

HOTV public Management Committee meeting minutes | draft

14 April 2021, 7:00pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer), Nick Sloan (Secretary), John Davison, Jo Bown, Carolyn Dauncey, Tim Slattery and (eventually) up to 15 others.

There was a delay at the beginning of the meeting because for reasons unexplained the initial Zoom connection did not work. Participants had to connect via new co-ordinates circulated by email. GG suggests making the recording available to anyone who failed to connect. A link will be provided on application to secretary@hotussg.org.

- 1.1 The minutes of the last public meeting, and of the interim MC meeting on 29 March, approved.

Shop update

- 2.1 CD reports that shop trading has remained brisk and new customers are still being attracted despite the road closure at Athelney which has had some effect. The café opened for coffee and cake outside on Monday when, among other visitors, there was the first of a regular booking for 10. Thanks to the garden volunteers for turning the garden into a lovely place. Takeaway teas for Mothering Sunday were very successful. New volunteers have signed up, including five under-eighteens who are now licensed to work in the shop and café. More volunteers would help reduce the load on those already volunteering. CD thanks the existing volunteers for their hard work, and also Marilyn for hers. Now the scaffolding is down she looks forward to the new vegetable stand and the awning. The PCC has kindly offered £150 towards a notice board for the wall opposite the side door, which they will share with the shop.

Financial report

- 3.1 DC: a remarkable year. He has prepared a draft comparison of [projected/actual budget](#) for April 2020 to March 2021 which [is now] published on the website. Total turnover for the year was just under £270K, which is about £26K ahead of what we projected. After our first year's trading we will roughly break even when taking depreciation and financing costs into account. We had £78K in the bank on 31 March, now £74K with some further bills to pay as Phase 2 nears completion. Some £55K to £60K has been spent on this with a further £10K committed. There may be further calls on our reserves depending on the result of our application for CIL funding for the kitchen, and any expenditure over the grant we have been awarded for solar panels.
- 3.2 GG points out that our financial projection assumed revenue from the pub and café which it has not been possible to realise, so this makes the performance of the shop all the more remarkable. DC thanks Rachel House, Sally Taylor, MB and Susan Crabbe for helping with the recent stock-take. There has been a substantial stock build, but this is to be expected as the shop has scaled up from when it was operating in the box.
- 3.3 DC explains that an audit waiver is common practice in small Community Benefit Societies like HOTV: our accounts are still audited and endorsed by our accountants AC Mole, but they put in less work than to conduct the comprehensive audit, which saves us £3K to £4K a year. This was explained to our Members who voted via email to approve the audit waiver by 129 votes to 2. [DC proposed that the MC support the vote of the Members, GG seconds the proposal and all agree.](#)

3.4 GG explains the background to our application to the PC for CIL money for kitchen equipment. There is about £65K in Community Infrastructure Levy payments available, and at least six applications from the village. The PC has decided to embark on a formal evaluation process involving community feedback, and no decision is likely before the autumn. We need to discuss whether we can afford to wait that long to invest in equipment, though the delay will not prevent us from refurbishing the kitchen and making it available to the café and pub for basic food preparation.

Work groups

4.1 JD says that the internal pub renovation is almost complete. Dave and Dan Dyer have almost finished laying a new floor in the bars and passage, the refurbishment volunteers have done a cracking job on the internal and external decoration. Particular thanks also to Simon Dauncey for undertaking the restoration of the cellar, bar equipment and beer lines. Both the garden and the decorating volunteers have done a wonderful job. JD reckons that their work on the shop and pub have so far saved HOTV between £5K and £6K.

4.2 MB: with much help from Andy Crocker we know what we need to do to bring the kitchen up to a high standard of hygiene. The extractor fan has been cleaned, Roger Brown is kindly undertaking the replacement of some of the wall cladding, and SJH flooring in Langport will be supplying materials to clean the floor and will seal up any damaged areas. Andy's friend Richard Jones has provided a provisional layout and a quote for new equipment. We will be transferring from gas to electricity for most or all of our kit. The total cost of refurbishment and equipment is between £12K and £15K.

4.3 NS: nearly all of the work required on the outside of the main building was completed by the time the scaffolding came down this morning; there remains some patching and painting to be done, and the sign should be replaced later this month. NS reiterates JD's appreciation of the great work done by volunteers.

4.4 GG says that we sound fatigued, but that all of those on the call have contributed in some way to what has become a resounding success, and should feel pleased. We have achieved 95% of what we set out to do, and the project remains ongoing. GG congratulates Helen Gittins, Kathryn Astin, Mike Long, Ann Woods and all the other garden volunteers for working, often in adverse conditions, to transform the garden. The Coates have kindly donated a wicker den for children to go on the lawn.

4.5 MB has nothing to add about the Shop Group, but thanks all the shop volunteers for their hard work once more, and DC for organising the stock-take.

Pub opening plan

5.1 GG: the event of the week will be re-opening the pub. So far we have 36 pre-bookings for Friday evening. Service may be slow to start with so please bear with us. Customers will have to sit at numbered tables and scan in for Test & Trace. JD says that Luke and Danielle McKinley have offered to wait at tables for the first evening. GG: We have engaged Phil Evans, who is living at Dykes Farm, to be our bar manager for the foreseeable future. He is combining working at the Oak with his existing job, but should be coming to us full time in a month or so.

5.2 SD gives an update on the cellar and bar arrangements. Two new gas regulators were fitted yesterday, the gas is arriving tomorrow and the beer from St Austell on Thursday. The cask beer will initially be limited to Tribute, with Carlsberg, San Miguel

and Guinness in keg and Thatcher's Gold cider. The drinks range will widen as we go on. GG thanks SD whose help with the cellar has been invaluable.

- 5.3 Paul Fielding asks how we are with bookings. GG answers that we are about 75% full on Friday night, 50% on Saturday and 30% on Sunday afternoon. People who turn up on spec will be accommodated if there is room.

Communications

- 6.1 GG introduces the "vexed" topic of communication between HOTV management and Members and the public. In response to a number of comments, NS had circulated a discussion document. NS: thanks several Members who provided detailed feedback: Ian Upshall, Susan Crabbe, Paul Fielding, Roger Brown [and Fi McQueen whose contribution was received later]. All had pertinent points to make and many of their suggestions will be incorporated into a revised document. The main points are that we acknowledge shortcomings in our web pages, which will be worked on, we still need to improve our social media presence and we will institute suggestion books in both shop and pub. NS would appreciate help with the website.
- 6.2 Paul Fielding suggests that we should be more active on social media and offers to help with this and possibly with the website. NS and JD bite his hand off.

Publicity

- 7.1 Tim Slattery gives a run-down of the local press and radio stations who are interested in the story of our reopening. Some radio interviews are in prospect. GG says that Pete Nicholas, who was born in the Oak, is to be asked to pull the ceremonial first pint on Friday. There is also a plan to recreate the 1945 village group that appears on the front of our Business Plan. GG thanks Tim for all the interest he has generated in the press.

Other business

- 8.1 GG announces that Marilyn Clarke is stepping down as volunteer co-ordinator; we will struggle to replace her but thank you Marilyn for all your hard work. Carolyn highlights the amount of work that Marilyn has done behind the scenes, reiterates that she and Jo will miss her and adds her thanks to those of GG. All concur. GG would love to hear from anyone who would consider taking over Marilyn's job, working with the 3Rings website and co-ordinating regular shop and pub volunteers.

Meeting closes 8:32 pm (1h 19m)

[The next scheduled meeting is the public HOTV meeting on Tuesday 4 May, at 7:00 pm.](#)