

HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes | draft

The Village Hall, 13 October 2021, 7:00pm

Present: Graham Gleed, Mike Blair, John Davison, Simon Dauncey, Nick Sloan, Ann Woods. Apologies from David Crabbe and Paul Fielding

Minutes of the last meeting

- 1.1 The minutes of the 16th August meeting were agreed to be accurate.

Appointment of officers

- 2.1 All the existing formal officers were unanimously confirmed in place, namely GG as Chair (proposed by NS, seconded by MB), DC as Treasurer (proposed by GG, seconded by JD), NS as Secretary (proposed by GG, seconded by JD) and MB as Vice-Chair (proposed by GG, seconded by JD).
- 2.2 DC has expressed a wish to step down as Treasurer when someone has been found to replace him. It is unanimously agreed that he has done a fantastic job in challenging circumstances. We would welcome a volunteer for this position.
- 2.3 GG expresses the need for a fund-raiser. While our finances are in as good a shape as we could have expected, we will need to raise more money to pay for all the Phase 3 improvements we are hoping to make. It is agreed that this should be financed by grants and/or contributions from shareholders, not from further loans.

NS and JD to explore various aspects of this.

Financial

- 3.1 GG: AC Mole are just waiting for a partner to sign off our year end closing accounts, as presented at the AMM, and to file them with the FCA.
- 3.2 The audit threw up an issue with the recording of cash purchases which has now been resolved. AC Mole have offered a short training course on Xero, the accounting software used for our books. Five places are available. **DC to organise.** PF has also suggested the option of using a "Variable Debit" with Bookers to reduce the need for cash purchases.
- 3.3 GG is looking for somebody to handle the transfer of our bank accounts from HSBC to Starling Bank. **PF has volunteered to take this on.**
- 3.4 GG: we need to determine a policy on the handling of tips, both the nature of the division (whether they all go into a single pot or not) and how the tax on tips is resolved, particularly when they are paid by card. SD suggests that the division is a matter for the managers to decide. **SD will research the best way of handling the tax aspect and report back.**
- 3.5 GG: we urgently need to set up a reliable way of integrating food sales into our accounting system, ideally by using an EPOS system behind the bar. (The EPOS system in the shop also needs to be streamlined to minimise manual input and custom bar-codes.) There are further questions about integrating café food sales, and having a reliable way of recording the sales totals on which salary incentives are based. A new HOTV laptop may be necessary. **AW to explore a potential source for this.**
- 3.6 MB suggests tightening up the EPOS system generally. Currently the system records sales only. We need a reliable record of purchases and stock. Grocery purchases each

week are between £4K and £5K, but the make-up of this is not clear. There is too much writing off of outdated products. All are agreed that better stock control is essential.

3.7 GG: shop sales for first half of the year were circa £172K, cost of sales £117K. Gross margin was 31.7%, giving a gross profit of £54,446. Pub sales since April have been £21K, with a profit of £10K and a gross margin of 47%. Combined sales over six months are about £195K. This represents very healthy trading, and we are in as good a position as we could have hoped, with £68K still in the bank, but with considerable overheads and upcoming expenses we cannot afford to be complacent.

3.8 GG: Now that we have a year's shop and six month's pub trading behind us, and particularly once we have started offering food, we can use the figures to repopulate our original spreadsheets and make realistic projections. On the basis of this we can prepare an updated Business Plan to inform shareholders and lenders, and guide us in charting our future course. **MB and SD to collaborate on this.**

PV Panels

4.1 GG: These are being installed on both sides of the skittle alley roof next week, the inverter and associated switchgear will be sited in the function room kitchen.

Operations

5.1 GG: Phil has plans for a couple of open mic nights and quiz nights before Christmas.

5.2 GG asks who can earth the steel cables in the kitchen and PAT test appliances.
JD to take care of earth bonding, find someone to do the PAT testing and check the fly zapper.

5.3 The new chef has requested two passes and a commercial dishwasher for the kitchen. The total cost of items proposed would be about £1,700. Jo has offered to source them.
All agreed that these are necessary items.

Skittle alley

6.1 GG: Mike Hutchins has a new set of skittles for sale.
JD to look at them and report back with a recommendation.

6.2 SD reports that there are two women's league skittling teams based at the Oak who are skittling again there for the first time tonight, meanwhile the men's league is holding a meeting there.

6.3 NS raises the question of improvements to the pitch board, about which there have been complaints. One proposal is to replace the thin plywood with steel.

Chef

7.1 GG: Jason Wide accepted the post of chef only yesterday. He has given notice to his current employer and will start work at the Oak during November. He has proposed a trial menu which he will initially cook and offer for feedback before going live. Food will be available at first on Thursday to Saturday evenings [and Sunday lunchtimes], working within the scope of the kitchen and available help. We aim to expand the times and the range as custom builds.

7.2 JD congratulates GG and SD for concluding the negotiations and achieving a chef for the Oak against all the odds.

7.3 GG asks SD to take on the job of MC line manager for Jason and Phil. **SD agrees.**

Young people

8.1 GG has had a meeting with a representative of Community Youth Project, together with Anne Merritt who was the last person to run a youth club in the village. The PC is willing to fund some form of youth facility at the Royal Oak, to be run in conjunction with HOTV. The next step remains to hold a meeting for young people to harvest their views. Provision of better facilities for young people is a very hot topic throughout the district, and the PC is strongly committed to this.

9.1 Phase 3

NS: Phase 3 of the refurbishment of the Oak [involving the incorporation of all the remaining facilities envisaged in the original Business Plan] is complex, expensive and undecided. A proposal was circulated to the MC and managers three weeks ago. We should study and discuss this, and agree an updated (and costed) proposal to circulate to the HOTV membership and the wider community in due course.

9.2 GG has concerns about the size of the kitchen and how well it could cope with an expanded service and more staff. NS says that the kitchen could potentially be enlarged, and adds that the overall plan contains complex elements with many variables. It needs to be seen as a whole.

9.3 NS says that the two highest priority elements are an accessible toilet and an enlarged dining area. SD points out that there is currently scope for 44 covers (not including the garden), and more if we have multiple sittings.

All members of the MC to study the proposal and discuss at the next meeting.

Kickstart

10.1 GG has heard nothing at all back on our application for a Kickstart employee.

Other

11.1 AW brings a proposal by Roger Brown for a purpose-built open-backed vegetable shed to go against the wall opposite the side shop door. Cost of materials £500. **All agreed that the proposal should be accepted.** There is still a proposal for an awning on the shop wall, though NS thinks this should probably not have a side panel.

11.2 AW raises the issue of the acoustics in the upper bar. The Notley Arms in Monksilver has big woollen clouds that help absorb sound. Other suggestions are corrugated cardboard strips and fleeces. **AW to research further.**

Meeting closes 8:40 pm

The next scheduled meeting is on Monday 6th December at the Royal Oak.