

## HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes

The Village Hall, 1 February 2022, 7:00pm

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

### Preliminaries

- 1.1 The minutes of the 18th December open meeting were agreed to be accurate.

### Matters arising

- 2.1 AW asks if anything has been done to enhance our social media presence and remove the out-of-date web page that often appears when googling for the Royal Oak. NS says that the domain name that points to the old page has been re-registered by a firm unconnected with the pub, and knows of no way of taking down the page without access to the domain. It will however disappear before long, especially if we amplify the profile of the HOTV website and Oak Facebook page. **NS to pursue this.**

### Financial

- 3.1 GG: DC had previously circulated the table *Profit & Loss for VAT* (3 months to end Dec 21). This shows turnover £116K, cost of sales £72K and gross profit £44K (all rounded). Administrative costs are £33K giving an operating profit of £11K. Other income (flat rental and donations) brings the net profit (excluding loans repayments of c.£3K per month) to about £14.6K. DC points out that this presents a snapshot for tax purposes. Due to the variability of invoicing, any given accounting period is an approximation and may not include some outstanding expenses. At least £2K of the accountancy fees were a one-off which should not recur. We also hope that building maintenance and repair costs should be decreasing. On the other hand VAT costs are likely to increase as we are no longer able to reclaim so much VAT on capital expenditure.

GG: the basic conclusion is that we are operating in profit, but not by a wide margin. We still need to work hard on building revenue.

- 3.2 DC reports that an EPOS system will be going live in the pub tomorrow. This has been demonstrated to be effective, and should provide good stock control once any remaining wrinkles have been ironed out.

- 3.3 **Business plan.** DC confirms that the costs listed in his P&L table can be used as a basis for the updated business plan. **DC, MB and SD to work on the revenue forecasts.**

- 3.4 **Bank mandates.** GG has mandates from HSBC to authorise payment signatories and seeks volunteers. **It is agreed that GG, MB, PF and NS should be the four signatories and the mandates are completed and signed accordingly.**

- 3.5 **Treasurer.** GG has made no progress in finding a volunteer to replace DC as Treasurer. This is a problem since DC has only agreed to continue in post until the end of March. DC suggests that some of the tasks he has undertaken could be separated out and divided between several people. DC says that the major responsibility is handling payroll via the HMRC system which has to be hosted on an individual computer. This involves security and data protection considerations. Finding the right person however is the main issue. **GG to draw up text for a general appeal and AW to post on Facebook. DC to essay an itemised role description.**  
*All invited to apply their mind to finding a suitable candidate.*

- 3.6 **Grants.** GG: Olivia Sanders has researched potential grants. A couple for Somerset Community Fund may be applicable. One is a matching revenue grant, but involves 11 days training. The other is a development grant for businesses with less than £500K turnover. GG is awaiting answers to questions about both these. GG has applied for £1500 from a covid-related scheme administered by SALC. We need to put more emphasis on grant applications to fund future developments. AW suggests that there is a public perception that HOTV is successful and does not need further funding. It is true that we are doing very good business, but at this stage in our evolution, with several major expenses yet to come, we still need all the help we can get to manoeuvre into safer waters.
- 3.7 **Stock management.** GG has been studying the shop wastage book; the average cost of wastage is about £150–200 per month gross. GG suggests that this needs to be made more visible so that questions can be asked about why it is occurring and what can be done to reduce it. GG proposes that a monthly record is kept of wasted stock, including both retail and cost values. Stock that is frozen for longer term storage should also be recorded and properly labelled.
- 3.8 GG: There is in the stockroom a freezer full of stock that is unlikely to be sold, while in the kitchen Jason needs a freezer. The cost of a new freezer greatly exceeds the cost of the stock which has in any case already been accounted for. It is agreed that the freezer in question should be moved to the kitchen (if it will fit there), and the stock written off. AW volunteers to empty the freezer and record and dispose of contents.
- 3.9 GG: we also need to plan the year end stock-take. DC says that last year's stock take took about two days for both stock room and shop. The pub stock will be relatively easy to record. The important thing is to have a clear methodology. DC suggests that keeping a record of stock movement on a month to month basis is at least as significant as the year end stock-take in understanding costs. AW asks, if stock is entered into the system on delivery, does this not constitute a sufficient record? GG suggests that this may not cover stock bought from Bookers. NS asks if we are any closer to an automatic Bookers ordering system, which has long been agreed to be something we should sign up to. Bookers has a high minimum order for delivery, but Jason, Phil and Jo are all visiting Bookers fairly regularly, so there should be scope for combining the collection of online orders. **GG and DC to scope a project to design a tighter stock management and ordering system.**
- 3.10 **Overtime.** In order to limit expenses which have been increasing well beyond contractual expectations, GG proposed that we limit the hours of those managers on an hourly rate to 140 hours per month. Hours beyond this figure would henceforth only be paid if they had been pre-approved. **All agree.**
- 3.11 **Cash management in pub.** GG proposes daily reconciliation of pub cash in order to keep a tighter record and make it easier to resolve future anomalies. **All agreed.**  
**SD to arrange with Phil.**

#### **Operations: food**

- 4.1 GG: feedback on food has been mixed, though the new menu has been well received. We need to understand whether there are any constraints in terms of equipment or help. SD says that Jason is keen to react positively to feedback but rarely if ever receives it directly, which makes it more difficult to act on. Some of the perceived shortcomings may be caused by lack of sufficient time or help, e.g. to prepare more

fresh vegetables. MB and AW suggest that better presentation, such as vegetables served separately, would be a significant improvement. AW raised the issue of good coffee not being available in the pub and it was agreed that this needed to be addressed. SD feels that there are problems with service, partly because Phil is often working single-handed. In particular he feels that people should be invited to give genuine feedback after their meals. **SD to discuss this with Phil.**

- 4.2 SD has received a wish-list of new equipment which would enable him to enhance the menu. **SD to cost this for further discussion at the next meeting.** SD also reports that in order to increase custom on Saturdays, he has agreed with Jason that Saturday should be a specials night (steaks, curries etc).
- 4.3 PF asks about gluten-free menu choices. SD says that more of the items could be marked as GF and this will be done. Jason is also looking into supplying GF bread, and extending GF options generally for both pub and café.
- 4.4 GG points out that food in the café is only available from Wednesday to Sunday. NS suggests that panini should be available without chips and garnish. **GG to suggest to Jason.**
- 4.5 **Function room.** GG asks if there is anything we can do with the function room. Uses are limited at present since there is no heating and the fire-escape needs repair. It might become an informal temporary games room.
- 4.6 AW suggests that the gates beside the shop should be kept closed in the evenings to discourage vandalism. GG suggests that the area outside the kitchen and further field should be cleared of junk. **PF to discuss with JD.**
- 4.7 GG refers to the plans for installing air conditioning to keep shop cool in hot weather. This could be grant-fundable on the basis that it avoids food waste. JD is still working on the plans.

### **Phase 3**

- 5.1 GG reports that NS' recent posting of the proposal for Phase 3 on the website has been greeted with "a tsunami of apathy"! GG will mention in his next email update.

### **Electricity consumption and PV panels**

- 6.1 GG says that it is unclear whether we might be losing PV power to the grid. NS thinks this unlikely since the inverter is designed to keep PV voltage above grid voltage. Advice on this to be pursued from various sources. DC says that recorded generation is roughly as expected. Consumption is still very high, and JD is to do an audit to assess whether it is higher than it should be in terms of equipment in use.

### **Young people**

- 7.1 GG: a meeting is scheduled at the Oak on March 8th to consult teenagers in the community with help from the Community Youth Project. GG will discuss with others how best to spread the word in advance.

### **Other**

- 8.1 PF: asks about proposed moves to ramp up social media presence. SD says that more events are planned (Six Nations matches are to be shown in the pub from this weekend), and he will talk to Phil about amplifying the message.
- 8.2 MB reports a request from volunteers to buy (for £20 to £40) a trolley for moving stock around. **Agreed. AW to arrange.**

- 8.3 NS mentions a scheme from Take Art to show one act plays in pubs. GG has already forwarded details from Olivia to Phil. SD feels that we don't have sufficient indoor space at present to make it worthwhile, but GG suggests that we could maybe book a performance in the summer and hold it in the garden. To be further discussed.
- 8.4 DC suggests adding something to the next agenda about accident reporting.

*Meeting closes 9:08 pm*

[The next MC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 1st March at the Village Hall.](#)