

TFC Committee meeting; Tuesday 24th October 2023
18 Shepherds Lane RG4 7JL

*Attendees closed meeting: Cathy, Helen, Caroline, Vivienne, Becky
Helga joined at 7.30pm*

7.00pm Closed Session for Committee Members

7.30pm Open Meeting

1. Apologies

- Apologies from Tayma.
- Esther has stepped down from the committee. We are very grateful for her contributions and wish her all the best.

2. Minutes of 25th September and matters arising

- Minutes accepted as accurate.
- A member with accounting experience has come forward for the treasurer position. We are currently waiting to hear back from them; they will join the November committee meeting to meet committee members.

3. Financial report

Helen presented the financial report for September 2023.

- Shop sales were good and exceeded the budget by 2%.
- TF made a net profit of £1.100; loss in July and August were smaller than expected based on the last two years.
- Profit year-to-date is £2.000.
- The profit margins look sensible in September, however, month to month fluctuations remain unresolved. Sue and Helen continue investigating.
- Cash in bank balance has significantly improved compared to last year.
- Targets:
 - o sales target not achieved (only 2% increase compared to last year)
 - o employment cost percentage target not achieved but it is coming down, (currently 20.6%)
 - o quick ratio target not achieved (0.7)

4. Membership – including approval of new members

- Six new members approved.
- The membership renewal is coming up and we discussed how we want to make use of the membership cards. Currently, all members have identical barcodes on their cards and often they are not scanned. We would like each member to have a new card with an individual bar code that allows us to collect data on member's shopping preferences which will be useful for product reviews and marketing. This would mean not issuing new cards each year, although an advantage of a new card every year is making it easier to keep track of active member numbers. We also discussed possibility of QR code on the phone to save physical cards printed every year.

ACTION: Cathy check data policies around shopping data collection

5. Policies update

- Cathy presented an update on the EDI policy. She implemented changes discussed in the last committee meeting:

- Addition of 'relationship status' to cover not only married and civil partnership (which is a protected term).
- Addition of 'speak to buddy or chair' in case the issue is related to the buddy.
- Volunteer agreement is in progress. It will be short agreement with links to relevant policies to keep it concise and avoid duplication.
- This brought up a conversation about where to save documents, policies, what we want to make public on the website → we need to have a better filing system, minutes are currently only in members area of website or on private computers.

ACTION: Agenda item at next meeting to establish a way forward on our records management

6. Marketing update

In Tayma's absence, Cathy gave a summary of the marketing activities.

- Organic September evaluation (see separate document):
 - Positive: focus on marketing activities, visibility and relationship building, in shop tasting events, good opportunity to trial new products
 - Negative: picknick and cycling festival, not sure how well print adverts work
- 1st November marks the beginning of the Christmas season; 7th November members Christmas event in the shop; CAVmas
- January will be on 'make one small change' rather than Veganuary.
- We'll be on the map for the next Caversham arts trail.

7. Product review report – feedback and next steps

- The product review report has been circulated to staff and committee. It contains two actionable parts, 1) recommendations for review of current products and 2) guidelines for introducing new product.
- The group would like to get feedback from staff to know if the process works or how it needs changing. Cathy highlighted that the recommendations could be stronger to make them actionable. From staff, it was fed back that the form for new products is time consuming and could be simplified to make the process implementation easier.

ACTION: Becky/product review group to work with staff to create revised/simpler version

- Helga mentioned that staff have (currently irregular) mini reviews and discussions around products which we agreed should be integrated with this process.
- We discussed the difficulties of scoring products as they represent different branches of TF (organic, plastic free, vegan, local...). We agreed that we should discontinue non-organic food, replacing with organic where possible, or simply discontinuing if the product is a slow seller. Of course, there will be exceptions to this rule, and we need to be transparent about this. Any non-organic product must be clearly justified as essential for us to stock to achieve our aims. An example of this is nutritional yeast – hard to get organic, yet a key product for vegan diets (which we want to support as contributing to sustainability); and providing this loose is great.

ACTION: Cathy to email staff to initiate the staff team to set this in motion

- Helga will forward summary to staff at next meeting.

8. Lifestyle update

Vivienne reported from the last group meeting (Tayma, Abi, Vivienne) where they review the strategic plan.

- The group is satisfied with the current information flow, the website lifestyle section, the lifestyle review, and the link with marketing activities.
- They decided to call it 'lifestyle' rather than 'education'.
- Goals for the coming year:
 - o Create regular output and keep website updated.
 - o find one more group member and encourage more members to contribute.
 - o continue to support marketing activities and work with product review group to get ideas about what we focus on
- Cathy suggested to combine the shop newsletter and lifestyle update to avoid duplication and extra work.
- We need to make sure that we use careful wording and add references for credibility.

9. Any issues staff want to raise

- Helga and Becky are new buddies.
- We discussed the idea of a 'Volunteer of the month' but decided not to introduce it as we don't want volunteers feel pressured to do more.

10. A.O.B.

- None

11. Date of next meeting **Monday 27th November**