

## Refreshed HOTV communications policy

31-3-21

There are various disparate issues involved in keeping in touch with HOTV members:

- 1) Keeping members (and others) regularly *informed* of progress and intentions
- 2) *Consulting* on major or minor refurbishment and policy decisions
- 3) Spreading the word to as to encourage more *custom* in shop, pub and café
- 4) Putting out messages to encourage more *volunteers* to come forward
- 5) Informing the wider *press* so as to raise the profile of HOTV and the village

There are a variety of channels available to us: public meetings, word of mouth, website, email, social media (Facebook, Nextdoor, Twitter, Instagram, TripAdvisor), leaflet drops and press releases.

### 1) Information

This is the most important element: maintaining a regular flow of information does not require members to do anything, but it keeps them involved and is appreciated. Good information is also a prerequisite for consultation and encouragement to customers and volunteers.

We don't do too badly, but we could and should do better. Graham's informative member updates are probably about right in terms of frequency. The fact that we hold regular monthly meetings to inform and respond to questions is not to be under-rated. News items on the website are easy to produce but have been far too infrequent, and our social media presence (except from the shop) is virtually non-existent.

**Action: more frequent news items and recruit an active social media volunteer.**

### 2) Consultation

This is the most controversial question and we are never going to satisfy everyone. A few argue that every question needs to be democratically decided whereas the majority appear to feel that they elect a management committee to manage. We clearly do need to consult more on some of the more significant questions. The best way of handling this is to identify three levels of decision:

- a) Highly significant issues that should be agreed by all members
- b) Issues on which we inform in advance and only consult if asked to do so
- c) Minor issues that are handled without consultation

The potential rejigging of the pub, moving skittles upstairs etc would be a good example of a), and of course the election of MC members is another. Normally these things would be decided at actual public meetings. We can (and have) arrived at decisions in Zoom meetings and we have also conducted successful email ballots. We need to adapt to circumstances but no radical changes are necessary.

b) is the trickier level, but provided we sharpen up our information and keep reiterating that people can and should inform us if they have any issues with what we are doing, we should be able to identify any causes of concern and consult more widely where appropriate.

The intention here is not so much to improve the quality of decision-making (though it is crucial that we stay aligned with the general mood) as to avoid the growth of disaffection. Members need to feel that this is their project and they are listened to, however often or seldom they choose to make their views known.

**Action: consult on major decisions; inform-wait-proceed on medium level decisions, and make this policy more evident.**

### **3) Advertising**

This is going to be increasingly significant. At the moment we are still riding a honeymoon wave with the shop, besides which Jo and Carolyn are handling their own publicity on social media and with leaflets. Hopefully a pub manager will do the same. The pub will stand or fall long-term according to how well-known and well-regarded it is in the wider community. We need to sharpen our social media presence in any case (1), and we probably need to take on some pub boosting in the short term.

### **4) Volunteers**

There is cause for concern about the level of regular volunteering. There may be multiple reasons why we are not attracting as many as we would like, but amplifying the message is relatively simple. We can, as agreed, do wide leaflet drops and put out appeals on Nextdoor and Facebook as well as other channels. We should also be asking what might be done to make being a volunteer more attractive.

### **5) Press**

Tim has done a great job of putting out press releases and there is no obvious reason to change what he is doing. Those of us involved in the reopening should be liaising with Tim in order to alert him to upcoming newsworthy moments.

### **A final note on the website (hotvssg.org)**

People often tell us that they have not been informed of this or that. There are so many different ways to put out information that it can be confusing both for those of us trying to disseminate it and members who don't know where to look. We do not want to bombard members with too many emails, so for the purposes of this policy on consultation, the HDTV News page on the website should be regarded as the official channel: if it is there (or in HDTV meeting minutes) we have told you, though major announcements will also arrive via your email inbox. If in doubt, ask.