

HOTV public Management Committee meeting (Zoom) minutes

7th December 2020, 7:30pm

Present: Graham Glead (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer) John Davison, Chris Reah, Jo Bown, Carolyn Dauncey and about 14 others.

Apologies from Nick Sloan (Secretary)

2.1 The minutes of last meeting on November 2nd were unanimously agreed to be accurate.

Update on Shop Opening

3.1 CD reported that we moved out of the SIAB at the close of business on Sunday 29th November and with the help of many volunteers opened the new community shop in the Royal Oak Monday morning. The response has been overwhelmingly positive from both existing and new customers.

3.2 Business is ramping up towards Christmas with a range of Christmas goods available to order and a Christmas raffle.

3.3 The shop will stay open on December 20th after the carol service at the Village Hall and will provide mince pies and hot drinks as well as the opportunity to do more shopping.

3.4 It has not been possible to start the coffee service due to restrictions on training in the current environment. This has now been addressed and it is hoped to provide a carry out service soon. The café will open shortly after but will operate within the guidelines of the tier restriction that is in place at the time.

3.5 We are starting to welcome volunteers back to the shop. CD expressed thanks to all who have contributed and not least Marilyn Clarke for her tireless work organising and scheduling this help. It is very pleasing that we are starting to see younger volunteers.

3.6 GG reflected back the thanks of all involved to Jo and Carolyn for all of their efforts and noted that this was a whole community effort, as we hoped it would become at the start of the project.

3.7 Ian Upshall commented that as the owner of the former Village Stores, he was very pleased to see that the project had realised the ambition that he and Karen set out to deliver with their original venture.

3.8 GG asked whether consideration should be given to a name for the shop that is unique and in character with the project. Any suggestions can be made to the email address contact@HOTVSSG.org

Options for Pub Opening

4.1 GG informed the meeting that after careful consideration it was not felt practical to open the Pub at Christmas. To do so would require us to serve food which could only be offered via table service with restrictions on non-family contact at tables. For the limited opening for the limited time which we would open this was not considered to be a feasible arrangement. GG asked if there was anyone who held a contrary view. There was no further comment offered.

4.2 GG informed the meeting that preliminary contact has been made to move the Thursday morning Post Office from the Village Hall to The Royal Oak. This dependent upon testing equipment and final agreement from the Post Office.

4.3 JD spoke about the plans and the timing for opening the Pub. It is anticipated that a plan will be developed and implemented during January, with a view to completing the work towards the end of Q1 next year. Much of the major work required has been completed as part of phase one (the shop move). With the Stoke Stampede currently scheduled for March 28th it would be a reasonable objective to be open consistent with this date.

Financial Headlines

5.1. DC reported that at the time of the meeting the bank balance was £97.5K. This is after £24K has been already spent on capital refurbishment work for shop fitting, RO electrics and facade. Up to a further £21K is committed giving a total spend of £45K for Phase 1. This is well within the estimate in the Business Plan.

5.2 DC noted that the average revenue in the shop between April and November was £4400 per week. During the first week of opening this was £7700. Footfall similarly increased from 600-650 to 813.

Relocation of Business Address

6.1 GG noted that the historical arrangement that existed prior to purchase of the Royal Oak was that the Business was formally located at the Chairman's home address. This plainly is no longer necessary, but to formally agree the relocation of the business to the Royal Oak requires a resolution to be passed.

6.2 GG formally proposed that the business address for HDTV be relocated to the Royal Oak. This was seconded by DC and agreed by all MC members present

Work Groups

7.1 Tom Stobie asked when a team should be assembled to redecorate the bar. JD responded that work would start mid-January and that the space should be available for decoration mid-February. A plan will be developed and shared early in the New Year.

7.2 JD reported that there is not a huge amount of building work to be done. Volunteers may be required as in the shop to strip the premises and remove carpets prior to the work commencing first half in January. Plans that were made originally will be circulated to remind members of the original proposal which has not changed. GG to circulate plans with net update. Changes will be principally to permit disabled access to the bar and through the rear door.

7.3 Sue Smyth asked if there were plans to have an open fire in the Pub. JD responded that there would be at least one and possibly two wood burning fires in the new Pub.

7.4 MB noted that while the shop was up and functioning there were still things that require a longer-term plan, in particular stock storage that will allow functioning of the kitchen. The use of

EPOS has gone well. The possibility to use it for other functions such as stock control are being considered.

7.5 CR commented that the membership liaison role has been noticeably quiet.

7.6 GG thanked Marilyn Clarke for her energy and persistence in generating enthusiasm among volunteers for the roles on offer. There is no doubt that without the volunteers, success could not have been achieved. MC noted the need for more volunteers particularly when we open the café. There are currently 58 volunteers on the rota but not all are active. More volunteers will be required. There are no restrictions on volunteering but equally there are no obligations if individuals are not comfortable.

7.5 Marilyn Clarke raised the point around how health and safety is organised and whether there is a specific responsibility for this topic. CR has responsibility for H+S in the context of building work. MC stated a need for a designated person responsible for H+S including Covid. GG agreed to address the nomination of a person responsible for operational H+S before the next meeting. SC pointed out that some people are having difficulty with 3rings. In this event MC agreed to be the point of contact.

7.6 Ian Upshall stated that he had prepared a procedures manual covering H+S for the Village stores which could potentially be adapted. CD has used this as a basis and has updated the entire contents to accurately reflect the current operation.

7.7 Paul Fielding asked whether additional training would now be required. GG responded that the answer was undoubtedly yes, as the Casio till is no longer in use. CR commented that this was also in hand.

Personnel

8.1 At the last meeting Dave Evans raised a question regarding the status of employment contracts. GG commented that this has been discussed and the contribution that CD and JB have made has been recognised. Furthermore, GG made the point that the subject of terms and remuneration is not a topic for discussion in a public forum. It is subject of discussion and has been resolved to the satisfaction of JB and CD.

8.2 GG stated that the selection process for the Pub Landlord has been a challenge. There have been over 120 applicants. The varied background of candidates is remarkable, but there have been several particularly good candidates, but these have been relatively few and far between. Given that the Pub is not now likely to open until the late in Q1, and with Christmas approaching the selection group agreed that this activity should be put on hold. We do have several good candidates in the frame but the chances of us offering them employment in the short term is unlikely.

8.3 Kathy Davidson asked about the accommodation situation and whether this will also need refurbishing. GG replied that this would depend on the candidate, but it could be included as part of any remuneration package as required. And if that was the case refurbishment of the accommodation was of equal importance to the work in the Pub. JD stated that this work will be managed as part of Phase 2.

8.4 Marilyn Clarke asked if we had considered renting out the accommodation. GG responded that this was an option but depended to a large extent on the applicants.

Publicity and Marketing

9.1 GG complimented Tim Slattery on his work getting our project out into the media, in particular the piece on BBC Somerset web page. TS stated that he is still exploring local and national opportunities to publicise our project but is challenged by the 'elephant in the room' that is Covid.

9.2 GG stated that we still have an open discussion channel with Taunton and Bridgwater College, but no candidates have come forward to date.

Additional Topic: Outside Grounds

10.1 JD asked Helen Gittins if there were any comments she wished to make regarding outside grounds. HG responded that plans will be made in the new year. GG suggested that once these were known a grant could potentially be provided to cover the cost. JD thanked Kathryn Astin for the planters which add a dash of colour to the entrance of the shop.

Next Meeting

Exceptionally, the next meeting will be held on **Tuesday 12th January** to allow financial reporting of Q3.

The meeting closed at 8:28pm (57 minutes)