

Notes of Committee Meeting on Monday 31st January 2022

We met at Becky's home for the Closed meeting attended by Becky Lawson, Bita Zand, Caroline Arnold, Francis Jakeman in person and Helen Eales on Zoom. Apologies were received from Cathy Hughes.

1. We agreed that before arranging a joint meeting between Committee and staff Francis would meet with each staff member separately to determine how well EPOS is now working and what difference this is making to their role.

Open Meeting

Committee Members were joined by Angela Morris and Helga Francis.

1. The minutes of the meeting held on 29th November were agreed and signed.
2. Helen spoke to the Management Accounts for December. She noted that we had £20.9K in the bank at the end of the month. This compares favourably with the balance we had forecast in early November of £5.6K. She put this improvement down to an increase in average gross margin from 27.5% in 2021 up to the end of October and 31.6% for November and December. Helen congratulated the staff on keeping costs down, but then told us about the effect of energy price increases. These have meant increasing our monthly direct debit from £210 to £450. Given that forecasting was inevitably difficult with so many unknowns, she said that from an accounting point of view she could not recommend adopting the proposed member discount scheme; however if the Committee decided for other reasons to go ahead there needs to be a trial period of no more than 2 months.

We then moved on to discussing whether to recommend adopting the proposed discount scheme to members or not. There was a feeling that it would be better if we could wait another month to see how trading is going in 2022. This would mean introducing the scheme at the start of April using volunteer figures for March. Others pointed out that we may not know much more by then and we owed it to members who had accepted a discount cut until the end of February to reinstate a discount scheme at the start of March using February's figures. It was recognised that either way we would be taking a significant risk and that needs to be communicated to the members at the Members, Meeting. Francis agreed to point out that we are putting our faith in the members to both volunteer to work in the shop AND spend more, once they can claim a discount. If members spend more, that will still increase our profit even with a discount.

So, it was decided by 3 votes in favour and 2 abstentions to recommend to members that we adopt the proposed scheme for a trial period from March 1st until the end of April.

3. Angela agreed to study how we can use Teams for the Members' Meeting and feed that back to the Committee. Helen agreed to produce some slides which she will use to show members how things have changed since 10th November.

4. a) The Committee congratulated the staff on their decision to continue opening the shop at 9am until the end of May. Francis then asked how we might capitalise on that by advertising as widely as possible.
b) Angela reported that a full rota was now complete to cover Kat's absence while convalescing. Helga pointed out that Steve was acting as Shop Manager on Tuesday 1st February and needed help closing the shop. Becky kindly agreed to take that on.
c) The new Covid advice is now on the board outside th shop and Angela agreed to up date the website.
5. Moving on to **Click & Collect**, Francis thanked Angela and through her, Richard, for their extensive proposal to develop Click & Collect. It pointed out the technical computer issues were relatively simple to deal with; the real challenge being rather the logistical issues around picking, storing, charging for the goods etc. While we approved of the idea of an initial trial we noted Angela's concern that prioritising Click & Collect at the moment would prevent her working on some more urgent work developing our website. So, we agreed to encourage Angela to focus on the website first.

Francis reported that Cathy has now applied to Coops UK for business strategy help through a programme they call HIVE. It would cost us about £65 if our application is accepted. There was further talk about including the sale of alcohol in our offer as well as a scheme to permit customers to buy in bulk for a suitable discount. The Committee encouraged the staff to explore these possibilities.

6. We discussed the AGM, noting that it must be before the end of June and that traditionally it was held on a Sunday. Francis said it was now urgent to have an 'in person' meeting with as much social side as possible; it being so long since members had been able to mix and chat to one another. This approach was agreed along with the idea of a Bring & Share meal. A date was agreed, namely **Sunday 12th June**.
7. There was no A.O.B. except to agree with Bita that she would be in touch with Kata to see what needs she has coming back to work after her operation.
Our February meeting to **Monday 28th February 2022**.
The venue is still to be decided.

7th Feb 2022

Francis Jakeman.