

**MINUTES OF SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE ROADWATER VILLAGE COMMUNITY SHOP
COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY**

16TH FEBRUARY 2022

PRESENT: 42 members and one non-member. Under our society rules, this makes the meeting quorate, since more than 10% of the membership of 333 participated. List available from the Secretary.

APOLOGIES: Received from 23 members. List available from the Secretary.

NOTE: This meeting was requisitioned via a letter signed by 14 CBS members, of whom 6 were present at the meeting. The member who wrote and delivered the letter did not attend. The letter asked the meeting to provide members with “full and complete understanding” of (1) works undertaken in the café kitchen and (2) plans submitted to ENP for a fixed patio shelter, with the opportunity to ask questions.

PROCEEDINGS

Bruce Freeman, CBS Management Committee member, chaired the meeting and welcomed members.

1. Kitchen Works

Simon Smith (CBS Management Committee Treasurer) explained the health and safety concerns that were the primary driver for the work and listed the issues that had to be addressed. [Full details are given on the information sheet sent to all CBS members in advance of this meeting.] He emphasised that the committee had no choice but to address these quickly, since staff welfare and safety was at imminent risk. Assessment by café staff and CBS committee members also indicated that some reconfiguration of the kitchen would have the dual benefit of improving safety and enhancing work flow efficiency. Tenders were sought and the cheapest was contracted, a local very experienced kitchen fitter. He was assisted by Andrew Benson, the Shop Site Coordinator and Steve Eggar, staff member and health & safety advisor to the CBS. During the course of the work, additional problems were identified due to water pooling and affecting the integrity of fixtures. The work was completed within a week and all staff and volunteers say the new layout is far more efficient, convenient and safe. The total cost was £2,282.

Questions

Q1. Concern expressed that the new positioning of the entrance means staff have to carry trays of hot drinks past the hub (where someone could be sitting) and cut across the shop area.

A1. Staff place the trays on a space created on the worktop and walk around to pick it up. In fact, it is safer because previously they carried trays past customers sitting at café tables.

Q2. Concern expressed that the hub is no longer accessible.

A2. In fact, the hub is more accessible because the laptop has been freed so that it can be taken to a table, rather than the user obscuring the view of the hub. Improvements to the display facilities are also in hand.

Q3. If it was such a risk, why was café not closed immediately problems were noticed?

A3. Temporary measures were put in place to mitigate the most serious risk, but these were not viable in the longer term as the structural damage had to be addressed.

Q4. Why was this issue not raised in the most recent (December) member news update?

A4. The committee regarded it as a relatively low budget management and maintenance issue that did not require agreement from the membership (noting that larger amounts of money were spent on bringing the flat up to standard without wider discussion).

Q5. Concern that seating has been lost as a result of reconfiguration.

A5. Not true, the café seating is the same as before. In fact, it is better because the old chest freezer that intruded into the seating area has been replaced by a small under-counter model, thus making more space.

2. Patio Shelter

Cherry Bird (CBS Management Committee Secretary) reviewed the process by which the design for a patio shelter was developed, emphasising that the membership had been fully consulted, through a questionnaire sent to all members, and information in the December member news update. [Full details are given on the information sheet sent to all CBS members in advance of this meeting]. The preferences emerging from the questionnaire were passed to the architect (Peter Roberts). In outline, these were for a fixed overhead structure covering only part of the patio, with no sides. The architect suggested a design using Cor-ten and after discussion with the committee he submitted a planning application to ENP. Since it had come to light that the original application for change of use from shop only to shop plus café had not been properly recorded and was therefore not valid, a retrospective “change of use” application was included, on the advice of ENP planning officials. The planning documents are available in the hub for everyone to see.

Questions

Q1. Since only 33 people responded to the questionnaire, how can that be considered representative?

A1. Everyone had the opportunity to contribute, we cannot force people.

Q2. One person said they had never seen the questionnaire.

A2. It was sent to everyone through the normal CBS mailing system and there were notices in the shop. When some people said they had not received the information it was re-sent and the deadline extended.

Q3. Who submitted the original planning permission and why was it not corrected at the time?

A3. There appears to have been an administrative oversight and the planning officials have assured us there will be no problem with correcting it through the retrospective application.

Q4. Suggestion that the planning documents should be pinned up for display in the hub so people know they are there.

A4. Space is rather limited, but additional signs could be put up to draw people’s attention. Also, Peter will send Cherry the link to the online planning application, to be sent to all members.

Q5. How much will it cost?

A5. Final figure is not known yet, but main Cor-ten sheet is estimated at about £2,500. Timber posts need to be added and nuts and bolts. Labour costs should be low as it is a simple structure. It was noted that the interest saved by paying off the SSEF loan early should easily cover this.

Q6. Can we see a sample of the Cor-ten materials to understand how it will look?

A6. A sample was purchased from the supplier (@£25) and is with ENP. Peter will request they return it and it will be left in the hub.

Additional points and comments

1. It was suggested that we agree on a budget limit for any work/ expenditure, above which the membership should be consulted and below which the committee can simply proceed. The committee noted that this has previously been suggested as an option and could be helpful. Agreed it will be added to the next AGM agenda as a proposed additional policy.
2. A number of those present expressed their appreciation for the shop and their confidence in the work of the committee.
3. A final piece of positive news, the High Sheriff, who visited the shop and café last summer, has contacted us to say he wishes to give us the High Sheriff's Award in recognition of our achievements as a community project.

Cherry Bird, Secretary, 17/02/22