

## HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes

Zoom, 10 May 2021, 7:00pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair (Vice-Chair), David Crabbe (Treasurer), Nick Sloan (Secretary), John Davison, Chris Reah, Jo Bown, Carolyn and Simon Dauncey, Tim Slattery and 12 others.

### Minutes of the last meeting

- 1.1 Ian Upshall queries minute 1.10 of the minutes from the last (21-4) interim meeting. NS agrees to reword this to clarify the nature of the decision that had been made to allow our bank balance to fall below £50K.

### Members feedback

- 2.1 GG responds to a member who had asked for details of the current business plan. GG summarises his previous email response which was that there are two parts to our plan: social and financial. He feels that we have achieved all of our community benefit targets so far with the exception of providing facilities for young people, which is still being investigated. Our financial forecast was updated in August last year at the request of our lenders and grant givers. We have exceeded the revenue target in that revised forecast thanks to the performance of the shop. All other aspects of the plan remain valid, though some developments have been delayed by the persistence of the pandemic. We see no reason to revise it now, though we would expect to do so later in the year.  
Paul Fielding asks if both the social plan and the updated financial plan could be published. GG to convert the financial plan into a more accessible format and post both on the website.
- 2.2 Fi McQueen suggests that a simplified version of the financial results and regular "feel-good" news items would be helpful. GG agrees to incorporate into his regular updates, and DC invites FM to advise on making his data more accessible.
- 2.3 GG: there was also a series of questions about the wood-burners, their selection, sizing and installation. Installing a fire in the bar was one of the most widely requested features, and we chose wood-burners since they are more efficient and less polluting than an open fire. Ann Finn says that she and Terry have recently stopped using their 3-year-old wood-burner due to recent publicity about particulates. JD: we took professional advice on the choice and sizing of stoves and have conformed with all the regulations in relation to their installation. The main thing is being careful to burn the right wood. Fi questions the need for two wood-burners. JD says that the combined heat output is less than would have been recommended for a private house.

### Shop and pub operation

- 3.1 CD: the shop is still doing brisk trade and attracting new customers and positive feedback. The café is also very popular, with some visitors coming from quite far afield. All volunteer shifts are currently being covered, some by new under-18 volunteers who are doing a great job. Sales are up 40% on this time last year. CD plans to start designing the shop website soon and JB has sourced some new kit for the kitchen which should enable the café to start offering cooked food soon. Café customers will be able to sit indoors from Monday 17th.

- 3.2 GG adds his thanks to Jo for securing for a good price most of the kitchen equipment we need in the short term.
- 3.3 SD gives an account of a positive start to pub trading in the garden. Despite the cold weather, trade has been encouraging. Phil Evans has been settling in to his role well, and will be more in evidence once he has completed the notice period for his previous job on 12 May. SD will be tidying up the pub furniture next week.
- 3.4 Inside opening will initially be for the same days (Thursday to Sunday), except that Friday 21st will be our first night inside, but evening opening will be extended until 10:30pm. The rules require us to stick to table service, giving us a capacity of 36 customers in the bar. For this reason we may have to use a booking system for the first few weeks. GG thanks SD for all the work he has put in. NS points out that we can still serve outside customers, so our overall capacity would be much higher if some customers were happy to drink in the garden.

### **Financial**

- 4.1 DC: we have £56K in the bank despite some heavy expenditure in April. Shop trading is holding up well, with margins about 30% as anticipated. The café turned over about £900 in April and the pub nearly £3K over the first three weeks of trade. The feedback from pub customers has been almost universally positive.
- 4.2 GG: we have received a recent share investment of £2,250. We are grateful for this expression of confidence.

### **Work groups**

- 5.1 JD: the inside work by Dave & Dan Dyer on the bars, including wood-burners and widened doors, should be completed this week, so that with some final decoration work everything should be ready for opening next week.
- 5.2 NS: the faces of the old pub sign have been beautifully restored by Misha Seelhoff. The sign would have been put up today had it not been for the wind. Dave Evans comments that he has a photo of Pete Smart putting the same sign up in [1987].
- 5.3 MB: thanks to the volunteers, especially Roger, who have done a wonderful job replacing the cladding in the kitchen. Thanks also to Jo for sourcing equipment which we will soon be able to install. DC asks if we want to buy a large chiller that is also available from Living Pretty. Agreed to measure up and assess when collecting the rest of the kit tomorrow.
- 5.4 GG: Phil Evans would like to move into the flats, and has offered to help with the refurbishment. Trevor Daniels has overseen the tidying of the skittle alley with a view to clearing it for re-use as soon as possible. NS reiterates that he is still planning to draw up plans for different configurations of the building as a basis for further discussion. GG suggests involving young people in discussions about how we might better serve their needs.
- 5.5 GG says that everyone has been impressed by the transformation of the gardens, and thanks Helen Gittins and her team. Helen says that they still have ideas for more improvements, including barrels of flowers along the front. Paul suggests that the refurbishment volunteers might be able to help with grass cutting. DC mentions that we are getting an increase in garbage, compostable or otherwise, and need to look at better ways of dealing with it.

## **Volunteering**

- 6.1 GG says that recruiting sufficient volunteers for various aspects of the enterprise has been a vexed issue, though he is glad to hear that the shop is now being able to cover all shifts. He asks is there is any way we could be approaching this better. Fi suggests that a regular newsletter might help to generate interest and spread the word. Ian says that now the project is moving from the initiation phase to day-to-day operation, this may call for a different approach and different skills. He suggests holding a skills audit to help match volunteers to the jobs required, also perhaps offering qualifications in e.g. food hygiene. Susan Crabbe seconds the idea. MB reports that Broughton village shop is finding that as Covid rules relax, the social benefits of volunteering are coming back to the fore. GG relays a suggestion from Paul that other village groups might be approached to undertake volunteer evenings, eg offering bar service. GG: all these suggestions involve wider "outreach". We will address how we can work on this at the next meeting.

### **Should we aim for carbon neutral?**

- 6.1 GG: the answer to this question is unequivocally yes. It is important that we minute the aspiration, and take it into account in our planning. We have already decided to phase out LPG and install solar panels. Carbon neutrality is separate from ecological considerations such as minimising particulates. DC asks for a definition of carbon neutral. GG: fully offsetting our carbon footprint. A good starting point might be establishing what our carbon footprint is. Ian fully endorses the aim towards carbon neutrality and suggests that all future plans should involve an environmental impact assessment.

## **Communication**

- 7.1 GG asks how people think we have performed since this topic was aired at the last public meeting. Fi offers to mock up a newsletter, to include for example simplified financial information and details of the social plan. Offer gratefully received.
- 7.2 Susan Crabbe asks if the revised communications plan has progressed. NS says that it has been completed and apologises for not having posted it. **NS to post.**
- 7.3 Paul suggests that we need to put out information about the internal reopening of the pub, and offers to post details on Nextdoor and Facebook.
- 7.4 Neil Morgan asks if opening times are changing. CD says that initially opening will be restricted to Thursday to Sunday, but evening opening will extend to 10:30. Phil will then decide on how opening times change in future. A discussion ensues on whether the pub will eventually open full time. This will depend on demand and how trade develops. Phil is initially on an hourly contract, but following further discussions before the end of June it is expected that he will be employed full time.

## **Publicity**

- 8.1 GG thanks Tim for his efforts in attracting press publicity, in particular the full page spread in the Gazette. Tim has plans for further coverage in various outlets.
- 8.2 Ian asks what is happening about providing publicity in the pub for business sponsors. JD has been speaking to the business owners and asking what information they would like displayed. We will then provide an area for this, probably on the wall in the bar.

- 8.3 NS refers to GG's suggestion that there should be some way-markers to the Royal Oak on the road, and asks what locations? GG suggests the same locations used for displaying share offer banners. **NS to design and circulate.**
- 8.4 DC suggests that we should be formalising a visual identity for the business. NS is happy to design anything with this in mind, but is diffident about imposing on other ideas. GG says that the HOTV logo is a strong image which should be promoted. **NS to design a banner to publicise the re-opening of the bar.**

#### **Next meeting**

- 9.1 GG: do we want to continue with Zoom or revert to face-to-face meetings? There is unanimous support for holding the next meeting in the bar of the Royal Oak.
- 9.2 Neil wonders if there might be some tension between the Oak and the Village Hall in competing for bookings. GG is emphatic that this is not the case, and there is general agreement that there is more synergy than competition between the two. DC is "just happy that there is a pub at the heart of the village".

*Meeting closes 8:21 pm (1h 21m)*

**The next scheduled meeting is the public HOTV meeting on Monday 7 June, at 7:00 pm in the Royal Oak.**