

# Heart of the Village (Stoke St Gregory) Ltd

## Management Committee Meeting

Meeting July 5th , 2022, 7:00PM,

The Royal Oak

1. **Present:** Graham Glead, Mike Blair, Anne Woods, Paul Fielding, 17 members
2. **Apologies:** Jon Cochrane, Nick Sloan, John Davison
3. **Minutes of the Last Meeting**

See under Matters Arising below

#### 4. Health and Safety Reporting

Nothing to report

#### 5. Matters Arising

- Previous minutes
  - A member expressed the opinion that the wording under minute 6.2 was unnecessarily confrontational in the context of a collaborative, community venture. GG responded that the words used were intended to emphasise the imperative of establishing a long-term viable business. Furthermore, should it happen, but hopefully not, upsetting a few people maybe a price to pay to avoid disappointing the whole community.
  - A member asked whether in the light of minute 5.1 there has been a change of policy regarding pension contributions. GG responded that there has not, however The MC reserves the right to review this on a case-by-case basis going forward.
- Members
  - A member (not present) submitted written comments around cleaning and facilities appearance as well as engagement with volunteers [JB and CD will have a direct conversation with the member on the first topic](#). The volunteer's topic is covered in 7 below.

#### 6. Financial Matters

- Bank Balance and Cash Management

- Our bank balance remains a concern, meaning cash management is critically important. Following a soft trading period earlier in the spring, sales in both the shop and the pub are showing recovery, particularly in the shop. The current balance is around £20K having been stable at this level for the last twelve weeks. There are some green shoots which may signal a slow recovery but continuing emphasis on the control of spending is critical
- Metrics and Targets
  - Recently developed metrics were put in place to give managers a view of the impact of their actions on the performance of the business. This has resulted in an improving trend (to date) in gross margin from the pub and the shop. Members present saw value in the information and requested this information be published on a regular basis. [GG to publish](#)
  - The considerable discrepancy between our bank balance versus the shortfall on breakeven has been addressed by cross checking actual cash flow versus previous estimates. This has resulted in a downward revision of the breakeven cost which is now consistent with actual performance
- Consolidation of loans
  - Consideration is being given to consolidating our two expensive short-term loans into a single arrangement with Triodos Bank. While this is a more expensive option in the long term it could offer significant benefit to the short-term cash position. It was unanimously agreed to develop this scenario to put a quantified proposal to members. [JC to develop a proposal for consideration.](#)
  - A member expressed a concern that any proposal must include consideration of likely interest rate movements before any final decision
  - It is hoped to avoid any short-term loan finance as this potentially only postpones addressing the core structural issue which we are currently trying to manage. This should only be considered as a last resort option
- Q end Stock Count
  - A stock count for the shop was complete at the end of June. This showed a slight decrease in value despite the increasing cost of goods purchased. All categories were considered to be in good control with the only possible opportunity for further reduction being in 'groceries'.
- Business Plan
  - P&L: A revised P&L which is based upon actual performance has been developed. It shows that we have a positive outlook provided the short-term cash management issue is resolved

- Cash flow: In order to apply for the loan consolidation described above it will be necessary to similarly revise our cash flow [GG to develop cash flow projection](#).

## 7. Operations Update and Plans

- The Function Room, Anticipated Use and Promotion
  - The painting and decorating team have addressed themselves to refreshing the function room. The work is nearing completion such that this facility can be built into our revenue potential. The MC expressed their thanks for this effort. One consideration going forward is to source suitable furniture given our cost constraints.
- Shop Pub Café Trading Update, Upcoming Attractions
  - Shop sales over the past several weeks have shown an encouraging upward trend. It is increasingly apparent that our success is in no small part due to the service we offer.
  - The shop website has now been published and has been well received. This will be used to highlight special events and offers later in the summer.
  - The shop website includes the new café menu. Uptake of this offering is still disappointingly low
  - Sales trend in both wet and dry in the pub are trending upwards with dry (food) showing good improvement since April.
  - With the availability of the function room, it is intended to install the pool table that has been kindly donated. It is hoped that this will attract a clientele that formerly used the Pub to whom we have not so far been able to reach
- Energising and Extending Volunteer Contributions
  - As set up 3Rings had an extensive register of volunteers only a proportion of whom are currently active. It was suggested that we refresh this register and extend an invitation to new volunteers who may have moved to the village since the original list was generated.
  - The till trained volunteers are managed outside of 3Rings. It was felt that there was not any value in incorporating this role into the system as they are directly managed by the shop managers
  - Anne Woods has kindly volunteered to take on a co-ordinating role to address the volunteer rota.
- Promotional Materials and Communication
  - With the new websites in place for the Pub and Shop to opportunity to reach a broader section of the community through the links to social media now exist.
  - This does not address those in the community who are not familiar with social media, let alone email. It was suggested that each member adopts a 'buddy' role whereby updates are shared with neighbours who may not access the information in any other way

- A member suggested that greater use of basic materials such as blackboards outside the Pub would help as positive comments have been made about the one at the shop although this is partially obscured.
- Some form of identity was suggested with promotional materials reflecting this. For the shop this would fall into the responsibility that Carolyn has undertaken.

#### **8. Insurance Renewal.**

- Our insurance renewal is due in August. It is currently on the desk of our broker

#### **9. Young People's initiative**

- The young people's initiative was part of our original community benefit plan. This is now being developed on a broad front under the sponsorship of the PC. Two areas where it potentially impacts The RO is in use of the function room, but also as a fast-food outlet (McGregory's). Both of these will be considered, and proposals will be made once ideas have been discussed and developed.

#### **10. Electricity Consumption and PV Panels**

- The solar panels are contributing up to 40% of our electricity consumption during these summer months. This is in line with our design spec and is an important contributor to reducing our cost base.

#### **11. Year end and APM**

- Yearend financial reporting is progressing well with no major issues so far identified. Cash reconciliations are extremely close. We continue to work with AC Mole to complete this in a timely manner.
- The Annual Members Meeting is currently scheduled for Weds 7<sup>th</sup> September.

#### **12. Next meeting.**

- The Next MC meeting will be held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022