

# **Minutes of Beckley & Area Community Benefit Society Ltd (“BACBS”) Annual Members’ Meeting, 30/11/22**

**Held in the Beckley Village Hall at 19.30**

**35 members were present, the quorum being 25.**

## **Chairman’s Report**

The Chairman (John Stradling) welcomed BACBS members to the evening and outlined the agenda.

The year had been a challenging one but with a good Autumn period for the pub. A permanent awning had been acquired and a new disabled access path to the garden created. Excess food had been given to the Barton Food larder. There has been close co-operation with the pub tenants and we have been working hard to assist with the successful running of the pub. Forensic analysis of the tenants’ operations have been useful to both parties. The usual balance had to be struck between drinking and eating. A new Share Offer had been initiated to provide extra working capital for BACBS’s work on the pub building and garden.

The Chairman reported on the survey of BACBS members and others. 65 responses had been received of which half were from BACBS members. The results will be posted on the BACBS website. The following is a summary of the findings:

- Differences of opinion on the issue of whether we want a local village pub or a high-quality restaurant
- Continued viability and survival paramount
- Service is sometimes not as good or as welcoming as it could be
- A more family-friendly environment with more children's menu choices
- Needs a two-tier menu – pub food and restaurant food
- Village events (evening specials etc)
- BACBS members’ occasional ‘rewards’
- BACBS to encourage the above

The Chairman then described a complaint which had been received during the year. This concerned the volume of music in the pub garden, and potentially anti-social parking. It has not been possible to make any formal change to parking arrangement since they do not lie in the hands of BACBS. The Committee of BACBS will continue to discourage very loud music and monitor it, as necessary. The tenants will be asked again to include a request that their customers park responsibly.

The Chairman mentioned the need to make considerable improvements to the upstairs of the pub building. This will require considerable investment and will have to await the availability of funds.

In conclusion, the Chairman looked ahead and talked of the threat to pubs in general. It was essential to work closely with our tenants, for BACBS members and others to make greater use of the pub and to keep the pub open. To this end, three Management Committee members have been using their combined business expertise to advise the tenants and we are confident that if the community continues to support the pub, it has a good future ahead.

**Treasurer’s report 21/22 (Adam Jeffrey)**

The Treasurer reported that many aspects of our results were similar to last year's. There had been continuing rent holidays for the tenants due principally to Covid, and agreement with some creditors to make interest only payments. Loss for the year was £3,461 compared to a profit for the previous year (20/21) of £12,400. Total income was £35,003 with total outgoings of £50,114 (main expenses being the pizza oven and contribution to terrace stretch tent). Our final cash position was £61,403 including £7,500 of tenants' security deposit. Outstanding loans totalled £48,512 compared to £56,823 the previous year.

The Treasurer then described the resolution to approve the exemption from audit. An audit would have cost £3,000 extra.

### **Resolutions**

- 1: To receive the Chairman's report: approved unanimously
- 2 To receive the financial accounts: approved unanimously
- 3 To authorise the Management Committee to substitute an accountant's report for the year to 30 Sept 2023, as permitted by the rules and applicable legislation: carried unanimously

### **Secretarys' Report**

The Membership Secretary, Gabriel Brodetsky, spoke of the share offer which had launched in January. 22 new members had joined BACBS bringing in £18,400 of new capital. He spoke of the deferral of interest payments to BACBS members until the economic climate was healthier and similarly of the inability to repay members who wish to withdraw capital.

The Secretary, Sam Clarke, described briefly the one new policy adopted by the Management Committee during the year, a simple complaints procedure.

### **More Than A Pub**

Cathy Davies, who leads the More Than a Pub group, described the work of the group. There have been 10 talks, many by zoom, using the talent available locally. Anthea de Vere's comedy 'Not Going Quietly' at the end of last year was very successful. Walks are still continuing (10 this year) and quizzes are growing in popularity (11 this year). Coffee mornings have been reinstated at 11:00 on the first Wednesday of the month, and there have been some jazz nights. Other events have included a poetry open mic session and children's craft workshops. She thanked the many contributors who have helped make this happen.

### **Elections**

There had been 5 vacancies for Management Committee members: two, John Stradling and Susy Jepson had come to the end of their respective terms and stood again, and three new applicants. The Chairman thus welcomed the new applicants, Georgina Matthews, Mish Tullar and Aris Karastergiou to the Management Committee.

Gabriel Brodetsky had moved from the village and had therefore stood down. Sam Clarke and Dave Drew had come to the end of their terms and retired.

The Chairman read out a statement from Georgina Matthews as she was unable to attend the meeting, and both Mish Tullar and Aris Karastergiou each briefly spoke of what they hope to bring to the Management Committee. The Chairman thanked Gabriel Brodetsky in particular for his long and dedicated service to BACBS and the pub, having been one of the original group that formed BACBS and saved the pub. He was presented by the Management Committee with a case of wine. Thanks, along with a small token of the Management Committee's appreciation, were also given to Sam Clarke and Dave Drew.

**The Chairman then opened up the meeting for questions and discussion.**

1. There was a question about the whether the flat above the pub was currently occupied. It was not and was now only occasionally being used. It is not suitable for unconnected occupation as it did not have a separate entrance. In addition, it needs (as reported above) considerable refurbishment.
2. There was a question about the large figure for creditors in the accounts. It was explained that this figure mainly consisted of the SODC grant in connection with the building of the new toilets, a decreasing amount of which would have to be paid back if the pub were to be sold within 10 years of the grant.
3. There was a question about whether we could make better use of the car park. We had hoped to be able to install a new bin store to keep the bins out of the car park, but funds are too limited at the moment. Some staff leave their cars in the car park and could perhaps park further away, but it was felt that it was inappropriate to expect staff (particularly youngsters) to walk all the way to the Village Hall car park or New Inn Hall Road late at night, the main alternatives.
4. There was a question about the tenants' possible other interests. The response was that the tenants are currently not looking for any external work beyond what they already do. Alex buys regularly from Covent Garden and does help with the cooking in another pub on a Sunday. A previous idea to possibly run a second pub earlier in the year had been dropped as impractical.
5. How competitive are the pub's food prices. We believe them to be competitive and it is something the tenants have been looking at. The prices are certainly not higher, and anecdotally are lower, than equivalent establishments.
6. The final question related to communications about the pub and its events, menus etc. There was a lengthy discussion about how communications might be improved. Judy Bushrod offered the use of the village list, which was welcomed, and other suggestions were made such as the village WhatsApp. Although these outlets are supposed to be non-commercial, it was felt the pub was an exception, given its community base. There had not previously been a media person available to work on communications, but Georgina Matthews had offered to take this on now she is a member of the Management Committee.

The meeting was closed at 20.38 and was followed by refreshments.

Proposed date for next AMM, 29/11/2023.

*Sam Clarke, BACBS secretary.*