

Minutes of meeting held on 8th April 2015 at pavilion at 7.30pm

Present: John Borrill (8.30) Shirley Colenutt, Alan and Elaine Johnson, Cath Jones, Malcolm Robertshaw, Pete Rushton, Roger Steel, Jan Swaddling (7.55) and Joan Woodroffe.

Apologies for absence were received from Natalie Albrow, Robert Gray and Victoria McArthur

Minutes of last meeting were signed as correct

Matters arising;

PR and CJ have tackled cleaning of bowels of big chiller and upright freezer, christening new 'Henry' vacuum cleaner in the process and this has successfully lowered the temperatures to required levels.

PR is producing dossier of all documentation for new committee members' information and delight. It is almost complete and he is hiring a lorry to deliver as they are far too heavy for a bike or even a Golf.

Easter Bunny Walk arranged by RS had been successful with many young participants who completed about 3 miles finding clues to win small prize. Event was enjoyed by all who participated and lessons learnt for next time.

Finance

JB gave bank balances, which were slightly lower but explained that holiday pay had been paid out to managers.

Thanks to hard work by JB, VM and our newly-trained-but-still-learning-the-ropes "How hard can it be?" PR (with some expert advice from KO) the reconciliation has been done up to 31.03.15 and cash discrepancy averages just £10 per month over last 7 months, which is fantastic achievement and a big improvement on previous months. This is due to stringent systems being put into place and a lot of work being done to ensure there are fewer mistakes being made at the till face. Well done to all!! A magnificent achievement! Even KO was impressed and JB had a happy face (short-lived, but appreciated while it lasted!)

JB has done survey and found an average of 152 customers come into shop daily and the average spend is £4.66.

JB explained legislation regarding pension options for staff. Staging date is August 2017 when full-time staff will be required to have workplace pension scheme in place. From then, RCS will have to pay equivalent of 1% into a scheme, rising incrementally to 3% over some months, with staff contribution being 4%. Part-time staff have the option to opt into the scheme if they wish. The scheme can be set up before staging date if desired. It was agreed, after discussion, to find out more information as to what is available before a final decision is made. RS will speak unofficially to his contact at Lovewell Blake who deals with pensions.

Archiving boxes have been bought and all paperwork now needs to be put together for year end 31/08/14 and stored in secure place. After more discussion, it was agreed that this would be off premises and that JB and RS would have key to access archives at any time.

PR showed impressive graph of takings since Sept '14, which shows a steady upward trend, plateauing at times but still upward. There is no obvious reason for this, apart from tighter systems being in place.

Stock level recording is still a huge issue as EPOS system is still not being used enough to keep stock levels accurate. This will require much discussion and will take place at a discrete meeting as so many issues are involved.

JB brought up wastage (smile now gone!) as he has noticed that no profit is being made on 25% of bakery products due to wastage. Much of this appears to be speciality bread and other products many of which are not sold at full price and have to either be reduced or thrown out. Possible solutions were discussed e.g. pre-ordering (and pre-paying?) of speciality items to avoid wastage, with just a small number for general purchase. JS will discuss issues with managers.

JB questioned how wasted items were disposed of and showed concern that many were being taken from shop for compost, feeding chickens etc and that this was hard to differentiate from saleable items being removed without payment. It was agreed that as long as wastage was recorded correctly and that it was monitored, it was better that something useful was done with wasted products rather than them just being put in landfill.

JB proposed and it was agreed by all, that, as volunteers do such a sterling job and often spend many hours at a time in shop on a voluntary basis, we should not charge for tea or instant coffee for volunteers whilst on duty. RS raised question of possible tax implications regarding 'perks' so eventually it was agreed to take some money from donations to cover the costs. Coffee from the machine would not be provided free as this would be too costly and would adversely affect profits from cafe.

Retail Sales etc

Sale of tobacco products rules changed on April 6th and NA has put new procedures into place already. Items e.g. lighters, matches, filters, papers etc have been removed from the lockable cabinet and placed on shelf next to it. RS will fit a glass screen to prevent them from falling off front of shelf. A price list of products has been produced for showing customers, as required by new legislation and all tobacco has been put in alphabetical order in cabinet by CJ (NB John Player Specials have been put under 'P').

More cake samples were tasted, this time from Merv's bakery in Attleborough. All agreed that they are not what we need in cafe, being too sweet and more suited to children than our grown up clientèle. JB has produced a sheet showing profit margins that are necessary on cakes which was distributed. MR has done an analysis following cake testing last meeting but results were inconclusive with a range of results with huge variation! RS has another contact in Attleborough which is being explored and he is optimistic that this could be nearest to replicating Ruth's wonderful baking! He has arranged a meeting on Monday 13th at 9.30 with lady in question- all welcome to be present. PR has also got another lead in Watton which will be followed up if necessary.

Wine section content was discussed as samples of red and white wine from Laithwaites were tested. It was agreed that there is a glut of rosé wine on shelves which is disproportionate to what customers want. Various ideas were discussed about promoting wine sales which JS will discuss with managers. AJ is willing to act as taster/advisor on wine sales.

Wastage figures are still too high (£78.14 in February and £59.62 in March). Products past sell by date should be reduced to cost price whenever possible so that loss is not made. Over-stocking on some products should be avoided. JS will discuss ways of promoting and displaying goods with managers, as well as prices charged for reduced products which seem to fluctuate considerably from day-to-day.

Some individual regular and special bread orders are still not always being put by which is annoying some customers. JS will investigate and find ways to avoid this with managers.

JS suggested weekly report being done by managers showing what has happened to either enhance sales or detract from them so that lessons can be learned next time round, e.g. on days like Barbara's Day, cafe sales are likely to be much lower.

Newspaper sales are irregular and some days too many are being returned which upsets figures. A surplus of EDPs has been sent back following an unsolicited bigger delivery this week, not due to a boxout (see JW for explanation!). This will be investigated by JS and managers.

Staff issues

Outstanding holiday pay has been paid to managers.

JS will give out appraisal forms to all managers tomorrow, having distributed copies to committee and having had a meeting with RS and DJ. These will be completed and returned by girls by given date and appraisal meetings will be arranged for w/c 27/04/15 during working hours. All the thinking behind the process was explained by JS.

Further PO-trained staff are still being sought for cover during sickness and holidays as CJ and PR are being stretched to limit at moment. JS, JW and Sarah Trota (another volunteer) have expressed a willingness to do PO basic training so RS will find availability of courses. This will help with counter dealings but does not cover back office training, which is where help is most needed.

Grants

BL application has had to be modified at last minute due to inaccurate advice previously given by their representative to VM. HUGE thanks to Vix for spending hours before her holiday getting necessary adjustments made and to Sue Steel and PR for their invaluable help in getting revised information back to BL in good time for panel meeting on 08/04/15. Fingers, toes and various other body parts are now crossed with bated breath as we await the imminent verdict about grant awards.

Volunteers

Next volunteer training session on April 26th (after closing) will also include information on new legislation on tobacco.

Shifts have been hard to fill during Easter holidays but thanks to some stalwarts we have managed to fill them all.

Publicity

RS will speak to RG about progress on generic flyer and also about possible production of RCS business card that can be handed out.

Website and IT

No further news

Repairs, maintenance and renewals

Broken glass in big chiller has been temporarily mended by NA. RS will look into replacement.

Hot water will be connected in café on Sunday 12th (pm) by RS.

RS asked for ideas about positioning of 2 AO publicity signs.

A and E have started re-painting side wall of shop to complete exterior re-furbishment and have also worked on oiling window frames

Kitchen area tiling is complete and looks lovely and they will start on janitorial area soon. Many many thanks to them once again for being such wonderful landlords!

Membership strategy

This needs to be revised with regard to new membership share offer. RS will distribute copies of previous documentation for information and discussion.

Correspondence

PR has had letter from Andrew Purdy asking if we would like 2 days' advice from Plunketts. It was agreed that this is not needed at present. Rs will tell H@P that he is giving advice to somebody from Warwickshire who is setting up a community shop as this may entitle us to funding.

JB has completed Staples account application.

AOB

Many thanks for refreshments - much appreciated.

RS informed meeting of his proposed holiday dates.

Next full meeting arranged for 22nd April 2015 in Pavilion at 7.30

(CJ to book pavilion)

Meeting closed at 10.26pm