Probably the most important thing on the agenda.

**MB to discuss contingency plans with Jo and Carolyn on 7-1-21.**

### **Volunteers and volunteering**

4.1 GG: NS had raised the issue that we are incurring extra costs because we are unable to use volunteers behind the counter; probably true but very few people are willing to do this. NS: now that the covid situation is becoming more critical locally we need to be very careful with our volunteers, so now is not the time to make more demands of them.

### **Stock storage**

5.1 GG raises several interconnected questions involving stock control, stock storage and the freeing up of the kitchen and bar areas.

JD: we need to clear stock from the bar area and the kitchen soon to clear the decks for building work. NS: the short-term location of stock is not too significant: it could go to the skittle alley and (more securely) to the cellar, but in the long term the pub and shop areas need to be more clearly demarcated. The outside area at the side seems like the best area to expand, with either a temporary or (eventually) permanent extension. JD concurs and feels that a container is likely to be the best medium-term solution. GG has concerns that this would negatively impact the outside social area. JD and NS feel that with careful siting this would not be an issue. DC points out that the skittle alley is unlikely to be used for skittling until September 2021.

5.2 JD proposes that for now we move the excess stock from bar and kitchen to the left-hand skittle alley. NS agrees on the understanding that this is a temporary arrangement, and that when there is a pub manager the skittle alleys are regarded as pub territory. Both propositions agreed, with some reservations from DC, and the further understanding that a permanent space for excess shop stock still needs to be established.

5.3 There is some discussion about stock management and how it is changing, both because of deeper integration with EPOS and because an increase in fresh meat and fish orders create a requirement for more out-of-shop chiller space. GG has concerns that there are still too many long shelf-life slow-moving items.

MB reports that efforts are continuing to integrate individual stock lines with the

EPOS system to simplify reordering. DC: eventually re-ordering from Bookers may be automated, but for now we need to be sure that the manual systems are working well.

### **Next priorities for refurbishment**

6.1 GG: the bar needs to be readied for pub opening, and the kitchen and upstairs flats both need to be refurbished. What plans are in hand? NS: we have a list of works which we are in the process of prioritising. There is not very much heavy building work. The only major items are door widening downstairs, new fire doors in the upstairs flat and the installation of a disabled toilet. It is agreed that in view of item 2 above, work on kitchen and flats needs to be prioritised.

DC asks if there is a budget for the work yet. NS: no, but it would not take long to come up with costings. **JD and NS to prioritise costings to go to DC.**

6.2 A decision has been made not to deploy volunteers on refurbishment work during lockdown, except for outside work which can be done in isolation, and possibly painting which can be undertaken by volunteers in the same bubble. GG asks how long the scaffolding is to stay up for. NS replies that it is currently booked until mid-February, that he would like to see it come down then, but that re-pointing of the upper levels needs to be completed first. GG feels that it would be a valuable morale-booster to complete the outside work and remove the scaffolding.

**NS to expedite this.**

### **Grants**

7.1 GG has been looking into available grants, but it appears that in most cases we do not meet the conditions. We are not eligible for Support for Small Businesses and Community Benefit Societies because we do not have two years trading behind us. In most cases we have to describe how the business has deteriorated because of the pandemic, whereas our trading has actually improved. Tim Slattery has supplied a newsletter from the Rural Services Network with a list of about 30 funding sources. GG is working his way through the list. NS is planning to address a grant application to the PC.

7.2 JD asks where we are with attracting new investment. GG reports one new investor and a couple of people who have said they are interested. Information about investment has been published on the website and in Stoke News. JD happy to take on the task of encouraging more investment.

7.3 JD mentions that there have been questions about the publicity offered for business investors. **JD and NS to look into ways of honouring this.**

### **Health and safety**

8.1 CR has checked the shop H&S procedures. They meet or exceed all legal requirements. He suggests revisiting the subject when the café is able to open, since this will involve a new range of food hygiene regulations. Carolyn and Jo are collectively responsible for H&S in the environment of the shop. All agreed that there is no reason to keep this issue on the agenda.

*Meeting closes 8:58 pm (88m)*

**The next meeting will be a public HOTV meeting on Tuesday 12 January, at 7:30pm.**