

HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes | Draft

The Village Hall, Tuesday 6 February 2023, 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 17 January meetings were agreed to be accurate.

Financial

- 2.1 JC: The cash position has improved, which is welcome, though largely due to the pause on loan repayments. The pub is paying for itself, though with low margins due to the continued absence of a food offering and little evidence of any attempt to attract more custom via events etc. The pub has failed to reach its target for 5 out of the last 6 weeks. It is suggested that events such as showing rugby matches should be advertised via posters and blackboard rather than relying only on Facebook.
- 2.2 JC: Shop margins are disappointing, mostly because people are generally spending less, which is no surprise in the current financial climate.
- 2.3 JC: Dave Evans has asked about the ultimate cost of delaying loan repayments. JC estimates this at around £9K. DE has maintained that we should have another share issue to pay off loans. JC believes that this would be the wrong thing to do, whereas improving our trading margins is crucial. Having done this we could then look at refinancing with lower interest rates.
- 2.4 JC suggests that in the face of high food inflation we may need to raise drinks prices again. SD feels that it would not take much to turn customers away. MK and JD think that there is scope for minor rises.

SD to carry out a review of prices in the light of recent increases.

Shop operations

- 3.1 MB reports a meeting with the shop managers in which it was agreed to limit their hours, though there may be difficulties in maintaining shop opening times with volunteers. The plan is to staff the shop only with volunteers on Mondays. There remain issues to be decided about how shop opening and closing are to be handled when managers are unavailable, and whether and how we need to trim opening hours. These decisions should be informed by a closer understanding of trade at different times of day. **MB AW and JD to meet Jo and Carolyn to finalise the paid hours that they will need to work, as already outlined by them, along with the volunteers hours worked in a week, followed by another meeting to confirm agreement and implementation.**
- 3.2 JD says that online ordering with Bookers is now in place, and regular weekly deliveries should start from this Thursday. The EPOS booking-in process needs to be finalised by then. If collections from Bookers are required, these will henceforth be done by volunteers.
- 3.3 MB: For the benefit of all, we need to keep a clearer log of staff holidays. Managers will be asked to complete a form when claiming holiday time off, Phil to SD and the shop managers to AW. These forms will provide an ongoing record for all parties.

Volunteers

- 4.1 AW has had a meeting with Jo, Carolyn and Marilyn Clarke to reorganise 3Rings so that volunteers can book themselves in for the necessary time slots from now on. Volunteer training is ongoing and we have several excellent new volunteers. Appreciative thanks as always to those who give their time to help.

Members' meeting

- 5.1 MB: The next Members' Meeting will take place as planned on 13 February. In answer to a question from NS, JC says that he will provide a digital copy of last year's accounts to any Member who requests it before the next meeting. Further information will be provided at the meeting, and any questions will be answered.

Pub: how to make it pay?

- 6.1 MB: If we are unable to improve the performance of the pub, should we have a plan B, such as renting out the space or enlarging the café? NS says that we know that the answer to making the pub profitable is to have a good food offering, and that while this has proved difficult it should remain our priority. Others concur both as to the necessity and difficulty. MB and SD have not received any useful leads from their approaches to catering colleges but SD has spoken to one person who has expressed an interest in the cook job. MK asks how widely known it is in the local area that we are seeking a cook or cooks. JD is about to circulate flyers about volunteering and it is agreed that we should extend these to include an ad for cooks.

Woodburners

- 7.1 JD reports that there have been questions about the compliance of the pub woodburners. The woodburners were installed to HETAS specifications by Dave Dyer. MK knows a HETAS-certified fitter who can confirm this and provide a retrospective certificate this week.

Matters arising

- 8.1 MK has resolved all outstanding issues concerning the flat.
- 8.2 Jo Bown has pointed out that she is the nominal license-holder and needs to formally authorise all those who sell alcohol. It is agreed that in the interests of resilience we should have an additional license holder.
SD agrees to re-establish his qualification as a license holder.
- 8.3 JD has inspected the car park wall with PF and Trevor Hooper. There is a lean in the corner over the bank which is not currently dangerous but needs attention. Trevor will price up a repair. JD has also found someone who could fix the faulty oven in the kitchen. **JD to proceed with both repairs.**
- 8.4 JC raises the question of whether we should be charging VAT on shop food that is heated. This would not apply if customers could put their own food in the microwave. He suggests that the microwave be moved into the café for the use of customers.

Meeting closes at 8:11 pm

There will be a Members' meeting on Monday 13 February, at 7pm in the Royal Oak. The next MC meeting will be on Tuesday 28 February, at 6pm in the Village Hall.