

BECKLEY & AREA COMMUNITY BENEFIT SOCIETY Ltd

Minutes of 2021 Annual Members' Meeting

On: Wednesday, 24th November 2021, 8:00pm

At: Beckley Village Hall

Present: 41 Members holding voting rights were in attendance.

The meeting was declared to be quorate

Apologies: 4 Members sent their apologies

1. Chair's welcome

John Stradling (Chair) welcomed all attendees to the meeting and thanked everyone for turning out on a very cold evening, especially as the hall's doors were being kept open for Covid-19 prevention.

2. Minutes of last AMM

These were accepted as an accurate record of the 2020 Annual Members' Meeting.

3. Officers' Reports

Chair's Report

John Stradling provided an overview of the last year. Specific topics covered included:

- The Abingdon Arms and COVID-19 – issues faced by the tenants concerning staffing, finances, and responding to government restrictions, and the investments made by the tenants including terrace shelter and pizza oven.
- BACBS – our support for the tenants including rent holidays and reductions
- “More than a Pub” activities
- Good Neighbour scheme
- Welcome packs
- Grants received towards construction of path from car park to lower terrace
- Projects – potential improvements including step-free access from car park, upgrading upstairs accommodation at the pub, and the possibility of a permanent gazebo in the garden
- The future – survey of members and broader community

Treasurer's Report

Adam Jeffrey provided a high-level summary of BACBS's finances for the year 2020-21. Please refer to the previously circulated Treasurer's report for further information.

He explained that it is unlikely the Society will be in a position to pay interest to Members holding 'A' shares in the coming year, but this will be kept under review as it becomes clearer how the finances are holding up.

BACBS is hoping to be able to pay down its private loan in the coming year (the CCF loan cannot be ended early without incurring significant penalties).

Secretary's Report

Gabriel Brodetsky provided details of policies introduced by the Management Committee, BACBS's membership, and the objectives of the upcoming open share offer, namely to provide funds for potential improvements, and to allow existing Members to withdraw their investments.

4. Resolutions

The following resolutions were all passed by a show of hands:

- To receive the Chairman's Report for year to 30th September 2021.
- To receive the Financial Accounts for year to 30th September 2021.
- To authorise the Management Committee to substitute an accountant's report in place of a full audit of the accounts for the year to 30th September 2022, as permitted by the Rules and applicable legislation.

5. Election of members to Management Committee

The Management Committee has decided to expand its size from 10 to 11 members, resulting in four vacancies. As there were four Members wishing to stand no election was required, and all four Members were deemed elected for a three-year term.

John Walsh and **Rick Kealy** are elected as new members of the Management Committee. They were welcomed to the committee, and they introduced themselves to the meeting.

Adam Jeffrey and **Nin Kelay** are re-elected to the Committee for a second term.

Lise Estcourt had decided not to stand for a further term on the committee, and was thanked in her absence for her contributions to the Committee. It was noted that she will continue as the village representative for Noke.

The full committee for 2021-22 is as follows:

- Jerry BLOOMFIELD
- Gabriel BRODETSKY
- Sam CLARKE
- Cathy DAVIES
- Dave DREW
- Adam JEFFREY
- Susy JEPSON
- Rick KEALY
- Nin KELAY
- John STRADLING
- John WALSH

Officers and other roles will be agreed at the first Management Committee meeting following the AMM.

6. Open Question and Answer session

Members raised various topics from the floor:

Can the Society introduce a rule to disallow share withdrawals? It was explained that the Society's Rules permit applications from Members to withdraw their investments, but that the original Share Offer was clear that such applications would be unlikely to be accepted before mid-2022 at the earliest, and then would be subject to Management Committee agreement. The meeting was reminded about last year's Rule change that sets out the process by which such applications will be accepted. We hope that the upcoming Open Share Offer will help to build our reserves to a sufficient level to permit withdrawals if requested.

Electric car charging point at the pub – shouldn't the council have paid? It was explained that the ECV was paid for in full by grants received for the purpose, so it hasn't cost BACBS or our tenants anything.

Zuzana Minichova's decision to leave the pub has resulted in a change of share ownership in the tenants' limited company (3-Catering Ltd). Concern raised about what would happen if 3-Catering was sold to new owners unacceptable to BACBS. Post-meeting note: the Society's lease with the tenants requires them to consult us about any significant change in share ownership, and if the Management Committee does not agree, the Society has the right to terminate the lease with immediate effect.

Can BACBS do anything about the parking problems in the Beckley High Street caused by the pub's customers? Following a general discussion about the parking problems faced by the village, it was suggested that a sign could be put in the car park suggesting alternative places to park if full. The Management Committee could also ask the tenants to ensure their website requests people to park responsibly. Although not directly within BACBS's remit, further points were raised about whether Beckley Village Hall car park could be made available for more general use (including pub customers), ie not kept locked when the hall is not in use. John Stradling offered to write to the village hall committee to ask whether a narrower entrance (such as at Homebase) could be installed to make it less likely that travellers could occupy the car park, as this is an issue that concerns some residents.

Many Members have no desire to receive interest from their investments and are solely interested in ensuring the continuing existence of a successful pub. It was pointed out that 'A' shareholders are very welcome to request that their shares be re-assigned as 'B' shares which are not interest-bearing. Some Members have already done so, and the Committee would of course welcome such requests.

What is being done about ensuring that there is always space in the pub for drinkers who are not dining? It was explained that we are working with the tenants to find an acceptable compromise that addresses the tenants' need to maximise their profitability (ie food sales) vs drinkers' desire for space to drink without eating. The view was strongly expressed that The Abingdon Arms is a pub not a restaurant, and BACBS should consider offering an appropriate reduction in rent in exchange for the provision of dedicated drinking space. The Chair offered to discuss this with the Committee as soon as reasonably possible.

Possibility of 'village nights' at the pub to generate local interest in using the pub more widely. This has already been discussed with tenants as something that may be possible in the new year.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm for refreshments, including consumption of the methusaleh of Chinon wine provided by St. Louans village near Chinon, with which Beckley has had an informal 'twinning' relationship in the past.

Gabriel Brodetsky
Secretary,
Beckley and Area Community Benefit Society Ltd
27th November 2021