

HOTV Management Committee meeting minutes

The Royal Oak, Tuesday 30 May 2023, 6:00pm

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

Preliminaries

- 1.1 The minutes of the 15 May meeting were agreed to be accurate.

Actions from last meeting

- 2.1 SD has passed details of the PRS subscription to Sally Taylor for payment.
NS has arranged for hotvssg.org email accounts to auto-renew.

Finances

- 3.1 The shop is trading well in terms of margin. Surprisingly, wet sales in the pub have declined slightly since we started food but the food sales are very good despite the extra start-up costs.
- 3.2 GG says that if MC meetings were scheduled slightly later, they would have access to more up-to-date trading figures. This will be taken into account when setting future meeting dates. Analysis of GM on food sales will follow when the figures are available.

Pub operations

- 4.1 MK says that the food offering is great and has been very well received, but it is agreed that the range of dishes on offer needs to be refreshed and/or extended. This will also provide a good opportunity for ongoing promotion. SD says this is already planned.
- 4.2 SD: Combining food with Thursday music nights is slightly problematical and needs thinking through. There are plans to combine sharing plates (and possibly pizzas) with quiz nights.
- 4.3 SD says that Jenna is working longer hours than budgeted for. This is partly due to time spent setting things up in an unfamiliar kitchen, but any help offered with prepping will help and be gratefully received.
- 4.4 MK asks when drinks prices were last assessed, being currently much cheaper than average. **SD to look into this, both in terms of purchase prices and local competition.**
- 4.5 GG refers to an email from Sally reminding us that under-16s are not supposed to work in a commercial kitchen or after 7pm, and that any payments for casual labour need to go through the books. It is acknowledged that in order to be compliant we will henceforth limit pot-washing to over-16s, and require invoices for casual work.
- 4.6 MK: Phil has repeated that there is insufficient hot water for the washing-up sinks. It is generally agreed that if used carefully there is an adequate supply but not enough to pass a severe test by an environmental health officer. Adrian Grinter has recommended a gas combi-boiler but we are trying to eliminate the use of gas. NS is reluctant to make expensive changes before decisions have been made about Phase 3. **MK to duplicate the existing system.**
- 4.7 MK relays a request for a lockable noticeboard outside the bar to show opening times, menu and details of upcoming events. **Agreed by majority.**

4.8 MK relays a further request for a zoned speaker system for playing music to upper and lower bars. GG is concerned about large capital payments until our trading balance is more positive. It is decided to see what cheaper options might be available.

MK to investigate.

4.9 MK says that Phil would like to make the pool table available again in the function room but experience has shown that this is impractical without some supervision. A simple CCTV camera system is proposed so that an eye can be kept on the function room from behind the bar. MK thinks this could be managed quite cheaply.

Agreed in principle pending costing.

Volunteers

5.1 AW says that Simon Weir, who has recently been an active volunteer, has suffered an injury to his hand. We thank him for his good work and wish him a speedy recovery.

5.2 AW has been discussing with Jo a readjustment of hours necessary to keep the shop staffed once Carolyn leaves. The proposal is to aim for half-and-half Jo/volunteers, or 33 hours each per week. As ever, more volunteers would be very welcome.

Shop operations

6.1 GG raises the issue of what changes need to be made in the wake of Carolyn stepping down as discussed in staff meetings (5.2). MB says that we cannot afford to be dependent on a single member of staff. GG asks whether we need to change the shop manager job description, and if so whether his recent draft should be adopted? NS feels that it needs further consideration and offers to work on it prior to a decision on how to implement any changes.

6.2 MK asks if we should be considering taking on a new assistant manager to replace Carolyn. NS feels that we have a good opportunity to see if we can rise to the challenge of running the shop with more volunteers. If this proves too difficult we could consider taking someone on.

6.3 GG proposes that we switch forthwith to separate shop/pub accounts with Bookers, paying the £35 weekly delivery charge when necessary. **All agreed.**

6.4 AW reports the intention to switch to milk bought from Bookers and delivered twice (or more) per week from Müller.

6.5 GG suggests that we reduce the maximum mark-up on fruit and veg to 15%. We should also be encouraging Jo to look for an alternative supplier with a better balance of quality and price, possibly via Bookers.

6.6 GG says that spend per customer has been remarkably consistent while footfall has been more variable. Increasing footfall should be the priority in increasing profit.

6.7 MB asks if we want to stock vapes. Despite some minor concerns it is felt that we should test the market with a Bookers trial pack. **Agreed.**

Fundraising

7.1 NS mentions the car boot sale in aid of HOTV being organised by Tom and Hazel Stobie on 17 June.

Phase 3

8.1 NS: Jason Keswick and Tom Hartley have produced a radical alternative scheme for Phase 3. An MC meeting is agreed (June 13) to assess the two schemes, following which they will be made available to the Members for comments. MK suggests that

the choice involves a decision on what vision we have of the future of the Royal Oak: a local pub with food vs a destination food venue.

Communication

- 9.1 AW says that Jeannie Kenefick has offered to take over Carolyn's role in handling social media and website publicity for the shop, using information supplied by Jo.
- 9.2 MB asks if she should be doing the same for Phil, but SD thinks that it is simpler for Phil to continue with this himself, though it is thought that there should be pictures of food on Facebook to increase the allure of the pub.
- 9.3 MB thinks our approach to communication may be too scattered and uncoordinated: newsletters in two different formats, separate websites for shop, pub and HOTV and different people handling different social media for each. After some discussion it is agreed that there is a place for a single page A4 newsletter for display in the Oak, and that there may be benefit in combining the websites.
MK to ask Graham Lofting if he'd like to continue distilling the monthly email newsletter to A4. SD to look at ways of combining the pub and shop websites without losing the existing domain names. NS to ask Jeannie Kenefick if she wants to take on regular online publicity for the shop.
- 9.4 SD says that the royaloakssg.co.uk website can be (and is being) used for submitting pub bookings. He plans to hand over administration of the pub website to Phil.

Meeting closes at 8:20

There will be an MC meeting dedicated to discussion of Phase 3 at 6pm on Tuesday June 13th at the Royal Oak. The next regular MC meeting will be on 4th July.