

HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes

The Village Hall, Monday 28 November 2022, 6:00pm

Present: Mike Blair (chair), Jon Cochrane, Simon Dauncey, John Davison, Paul Fielding, Martin Keswick, Nick Sloan, Ann Woods

Preliminaries

- 1.1 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed to be accurate.

Matters arising

- 2.1 PF asks whether there has been any move on MB's suggestion that we should receive a progress report from managers before each MC meeting. It is agreed that brief written reports would be valuable and within the agreed job descriptions.

MB to discuss with managers.

Financial

- 3.1 JC has succeeded in having capital repayments on two of our three loans paused, for a year in one case and six months in the other, with the option of subsequent reviews. This is saving us £1,550 a month for the duration. Discussions continue with Triodos, the third lender.
- 3.2 JC: We need to increase our gross margins in from 6 to 10 months, to the stage where we can afford to resume capital repayments. There is an encouraging trend towards improving shop margins but despite some good evenings the pub continues to disappoint. In particular we need more pub special events to drive sales, and more effective publicity.

Operations

- 4.1 There is general concern that not enough events are planned for the Christmas period and New Year, which is traditionally the busiest and most profitable period. **SD and MK to meet Phil this week to explore how to make the most of the Christmas period.**
- 4.2 **Pub food**—SD has produced some illustrative numbers to show the potential outcomes of doing pub (and café) food over three and five days, using a paid cook for 5 hours per food day with volunteer support. These demonstrate that 5 days is currently impractical. The numbers assume an average of 24 covers per Friday/Saturday/Sunday lunchtime. There is some scepticism from JC and AW as to whether 24 is a realistic assumption, though it very much depends on getting the offering right, promoting it and building a good reputation.
- 4.3 JC suggests that we need to clarify the assumptions on price, number of covers etc, and run the calculations again to show how the outcomes change as the figures vary. Further questions include comparison with prices of local competition, seasonal variations, purchase management, margins and likely menus. JC's imperative is to not run out of cash, while the general understanding is that the pub cannot thrive until it has a tempting food offering. **MK to work with SD to provide expanded and updated figures. The MC to meet on 6 December specifically to reconsider this.**
- 4.4 MK asks why we cannot offer the same hot snacks in the café that are currently available in the pub. **JD and MB to discuss this with shop managers.**

- 4.5 **Cost reductions**—JD has been working with Jo to eliminate dead stock and rationalise purchasing. The area manager of Bookers is coming out to assess the potential for streamlining ordering and delivering in order to reduce manager time spent on this.
- 4.6 JC is seriously concerned that we will run out of cash unless we can reduce our wages bill. Part of our strategy for ensuring the survival of the business is to transition to a reduction in paid shop hours made possible by streamlined ordering and much better use of volunteers. This is in line with our original business plan.
- 4.7 MB and PF have been continuing trials with moving stock onto the EPOS system for listing, ordering and booking in. Once this work is complete it should enable us to save time on purchasing, improve stock control and give us a much clearer picture of what sells well and what to keep in stock.
- 4.8 **Volunteers**—JD says that we have 18 potential new or returning volunteers, of whom 3 are already training in the shop. AW is helping with rotas and support. SD stresses the importance of matching volunteers to the tasks they feel comfortable with. Our volunteers are precious to HOTV and need to be nurtured. An event is planned for the evening of 19 December as a thank you to all volunteers, with mulled wine, mince pies and a free raffle.
- 4.9 **Accommodation**—JD says that MK has generously extended the safety balcony outside the flat, and that Dave Dyer is planning to start work on their bathroom next week.

HOTV admin

- 5.1 JC is gradually taking over from Graham the task of making payments on behalf of HOTV as Graham transfers the necessary information to him.
- 5.2 MB suggests that we need to improve our processes for interacting with managers and tenants. JC points out that there is a wealth of advice on the Plunkett website and offers to circulate a link to this. Much of the advice is obvious but nonetheless very relevant.
- 5.3 MB is handling our Payment Card Industry Compliance review.
- 5.4 MB says that Tim Slattery has suggested a festive update to Members. NS offers to supply MB with a festive heading to his regular update.

Other

- 6.1 Graham has applied for a grant [from Power to Change]. Olivia and Graham are considering an application for a Lottery grant and another from Aviva that involves match-funding.
- 6.2 MB has been invited to register support for the current Village Plan on behalf of HOTV. With the proviso that we sign as one organisation rather than three independent entities, all are agreed that we should confirm our support.

Meeting closes at 8:17 pm

[The next MC meeting, solely to decide on the food offering, will be at 6pm on Tuesday 6 December in the Village Hall.](#)