

## **HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes**

The Royal Oak, Tuesday 15 May 2023, 6:00pm

Present: Mike Blair (chair), Simon Dauncey, Paul Fielding, Graham Gleed, Martin Keswick, Nick Sloan, Ann Woods. Apologies from John Davison.

### **Preliminaries**

- 1.1 The minutes of the 25 April meeting were agreed to be accurate.
- 2.1 MB proposes thanks to Jenna, Phil and Simon for all the work they have put into the successful relaunch of food at the Royal Oak. SD adds that thanks are also due to Richard Veck and MB for their invaluable help in the kitchen.
- 2.2 SD alludes to an issue with the limited supply of hot water for washing up. It is agreed that we need to find a solution to this in the medium term.

### **Matters arising**

- 3.1 MB to provide an HOTV report for the Annual Parish Meeting.
- 3.2 SD to arrange payment of an annual fee to the PRS to cover us for broadcast and streamed music played in the pub.

### **Finances**

- 4.1 GG reports that we have received a very welcome £4K share purchase to be put towards reducing our loans. GG to discuss with SCF, with the intention of paying into our account with them.
- 4.2 GG has completed a P&L and cashflow forecast up to 2024. This relies on the food offering to bring us into profitability. PF asks how many covers a week are assumed. The approximate figure is 75 per week, over five days, though the figures are based on spend rather than on the number of covers. The first week of food exceeded budget assumptions.
- 4.3 The forecast models have proved to be accurate over the last two months, but will be continuously monitored in the light of actual performance. Cash is holding up well. The May figures will be hit by a £4.6k VAT payment, but that should be the last negative month this year.
- 4.4 NS raises the question of whether we need to upgrade our hotvssg.org email accounts since the accounts@hotvssg.org account is nearly full. **NS to assess the options and make a recommendation.**

### **Staff meeting feedback**

- 5.1 MK reports back on matters discussed at a staff meeting on 4 May. One outstanding issue is still whether or not to open a separate Bookers account for the shop, which JD is convinced would be advantageous. **MB and MK to meet to discuss this with JD.**
- 5.2 PF: Bookers have been unable to help us streamline our EPOS system since ours is run by PayPoint and they use a different one. Our contract with PP makes it difficult to switch systems quickly, and in any case we need features such as Key Card which the Bookers' system does not provide.
- 5.3 NS asks whether card payments incur a minimum fee per transaction as opposed to a straight percentage on the transaction. GG says no, there is only a percentage on the

amount per transaction, so no reason to limit low card payments and no fee on failed transactions.

- 5.4 PF refers to an email from Carolyn suggesting that some shop lines may be over-priced. It is agreed that this is probably the case and needs consideration.

### **Grants and fund-raising**

- 6.1 NS: our application to Valencia for a grant towards more efficient kitchen equipment is progressing. They will be sending out an inspector in mid-June and we should know by the end of June whether we have been successful. This is part 1 of a two-part application, the second part of which, to cover Phase 3, will have to be submitted before the end of July. It will therefore be necessary to make decisions about Phase 3 before the end of June in order to provide enough time to obtain quotes.

**NS to circulate a proposal for a dedicated meeting and public consultation.**

### **Volunteers**

- 7.1 AW says that we are struggling to fill rotas from time to time, both for the shop and the pub. Several people have declared themselves willing to do the occasional shift but are understandably reluctant to make a regular commitment, whereas from the managers' point of view it is essential that help is available whenever it is needed, especially when the pub is serving food and pot-washing in the kitchen is vital.
- 7.2 GG asks if young people could be paid to contribute. SD says yes, and that this was to some extent budgeted for. Several young people have expressed an interest and it is agreed that we should look at recruiting young pot-washers for £8/hour. AW suggests that Jenna is given the details of those who have offered occasional volunteer help so that they could be contacted in an emergency.

### **Pub food**

- 8.1 MB says that the feedback from the first week of food at the pub was that it was fantastic. One strange and unexplained blip was the discovery on Friday 12th that the baskets were missing from the chip fryer. These were known to be present two weeks earlier. If anyone has any information as to their whereabouts, please let us know.
- PF to source replacements.**
- 8.2 SD says that the food is a collaborative process between Jenna and Phil, using local produce where possible. NS asks if Jenna would be open to offers of garden produce. SD says yes within reason, though some items, such as eggs, need to be certified.
- 8.3 PF observes that the initial menus had no indication of which dishes are gluten-free although quite a number of them are. **SD to ensure that this is noted.**
- 8.4 MK asks about margins for the food offering. GG says that we would be lucky to break even for the first week or two because of having to restock the kitchen, but this will be monitored and reported as we go on, including the cost of additional paid staff.
- 8.6 PF asks what bookings for the pub are looking like. SD says not great. NS asks if the time has come to tell people that booking is not essential. SD will play this by ear as the week progresses.

### **Hygiene**

- 9.1 MB reminds us that several people have elected to attend hygiene courses. We will probably need to book some more and sign people up. **MB to pursue this.**

- 9.2 MB had received and circulated an anonymous email complaining about the cleanliness of the pub and toilets. It was agreed that while some of the comments were valid, we would prefer if these were not made anonymously. SD and AW said that Jenny and Ron Priddle had recently done a fantastic job cleaning the pub and Ladies. They are planning to do this every Tuesday. This is very much appreciated and makes it easier to keep things in order the rest of the week. It is agreed that while there may still be room for improvement, several volunteers should enable us to maintain a good standard of hygiene from now on.

### **Communication**

- 10.1 MB refers to the newsletters that have recently been produced by MK (MailChimp) and Graham Lofting (A4 sheet). There is some confusion about who is expected to do what, but agreement that it is important to communicate regular news about upcoming events etc. MB also mentions the opportunity to issue updates for Stoke News and the Athelney Magazine. GG points out that Stoke News goes to every household in the village and is an important channel especially to those who do not do email. NS thinks the revival of pub food is the main news, including the message that while booking is recommended it may no longer be essential.

### **Other**

- 11.1 AW had been asked by a lady skittler if we could replace the pitch-board. We are aware that the alley needs to be upgraded and this will be undertaken in consultation with skittlers once we are clearer about Phase 3.
- 11.2 SD suggests that it is made clear to paid staff that all annual holidays need to be taken in the year they become available and cannot be carried over or paid retrospectively. It is agreed that this is normal practice. AW to keep track of holiday data.

*Meeting closes at 7:51*

[The next MC meeting will be on Tuesday May 30th at 6pm in the Royal Oak.](#)