

MINUTES OF ROADWATER VILLAGE COMMUNITY SHOP CBS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
4th SEPTEMBER 2023, 6.00 PM, IN THE VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Mary Coles (Chair), Cherry Bird (Sec.), Simon Smith (Treas.), Di Binding, Sheila Robertson, Claire Sawatzky, Bruce Freeman, Karl Toth.

1. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- **Customer accounts:** Simon has reviewed this carefully and recommends we continue to offer individual accounts as, overall it is a positive influence on the business. Most people pay well on time or soon after the deadline. There has only been one individual problem, which has now been dealt with.
- **Newsletter:** Completed and circulated.
- **Volunteer event:** Date and catering booked (15th November, Jen's Pantry) and Sheila is in discussion with Gavin about food and budget (to be finalised with Simon).
- **Grants:** All agreed to offer another round with the same budget (£3,000)

2. FINANCIAL UPDATE

- **Monthly figures:** July was good, although profit was small because stock ordering was much reduced in June to avoid having to count it in the stock take. Significant stock orders were therefore placed in July to replenish, shown by a comparatively higher cost of sale, leading to much lower gross profit which drops down to a much reduced net profit.
- **Annual accounts:** Now completed and all in order. Sales are good but Simon flagged up the fact that overhead costs are slowly but consistently rising, which is a danger sign for the business. It appears to be largely due to increased staff costs - up by 30%, of which only 12% can be accounted for by increased costs of pension etc payments. There appear to be a number of small issues feeding into this, which gradually add up. Need to look at timesheets, cover for sickness, new tasks being paid for (eg newspaper management now a paid task which was previously done by a volunteer, similarly management of home deliveries) and other creeping expenditures. Noted it is becoming increasingly difficult to get volunteers, particularly for the café. **Simon** to monitor. The meeting agreed to adopt the accounts, to be approved by the AGM.

3. THE FLAT

- Oiling of external balcony and steps in process, almost complete.
- Extractor fan ready for installation. Andrew will also further investigate the cause of excessive condensation (could be from café kitchen?)
- **Rent review:** Rent has remained the same for 3 years (£585 per month, low by local market standards) and tenant seems to understand there may need to be a rise. **Agreed to increase to £625 per month with provision for an annual review.** *Proposed by Cherry, seconded by Mary.*

4. SHOP MATTERS

- **Lottery changes:** Allwyn will take over from Camelot from January 2024. PO will no longer be involved. Relevant forms have been completed but agreed to check the current PO contract so we know if there are changes. **Mary** to speak with Steve.
- **Discount for staff and volunteers:** Simon produced a model for how this could work financially. All agreed it would be a good thing to do, as an incentive for these individuals to do more of their shopping at RVCS and for

new people to volunteer. We now need to look at how to implement, ie develop a system. Could be linked to accounts, but not everyone wants to open an account. Could be via some kind of scannable loyalty card. Important to be able to monitor and ensure transparency. **Simon and Sheila** to discuss further and report back to committee.

- **Consistency between shop and café policies:** There is now more collaboration and support between shop and café teams, which has helped iron out inconsistencies and is a very positive development.
- **Café cover and volunteers:** All noted that the closure of the café over bank holiday weekend because of staff shortages was not a good sign and not likely to engender public confidence in the business. Part of the problem is the last minute timing of the rota which does not leave enough time for volunteers to cover for absences. The rota itself is also not clearly laid out and Lynne's holiday arrangements are not shared with the team sufficiently early. Despite continued efforts by various individuals to suggest changes, these issues have not been taken on board or acted upon. **Cherry, Claire and Sheila** will meet to discuss how to address. There is also a café team meeting scheduled for this week.
- **Scales for refills:** Sheila has looked at refill sales over 15 days, and reported that on 6 of these there were no sales, and the maximum number was 5 sales in one day, which only happened on one day, others were around 1 or 2 per day. On this basis there is currently no justification for an outlay on a specialist set of scales and labelling machine. Agreed we need a marketing initiative to increase sales, especially if Julia is thinking of offering dry food refills, which would anyway need to be properly researched and marketed. The only major success is the refill milk, so we need to look at why this should be.

5. WEBSITE UPGRADE

- Some of the photos have now been changed and correct information about opening hours added. Some minor design features have also been adjusted. As Bruce is overloaded with his own work at present, John Evans has agreed to work with Cherry on this, which will be easier as they live in the same house! Work will continue on addition of text and uploading of essential documents.

6. AGM PLANNING

- **Date:** Hall is booked for 7.30 on 18th October at 7.00, publicised in the newsletter.
- **Timeline and communication:** Formal notification to go out at least 14 days in advance, with agenda, committee nominations information, last year's minutes (2021/22) and reports
- **Review of procedures:** Notes from last year should ensure we cover all formal requirements.
- **Documentation:** Agenda was confirmed, accounts are ready, nominations information previously circulated and agreed, **Cherry** requested inputs for sections of the annual report.

7. AoB

- **Post office "fit and proper":** Declaration now completed and in order
- **Electricity:** Reminder from John Evans that our fixed tariff expires in November. So far he has not been able to find information about the likely level of rise (this only seems available for individuals not businesses), but expects we will go up to be in line with what others have been paying and that it should not be too steep.

Next meeting: Wednesday 4th October, 6.00.