

## **HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes**

The Village Hall, 29 November 2021, 7:00pm

Present: Graham Gleed (Chair), Mike Blair, David Crabbe, Simon Dauncey John Davison, Paul Fielding, Nick Sloan, Ann Woods

### **Minutes of the last meeting**

- 1.1 The minutes of the 13th October meeting were agreed to be accurate.

### **Matters arising**

- 2.1 PF asks if there has been any progress in seeking a replacement for DC as Treasurer. GG: not yet, though enquiries are being made. AW and GG both offer to approach possible candidates. [Any suggestions welcome.]
- 2.2 PF asks why Phase 3 is not on the agenda. NS says that he had suggested to GG that discussion of Phase 3 be deferred since he had not expected to be able to attend this meeting. He also felt the subject was so extensive as to require a meeting to itself. GG and others agree that with the current state of the finances, Phase 3 could not be funded for some time. Discussion will be deferred until January or February.

**NS to produce draft costings.**

### **Financial matters**

- 3.1 DC: £40K currently in the bank but several large bills coming up. GG reports that shop sales have been down 15–20% in recent months. Short term cash flow is fairly tight while we wait for pub revenue to build, so we need to avoid inessential expenditure. Speculations as to why trade has dipped include people being careful before Christmas and general financial difficulties. The margins remain good but the amount of trade needs to increase. A serious concern is that recent Covid developments could lead to further restrictions.
- 3.2 GG asks if we should we be making contingency plans to raise more money. This would presuppose an updated business plan. [See 5.1 below].
- 3.3 DC: Total costs across the business, including bank repayments and depreciation, are about £15.5K per month. GG: Although we are currently approaching a cash flow pinch, indications are that revenue should build to cover and exceed this as the food offering is expanded. We are due a significant VAT reclaim in February.
- 3.4 GG is currently in discussion with the managers to make them aware of the broader picture in terms of profit and loss, as well as to air any other issues arising.
- 3.5 DC has filed the year end accounts, and these have been submitted to the FCA.
- 3.6 DC: Issues with recording shop cash purchases in Xero have now been resolved. There are still some minor issues with recording pub payments, but these are being monitored by DC and should be resolved shortly. There are still improvements to be made in how purchases are paid for and how they are logged. The arrival of an HSBC debit card and extended use of the EPOS system should help make purchasing more efficient and transparent.
- 3.7 DC: Xero training from AC Mole has been deferred until after Christmas.
- 3.8 GG: HSBC has changed our account to a business account, an application has been submitted for a debit card, change of address (to the Oak) and change of signatories.

- 3.9 SD suggests that HOTV adopts a “tronic system” for the distribution of tips. This has tax advantages, maximising the benefit to employees and makes the division more predictable and transparent. The system is administered by a “troncmaster” who may be one of the managers or an external third party. GG feels that it would be invidious to ask one of the managers to administer the scheme if they are also beneficiaries. After prolonged discussion about the fairest way of distributing tips, GG proposes that all tips are divided according to “an agreed fixed percentage”. SD’s research suggests that irrespective of the form of payment, tips are outside the scope of VAT. A system needs to be devised to record and identify payments which are intended as tips.

### Operations

- 4.1 SD: There will be a Christmas Quiz Night on 15th December. AW remarks that the music nights have been very successful. PF asks whether it would be practicable to open the pub on Monday or Tuesday if particular requests came along, such as Tuesday night skittles. SD thinks this should be assessed on a case by case basis, but with a bias in favour of approval.
- 4.2 GG suggests the soft opening of the food offering has gone well. Menus and Christmas opening hours will be published on social media and on the village website. SD thinks Jason is settling in well and enjoying the kitchen. We need to find a way of providing coffee with meals.
- 4.3 JD says that he and NS will make sure that all relevant appliances in the kitchen are PAT-tested. The electric grill is tripping the RCD and could be repaired for about £100. SD will ask Jason how essential the grill is with a view to repair.  
**JD and NS to address electrical issues in kitchen.**
- 4.4 JD: it has been decided to reverse the hanging of the kitchen door to create more space around the new dishwasher. **PF to arrange this with the volunteers.**
- 4.5 DC: the kitchen hot water is supplied from the hot water cylinder in the flat. This is problematical both in terms of quantity and of apportioning cost. **JD and NS to consult Matt with a view to providing an alternative source of hot water downstairs.**
- 4.6 PF asks about cleaning arrangements, in particular for gents. **SD to check with Phil.**
- 4.7 GG: Sue Smyth has volunteered to make curtains for the upper bar to help with sound deadening. **Offer very gratefully accepted.**
- 4.8 PF raised the question of cleaning up and potentially using the function room in the short term. There are various problems associated with this, and we should probably wait until the Phase 3 plans are determined. DC would like to site an HOTV office area near the inverter in the meantime. Agreed.
- 4.9 GG raises the issue of shop purchasing, and a long discussion ensues on how to make this more transparent and accountable in order to keep a closer eye on costs and avoid wastage. All agreed that the responsibility for shop buying should be shared. DC highlights an issue with recording incoming purchases. GG and AW highlight a problem with the use of custom bar-codes for unmarked item. **MB and DC to liaise with shop managers in devising a tighter purchasing system, integrating with EPOS.**
- 4.10 GG: we welcome a Kickstart candidate, Ruaridh, who lives in the village and who could be suitable for training in stock control as one of his responsibilities. He will be starting on 4th January.

## Updated Business Plan

- 5.1 An updated Business Plan will be essential if we need to raise more funds to see us through a cash-flow pinch. Crucially we need data to prepare projections for shop, café and pub sales. **DC, MB and SD to contribute data for GG to revise plan.**

## Publicity

- 6.1 PF asks if we could encourage favourable reviews on TripAdvisor. Google still holds outdated information which needs displacing with new. We should also be making more use of Facebook and Nextdoor.

## PV Panels

- 7.1 GG: The PV panel installation is now finished and operational. DC: Virtually all of the current generated by the panels is consumed within the Oak. It should account for about 20% of our consumption, though it is difficult to say exactly since consumption has risen now the flat is occupied and the kitchen is in use.

## Young people

- 8.1 No developments yet in our scheme to provide facilities for young people. The PC is very supportive and there are council grants available. We aim to start consultation in the new year.
- 8.2 DC asks if we are able to offer part-time work to teenagers. This is very much part of the plan. It is a variable cost that can be managed according to circumstances.
- MB asks if there is any scope for transferring waste heat to heat the café. JD doubtful, though there is still a problem with excess heat in the summer. **JD to review this.**

## Other

- 8.3 SD Pub Christmas opening hours are as follows: Christmas Eve (Friday) normal opening, 5:30 till 11. Christmas Day, 11 till 2. Boxing Day 12 till 4. New Year's Eve 5:30 till 1 am and New Year's Day 6 till 10. There will also be extended hours on the day of the Stoke Stampede, Sunday 9th January.
- 8.4 PF: a herd of caravans is booked to stay at the Village Hall over new year (29 Dec to 2 Jan). This could lead to increased trade at the pub.
- 8.5 AW asks whether any of the items requested during the last shop meeting (laptop, scales, updated EPOS) have been bought. MB says no, primarily due to lack of funds. JD suggests making a firm commitment to re-equip in January. **MB to price kit.**
- 8.6 PF asks whether the next meeting is a public meeting to communicate to Members, or a closed meeting to conduct business. GG says that it should be both, though avoiding topics that should remain confidential.

*Meeting closes 9:02 pm*

**The next scheduled MC meeting is Tuesday 4th January at the Village Hall followed by a (deferred) open meeting on Tuesday 18th January at the Royal Oak.**