

HOTV public Management Committee meeting (Zoom) minutes

12 January 2021, 7:30pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer), Nick Sloan (Secretary), John Davison, Chris Reah, Jo Bown, Carolyn Dauncey and about 16 others.

- 2.1 The minutes of the last (closed) meeting were unanimously agreed to be accurate.

Update on shop operations

- 3.1 CD gives an account of the busy trading over Christmas, including pre-order of meat and veg, late night opening, gift hampers and a raffle (thanks to Jo) which raised £374 for HOTV funds. Pre-ordering of meat and fish has now been added as a regular service. A new leaflet drop is planned to increase awareness in the surrounding area, as well as plans to celebrate Valentine's Day and Easter with special events.
- 3.2 The shop is having to cope with a new lockdown, and is maintaining the same precautions of max 4 customers at a time, hand sanitising, masks and social distancing. They are also sanitising baskets and touch points regularly, and will continue to keep all procedures under review.
- 3.3 GG congratulates Jo and Carolyn for their success with the shop, which is making a name for the village, and thanks them for all their hard work.
- 3.4 Dave Evans thanks the Shop- Group for publishing notes on their meetings on the website. It is necessary for volunteers and Members to be kept up-to-date with what is going on, and while the Zoom meetings are useful they don't take the place of regular records of meetings and discussions. Marilyn Clarke adds that it is nice to see MC minutes published, and hopes that more could be made available. [*Minutes are published for all formal MC meetings.*]

Q3 Financial update

- 4.1 DC: the numbers reflect the busy trading that Carolyn reported: average weekly shop sales during December were £6,700, this compares with about £4,400 from April to November. Footfall has also increased to an average of 770 visits a week in December. Annual sales to date, excluding VAT, are about £188K, and gross profit around £58K, which gives a very respectable gross margin of just over 30%. Direct costs are about £48K which gives a trading profit of £9,100, reduced by transition costs in the first quarter to £4,500. This compares very favourably with the trading loss forecast in July.
- 4.2 GG shows DC's table [Comparison of Budget and Actual..](#) to illustrate his commentary. Actual gross profit is almost exactly the same as forecast gross profit, though achieved via excellent shop trading without the benefit of pub or café. Further down the table shows a comparison between forecast and actual expenses, and other outgoings. HOTV is showing a net loss over 9 months of £6,800, but this is some £10K better than we had been forecasting.
- 4.3 GG invites questions. Paul Fielding asks about building contractor costs. DC says that the previous table only covers shop trading; all the building costs are taken into capital expenditure. The next table ([Cashflow Summary](#)) shows the history of capital income and expenditure from August 2019, which gives refurbishment costs from

September 2020. This includes building work, wiring and the purchase of equipment, totalling around [£35K]. GG adds that this, together with further projected spending, is well within our budget for refurbishment.

NS points out that the tables referred to above, and other financial tables, are all available on the HOTV Documents page of the website.

JD thanks DC for all the work he puts into monitoring HOTV finances. This is much appreciated all round.

Potential extension of trading

- 5.1 GG: with the pub not operating, and unable to operate for at least 3 months, we are looking for ways of generating more revenue. Plans for new shop events have been mentioned, we are also considering e.g. takeaway pizzas. If anyone would like to join MB, DC and GG to discuss ideas for taking this forward, please let any of them know. Marilyn Clarke asks if the kitchen is viable. NS replies that it is a high priority to ensure that it soon becomes so.

Volunteers and volunteering

- 6.1 GG: these are difficult times, and the last thing we want to do is to pressure our volunteers in any way. Volunteering must be fully voluntary. That said, volunteering is regarded as “a reasonable excuse” for leaving your home during the current lockdown. MB has issued guidance to all volunteers by email. Volunteers are essential and much appreciated. GG expresses particular thanks to Marilyn for her work as volunteer coordinator, and in particular for quietly covering extra shifts where necessary.
- 6.2 Marilyn mentions a recent meeting with the MC which was intended to clear up any misunderstandings about her role and to offer her support. The outcome of this meeting was that in future MB would inform the volunteers if there was any change of policy, while she would continue to manage the rotas. GG suggests that the concern of the MC had been that Marilyn was receiving insufficient support from the MC in making decisions on volunteering.
- 6.3 MB: it had been the intention to modify the rotas before Christmas, but with uncertainties around covid it was decided to leave them alone. If anyone would like to see particular changes, please let him know. Marilyn adds that Jo and Carolyn would prefer cleaners to arrive a little later. Also that volunteers working in the building on their own should let someone know when they leave and return, so that they would be alerted if there was a problem.
- 6.4 Dave Evans says that the minutes of the 19 Oct MC meeting stated that it was “the priority to find a [paid] cleaner”. CR points out that the associated action was to *discuss* this [though in the context of obligations to TUPE employees]. DE regrets that any subsequent discussion was not minuted, and GG acknowledges the point. Carolyn points out that cleaning is one thing that volunteers can actually do, it is helpful to Jo and herself and helps keeps volunteering active. Susan Crabbe says that as a volunteer cleaner she welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the shop.
- 6.5 JD: volunteering on pub refurbishment has been suspended for the time being in response to the increasing covid risks. If this resumes, it will have to be much more strictly controlled to ensure social distancing. A limited amount of volunteering work may continue on the exterior.

Contingency planning

- 7.1 GG: The MC has been considering how to prepare for a scenario in which an infected person walks into the shop and Carolyn and/or Jo are subsequently obliged to self-isolate. We have discussed preparing a simple manual for operating the till, but there are many other considerations, such as ordering and dealing with suppliers. DC says that we could “muddle by” with phone help from Jo and Carolyn. He would be willing to have a go. It would be good to have a couple of younger volunteers willing to be trained. The functioning of the till is simpler with scanning/EPOS than it was before. MB says that training in close proximity could be a problem. GG asks volunteers to get in touch with DC, MB or the shop managers. Tom Stobie offers his services; GG hopes we are never in a position to have to call on them. This is greeted with much hilarity, but GG’s real meaning is understood!

Plans for further refurbishment

- 8.1 JD: we are starting with phase 2 building work next week. The major items are improving access by widening doors, replacing some windows and installing two wood-burners. We need to get the kitchen up and running, which will involve moving stock to a temporary stockroom in the LH skittle alley. We also need to renovate the two flats and the function room. We plan to finish the work by the end of March.
- 8.2 Wood-burners were top of the list of requests for the pub. GG shares a [drawing](#) showing the proposed position of two new wood-burners, in the corner of the lower bar and against the outside wall of the upper, with a log store under the stairs, both flues to be routed through the roof above the upper bar.
- 8.3 NS describes work required to widen the car park door and the door from the passage into the lower bar in order to make them more welcoming and wheelchair-friendly. The café/garden door is also being replaced to eliminate the step. At some stage we are also determined to install an accessible toilet, but the location of this will depend on other decisions yet to be made.
- 8.4 JD has drawn up a full [list of works](#), with approximate costings. These are well within our forecasted expenses. MB suggests that bringing the kitchen up to scratch may cost more than has been shown, and JD agrees.
- 8.5 Marilyn Clarke asks if we have considered using the skittle alley as a permanent stock room. JD says that there is ongoing discussion about using the LH skittle alley, whereas the right hand alley is definitely being kept for skittlers. CR points out that in the original business plan we made a point of maintaining both alleys. NS says that a decision on the alleys should not be made until a pub manager can be included in the discussion. Dave Evans suggests that one option would be to move the skittle alley back upstairs.
- 8.6 GG asks when the scaffolding is coming down; JD says we are aiming for the end of February.
Marilyn asks if there is a regular rubbish collection. DC confirms that we have a contract with Viridor and that collections can be rescheduled at short notice. Marilyn says there is a build-up of plastic waste and cardboard that needs to be disposed of. DC agrees to look into it.
- 8.7 Paul Fielding asks whether there is any news on a plan from the garden group. JD says that Helen Gittins is on the case.

Naming the shop

- 9.1 CR: those who have responded directly on this question have been divided between a name including "HOTV" and "The Village Stores". There has also been a discussion on Nextdoor, where the primary choices were "Village Shop" and "Stoke Shop". He suggests that we settle on a brief shortlist and put it to a vote. A very small fraction of the membership has spoken so far, and most may be unaware of the question. Marilyn suggests that shop visitors are invited to indicate a choice from a small selection of names. Dave Evans says Jo and Carolyn should decide. CR thinks community input is important. GG suggests that a blend of the two approaches would be best. NS thinks an official name that includes the place (e.g. "Stoke Shop") would be preferable.

Meeting closes 8:49 pm (79m)

[The next scheduled meeting is the public HOTV meeting on Monday 1 February, at 7:30pm.](#)