

## HOTV Management Committee (and manager) meeting minutes | **draft**

The Village Hall, 22 August 2022, 7:00pm

Present: Mike Blair (chair), Jon Cochrane, John Davison, Simon Dauncey, Paul Fielding and Nick Sloan. [Apologies from Graham Gleed and Ann Woods.]

Before the meeting there is a presentation from Jo Pavey with full details of our insurance renewal.

### **Preliminaries**

- 1.1 The minutes of the 22 July meeting are agreed to be accurate.

### **Insurance**

- 2.1 Following Jo Pavey's departure, a discussion ensues on whether to pay for the insurance in a lump sum or monthly. **JC to consider in relation to available funds and to make a recommendation. MB to circulate insurance documents.**

### **Financial: trading performance**

- 3.1 JC shows how although the figures can vary widely from week to week, there is a gradual downward trend in trading for the shop, and to a greater extent the pub. The cash balance is similarly trending downwards though not yet to a dangerous level. We need to be realistic about this and to solve the systemic problems, particularly in relation to pub food which has been losing us money, and stock control in the shop.

### **3.2 Consolidation of loans**

JC points out that we own an asset (The Oak) that is going to be around for over 50 years, and that it makes sense to extend our loan over a much longer payback period in order to reduce the size of regular repayments. Triodos Bank is willing to make us a longer loan on acceptable terms that would reduce our monthly payments by about £1K. There is currently a lot of uncertainty about interest rates which makes it tricky to choose between variable and fixed rate loans.

**All agreed that we should consolidate our loans and extend the period.**

**JC to consider options and recommend the most favourable terms.**

### **3.3 CIL application**

NS says that we have been invited to renew our application to the PC for a grant from CIL funds. Our initial application was for £10K towards the cost of upgrading the kitchen to make it more flexible and efficient. There is a suggestion that we might put in a separate claims for the cost of controlling the climate in the shop to avoid food waste, and for improving accessibility, particularly to the function room.

NS argues that a good and efficient kitchen is central to the pub's future, that this is the greenest of the options and the widest in terms of benefit to the community, and therefore the most likely to succeed. JD asks how the £10K figure is arrived at. NS says that the various items have been costed, assuming that we would buy refurbished rather than new, but that it would be easy to spend far more.

It is felt that the accessibility items would be easier to fund by other means.

**All agreed that we should renew just the kitchen application, but increase the claim to £12K to give us a little more headroom.**

3.4 NS mentions that Ann and James Woods have offered to donate £500 towards the cost of creating an accessible toilet. This is very much appreciated.

### **Operations: food**

4.1 [Jason has recently resigned as chef at the Oak and we need to decide how to reinvent our food offering in such a way as to conform to our vision of the sort of pub we want while achieving sustainable margins. Neither pub nor café has been realising its potential in terms of food sales.]

4.2 SD believes that in future we need to have more of a say over the running of the kitchen and the menus. One of the reasons for the lack of profitability has been very poor value purchasing. SD offers to oversee a complete reset, with more input on the café from Carolyn and Jo.

4.3 Finding a like-for-like replacement chef and franchising the kitchen out as an independent business would both be possible, but neither seems an attractive option. SD proposes separating out the café and pub and operating as follows.

4.4 Café opens Monday to Saturday from 11 to 2; three people would work two days a week each plus one in three Saturdays, paid £10/hour to work from 10:30 till 2:30, cooking to order for £10/hour.

4.5 In the pub, Wednesday and Thursday, currently quiet nights for food, would become more snack-based. This should be manageable with existing staffing. Friday and Saturday we would offer proper food, and Sundays would be a traditional roast, all with much better stock management and menus responsive to popular demand. We would need to find a capable cook/s to work 6 hours on Friday/Saturday and 8 hours on Sunday. We also need to evolve a more efficient way of sharing suppliers and stock between shop and kitchen.

4.6 All are agreed that this is a realistic way forward, though JC points out that we need to do significantly more trade in the café to make the proposal profitable. JD suggests that we need to improve our publicity to encourage people to come back to the Oak once the new regime is in place. JC asks for ideas for increasing footfall in the café by offering alternative reasons for visiting.

### **Spending control**

5.1 JC suggests controlling overspends in both shop and pub by putting a cap on weekly spending determined by the previous week's revenue. This would have to be qualified by circumstances, but it would be one way of addressing a major problem. MB proposes further discussions on this with GG and the managers.

### **Annual Members Meeting**

6.1 NS: Graham Gleed has said that he will be stepping down from the MC at the coming AMM. We have two nominations for election: JC, who was previously co-opted and Martin Keswick. This means that the overall number on the MC would remain the same. NS will circulate the nomination forms to Members with a view to confirming the election of the nominees with a show of hands at the AMM.

6.2 JC points out that several people have been on the MC since the beginning, and that the introduction of fresh blood is to be encouraged. It is also desirable to be able to spread around the manifold responsibilities of managing HOTV. MB points out that it is possible to include co-opted members with particular skills.

## **Other**

- 7.1 NS proposes that the following be minuted: The HOTV management committee is extremely grateful to Rob and Liz Hembrow for the long-term loan of their pool table. We understand that we may retain it for as long as HOTV has a use for it, but ultimate ownership is retained by the Hembrows. [All agreed.](#)
- 7.2 NS proposes that we thank Sue Hembrow and Trevor Hooper for organising and carrying out the clearance of junk from the yard. [All agreed.](#)

*Meeting closes at 9:38 pm*

[The Annual Members' Meeting is \[later\] confirmed for Wednesday 28th September, in the function room of the Royal Oak.](#)

[The next MC meeting is provisionally agreed for 4th October.](#)