

Annual general meeting of the Great Bromley Cross Pub Community Benefit Society Ltd

27th January 2019

Attendees:

Management Committee :- Owen Blowers Chairman, Adrian Randall Secretary, Bryn Jones, Linda Pinhey, Steve Roberts, Dave Edwards, Grant Hibbert, Jayne Bates

49 shareholders signed in and they are listed in a separate annex.

Apologies - Phil Reeve

1) Welcome

The secretary welcomed everybody to the meeting and explained that the meeting had two principle aims: firstly to allow the committee to report how the business had performed, and what plans we have for the future. The second and more important aim was to allow the shareholders to ask questions of the committee in a formal minuted way about how the business is performing and how they feel the business should be developed.

2) Finance

In the absence of the Treasurer the accounts were presented by the Chairman

A copy of the accounts for the year ending 30th September is attached

The headline figures were the pub had a turnover of £135,757 which includes £95,000 in grants, £40,092 in stock. The final profit was £8,884.

It was pointed out that an adjustment of £339 had been made to balance the books. This left two options: one is to accept the accounts as they are and the Treasurer would investigate the cause of the imbalance and finalise the accounts later. The second option was to not accept the accounts and call another meeting to review the accounts. A vote was taken and it was unanimously decided to accept the interim accounts as seen at the meeting with finalised accounts being published later.

The current Treasurer has resigned on health grounds, and the post will be filled will be taken by Steve Roberts.

Steve explained to the meeting that the business was on the threshold of the VAT limit and we will have to register and add VAT to our prices. At the same time we have held our prices since the business started and we also have to raise prices to cover increased price of stock. As an indication, beer is likely to increase to around £3.30 a pint; however the cost of meals is likely to rise by the full 20% so the £7.50 Friday meal will rise to £9.00. It was also pointed out that the pub accounting system would need to be delivered in an electronic format acceptable to the VAT office.

There were questions from the shareholders:

- Can the accounts be issued prior to the AGM? This was agreed and the requirement to produce the accounts in an electronic format acceptable to the VAT office would assist this.

- Could we explain the imbalance between the 2017 and 2018 takings which were roughly the same, but purchases were significantly higher in 2018? Jim Craddock pointed out that the 2017 accounts had included grant income in takings and for the 2018 it had been separated out. This change in accounts format would account for the anomaly and actual bar takings are significantly higher in 2018 compared to 2017.
- Why were the electricity and rates costs substantially higher for 2018? This was partly due to increasing use of the pub, particularly the kitchen and an anomaly of the billing cycle.

3) Membership and Membership strategy

The Secretary explained that there had only been one new shareholder added on 2017 as there had been no campaign to get new shareholders, however the business was entering its third year and shareholders would be entitled to sell their shares back to the business. In theory, the business could have to buy back up to 20% of the shares. This might require a campaign to sell more shares to ensure that there were adequate funds to cover any share buy backs.

Jim Craddock pointed out that selling new shares would add to the shareholders pool who will bring new ideas and expertise.

4) Annual report/ Volunteers/Building improvements

The Chairman presented the significant improvements which have been made during the year.

The biggest change was the recruitment of a full time pub manager and Amanda was formally introduced to the meeting. Amanda's appointment basically completed the original 3 year business targets apart from some outdoor seating and a smoking area.

Issues we wish to address over the next year include.

- Co-operative purchasing of stock with other pubs to give both parties the benefit of bulk purchase discounts.
- Increase the use of the community room for both commercial use and local community groups.
- Improve communications with shareholders and customers.
- Issues raised by shareholders were,
- Can we improve the till system to allow faster turnover on busy evenings?
- Can we improve the PA system?
- Can the cellar door be repaired?

It was agreed that these issues would be addressed.

Volunteers

Jayne Bates addressed the meeting, pointing out that the volunteers were the life blood of the business and whilst Amanda was working full time the pub needs volunteers for all roles. It was pointed out that it wasn't necessary to work a full shift and normally Amanda dealt with the opening of the pub and cashing up at the end which makes life easier for the volunteers. The proposal was that volunteers would be asked which shifts and hours they preferred as this would make it easier to identify people to fill gaps in the rota.

Buildings

Bryn Jones started by thanking all the volunteers who had put in many hours of work on the building. This was important for both the work put in but also it is used to cover the pub's contribution to the grant funding which has been used for many of the improvements made so far.

We have recently had a grant from Essex Council and are looking for more grant funding.

Work which needs to be done includes improving fencing and the carpark surface and indoors improving the bar itself and a new carpet for the pub.

He finished by thanking both customers and volunteers who have supported the Friday evening pub grub and making it such a success into the future

5) Appointment of Auditors

So far there have been no external auditors for the pubs accounts, the shareholders were asked if they wished to continue with this route or pay for external auditors. The proposal made was that this should continue with this for at least one more year but as the turnover increases and we have to pay VAT we should appoint auditors.

6) Election of Members of the Management Committee

In line with the policy of the business at least three members of the committee need to stand down to allow new members to join the committee.

This year the three members who offered to resign were Linda Pinhey, Dave Edwards, and Phil Reeve. They were thanked for the effort they had put in getting the business started and its subsequent growth

The three volunteers who wished to join the committee were Jayne Bates and Steve Roberts (whose co-options onto the committee need to be confirmed) and Christine Barrett.

The changes to the membership committee were agreed without a vote.

7) Any other Business

- Questions were made regarding Amanda's work load and her remuneration. It was agreed that the committee was concerned about Amanda's work load which was part of the reason we were encouraging more people to volunteer. The exact terms of Amanda's remuneration were not given but it looked low. That it is because she had only been in post for a few weeks before the accounting year finished, and it was confirmed that there was a bonus payment linked to turnover in the package.

- The wood burner in the pub does not appear to be providing much heat. The committee are aware of the problem and modifications to the fire have been requested from the supplier. This work will be chased up.
- The problem with queues building at busy times was raised again. It was agreed that the issues were known about and were already addressed but if necessary more action would be taken.

The meeting then closed and retired to the pub for a drink