

Minutes of meeting held on 28th January 2015 (postponed from 21st) at pavilion at 7.30pm

Present: Natalie Albrow, John Borrill, Shirley Colenutt, Dave and Julie Howie, Alan and Elaine Johnson, Cath and Dave(8.50) Jones, Victoria Mc Arthur, Andrew Roebuck(8.15), Pete Rushton, Roger Steel, and Joan Woodroffe.

Apologies for absence were received from Gina Ayres and Mr and Mrs Fly (whose absence was noted and appreciated.)

Matters arising;

Stockroom has been sorted and tidied by JW and CJ during a long Sunday afternoon session- thankfully several cups of tea and slices of cake kept them going during the marathon, so cafe takings were up that day!

Hot water pipe has been laid to café sink but is not yet connected as new double sink has only just been delivered. Thanks to RS and his conscripted workforce, AJ and EJ.

CJ has received all documentation regarding membership from JF.

Dave and Julie Howie were welcomed to meeting.

Finance

JB gave vote of thanks to all PO staff, but particularly 3 managers, who earned a magnificent £1483.11 in commission from POL between 27/11 and 25/12. It had been a very busy time but all had gone well and customers seemed very happy with service provided. Next year, we will have more idea of quantities of stock needed over Christmas period, which will help in planning.

JB presented bank balances, which are again encouraging as he has squirrelled away more funds into a/c used for paying wages.

Draft accounts have been received from accountants and show that at year end (31/08/14) after less than 6 months' trading, our turnover was £103k+. VM pointed out that this is largely the same as our predictions so gross profit of 21.9% is pleasing, particularly as we know that things have improved since that date. Some recommendations for future practice will be discussed by business sub-committee and actioned when feasible.

Sage entries are almost up-to-date now, thanks to magnificent sterling work by PR. After more Sage training, he is now becoming more familiar with procedures and things should improve further as errors will be noticed much more quickly and sorted under new systems.

Thanks to all who have worked so hard to cover matters financial, especially since JB has had to lessen workload to look after Heather (who we are pleased to report is doing well after her major op!)

Retail Sales etc

NA brought along some sample sweets to try as there have been problems with customer satisfaction since we reluctantly had to change suppliers because of lack of VAT registration. These were passed round and straw poll taken but all agreed that sweets aren't what they used to be - for a start, Koff Kandy was spelt properly when CJ and Methuselah were young (AJ tried to blame deterioration in taste buds due to Anno Domini but not all testers have that excuse so it was not completely accepted!) JB will contact original supplier to see if he is now registered. It would probably be worthwhile to get original sweets but charge higher price to cover 20%VAT as they were very popular with customers. AJ will give names of other suppliers who will bring in display stands for their wares. It was agreed that current display of piles of bags on shelf is not best way to improve sales.

Last of Ruth's cakes are now on display so NA is arranging with Hingham for further supplies to be trialled. This will be much easier to administer orders, which can be updated daily so there should never be any wastage.

Barnards' will be providing specialist cheese to us soon, starting with blue variety.

AGM Preparation

RS has circulated sample AGM agenda which was agreed as satisfactory. PR explained procedures that need to be followed according to Model Rules.

Sample poster was approved and will be displayed immediately in shop and elsewhere. Personal invitations will be issued to all shareholders by CJ.

Finer details of conduct of meeting and content of reports will be discussed by sub-committee, then agreed at next management meeting on Feb 11th.

Powerpoint presentation will include highlights of what has gone on in last year and ideas for future happenings (new equipment in VH will be used). Ideas to RS, please. Operational equipment training can be given by DJ

Grants (see report from VM)

Basically as in report, with some slight advancement.

Volunteers (see report)

Call to arms has been successful, with some expired volunteers coming forward again and three new names put forward. Thanks to PR for collecting new DBS forms from Momentum (identical but new number at top!) Those issued last February should all now be automatically renewed if they were registered online at the time.

Publicity (see report)

Thanks again to SC for sterling work with local publications.

Newsletter still planned for early February delivery. We have one volunteer to help with deliveries- perhaps we could ask in n/l for more who might be willing to put them through doors especially in surrounding villages?

Congratulations for half page spread about 'Top of the Shops' i.e. RCS, complete with photo of our Company Secretary, a volunteer and lots of comments from a Victoria McArthur, 44, mother of 4 (*Anyone who knows who she is, please spill beans as she looks like a 'good sort' and we could do with someone like her around!!*) Our fame has spread to Daily Mirror readers all over globe, including Essex.

Website and IT (see report from ARo)

ARo started trying to input tobacco products onto EPOS system but found that even though he was only trying to enter a comparatively small, finite product area, it was far more complex than he had anticipated. His conclusion was that it could ONLY be done during closing hours. He described what he saw as three possible options to overcome this:

1. Do nothing and carry on as at present
2. Have concerted effort to get all stock on system, shelf by shelf, and use system as it is designed
3. Get another, less complex system (as recommended by man running convenience store in Attleborough) and try and sell current system back to ECR.

After some discussion, it was agreed to try using a volunteer (SC?) in back office entering PLUs weekly, with stock being entered gradually, then kept up to date regularly as orders come in. JB and ARo will arrange and co-ordinate first session on Sunday 1st Feb at 1.30 with volunteers (JW, DH, JH NA, SC and CJ as starters) Situation will be monitored closely.

(Meeting suspended at 8.41 to sing 'Happy Birthday' to our illustrious half centenarian Company Secretary and to eat delicious cake provided by Vice Chairperson. After complaint by CJ, decorative Smarties were re-distributed more fairly and everyone was happy to watch candles being blown out!)

JB has received email from ECR asking us to renew maintenance contract on EPOS system at cost of £800. He will liaise with them as we do not feel we have had sufficient support to merit that cost over last year.

(Another pause to investigate strange bright light outside that could have been Masked Intruder stealing Birthday Boy's bike. It was found to be equally suspicious DJ arriving after another meeting on his 50 year old bike sporting new lights provided by Father Christmas and wearing a definitely suspect piece of headgear!)

Community IT training is going ahead on Wed lunchtimes but is being impeded by lack of access to systems due to no knowledge of passwords onto PCs. Investigations will continue about what passwords are, before ARo has to bypass and set up system again which would be very time-consuming and un-necessary with correct passwords. All work setting up will need to be done out-of-hours to avoid problems.

No invoices being received by JB from Zen to be put onto Sage - RS will forward them to JB and PR.

Anti-virus is due for renewal - ARo given mandate to get AVG system that is free, as long as it is secure.

Broadband speed still poor - ARo could get it improved by expert but cannot do so until we have password access to router. Longterm solution is campaign to get faster Broadband in village by rallying all villagers to support. Next project!

Staff and Training

Nothing specific to report - all volunteer training is ongoing as always.

Repairs, maintenance and renewals

Exterior light has been installed by electrician. Light sensor is still on order so at moment is operating on time switch which is not always working correctly but is being investigated. There have been complaints from several neighbours opposite that light is very bright and intrusive in their homes. PR will consult local people who play with metal to construct a shield that will deflect light to shine just on forecourt, not across Street. This should solve problem.

PO sign has been delivered by POL but does not fit on front of shop easily due to dimensions! Agreed to store it out of way (NB not in tidy stockroom!) for time being.

CJ requested that a couple of coat hooks are installed in café area near door for customers' (PR please note correct use of apostrophe!)coats. RS to action when he finds time.

PR has looked at 2 secondhand chillers on sale at Bunnings at £50 each. It was agreed after discussion to buy them with view to replacing dodgy stockroom chiller, after PR has arranged for Mrs Mop to sanitise them to hospital surgical standards.

Correspondence

RS has received many positive congratulatory communications about Daily Mirror article so will also forward PCF magazine article to Great and Good and local politicians.

JB reported that future PO remuneration advice will be done online so passed relevant paperwork to Postmaster to complete with necessary information.

RS has been in communication with John Dallimore of PO fame with regard to offering ALL services provided by EJ under old system.

AOB

Many thanks to Johnsons for providing refreshments, to VM for cake, and to JW and JH for making drinks. All are much appreciated.

Next meeting arranged for 11th February 2015 in Pavilion.

Meeting closed at 10.00pm