



Minutes of Members Meeting

Held at the British School Room
At 7.30pm on Monday 12th November 2012

In attendance and apologies

In attendance were Geoff Martin, Mike Johnson, John Knight, Pete Johnston and over 50 members.

Peter Sidebottom, chairman, was unable to attend because of ill health. He had sent his apology and the meeting wished him well. Richard Hulme, director, had another business meeting. John Kerlake, membership secretary, is on holiday.

Apologies were received from a further 10 members.

1. Chairman's opening remarks

In place of Peter Sidebottom, Geoff Martin acted as chairman for the meeting.

2. Minutes of the Members General Meeting held on 7th November 2011

These were taken as read and approved.

3. Construction report

John Knight was pleased to report that construction had been finished on time and below budget. He expressed some frustration at the cost of the works required to the 'playground' and stressed that the surface is fragile and cannot cope with heavy loads.

In response to a question he reminded members that the Village Hall is the owner of a large part of the playground and displayed a drawing showing clearly the delineation. The Village Hall has been made formally aware of its responsibility for the playground in future.

There were many questions from members about the use of the playground for car parking. It was explained that SOSCIC tenants each had car parking spaces allocated to them in accordance with their leases and with the planning permission given to SOSCIC for the development. Taken together with the restricted access and the inadequate surface, this means that car parking has to be restricted to tenants and light delivery vehicles and cannot be used for general parking.

4. Planning and Highways report

Mike Johnson re-iterated many of the points made by John Knight in relation to the rear of the premises and went on, with the aid of the displayed drawing, to describe the works proposed by Wiltshire Council to the road at the front. While SOSCIC has no control over the works at the front it is clearly interested in how this may affect the use of the building. Again, there were many questions from members about many aspects of the planning proposal and Mike explained the proposals, whilst having to accept that many are outside the direct control of SOSCIC. Mike also added that we are anticipating that some of the tenants will want to place some form of signage on the building to advertise their presence – all of which will require prior consent from the Local Authority.

5. Tenancy report

In Richard Hulme's absence, Mike Johnson talked to the meeting about the tenancy situation. He was pleased to report that all units are now let and gave a brief summary of each of the tenants. Shear Class Salon will have to make some alterations to Units 2/3 and, in addition to the practical issues, may have some building control/listed building matters to deal with. Trading by Shear Class from their new facility is therefore not expected until towards the end of January. Mike said he was pleased that all tenants were local, in line with the hope that local employment can be encouraged, and he particularly complimented the Post Office Stores on their new business and for having set a very high standard for others to follow.

In response to a question, it was explained that all tenant terms, including rents, had been negotiated by the professional firm of Graham Singer acting on SOSVIC's instruction to achieve the best possible outcomes.

6. Fund raising, events and membership

Mike Johnson reminded the meeting that, a year ago, he was pursuing various strands for grants and of his subsequent delight on being informed by the Prince's Countryside Fund that we had been awarded a grant of £50,000.

Pete Johnston, acknowledging his wife Irene's part in the project although she was unable to attend on this occasion, described fund raising progress since the launch of the member appeal at this equivalent meeting in 2011. He said how pleased he had been with the members' response to this and that 131 separate donations had contributed a massive £14,000. In addition the Charity shop, French fete, Rude Health Show and Gardeners Day had raised about another £10,000 in total. He said that SOSVIC now has 283 members and new members are always welcome.

The next, and prospectively last, event will be the Winter Ball in December at which a painting, kindly donated by Neil Forster, will also be auctioned. He hoped that people would support the Ball and be generous with their bids for the painting.

7. Finance report

Geoff Martin showed a summary of the financial position expected at the time of the 2011 members' meeting and a comparison with the current position, a turn around of almost £100,000.

Funds received are £86,000 greater than a year ago and building costs are lower. He particularly noted that, allowing for final payments to Chappell & Dix not yet made, the building works cost will finish almost £20,000 lower than anticipated.

At this point some £25,000 is 'in the kitty' but more than this will be needed to pay the builder the remaining £19,000, pay for works to the playground of £6,000 and to make the next lease payment of £6,000 payable to the Parish Council next 1st April. He forecast that resources will be tight until the development issues are finally satisfied.

In response to questions, he said that, provided full occupation of the units continues and provided no unforeseen costs occur, SOSVIC should be able to begin to build some reserves in the later part of 2013 and that this would be re-assuring to the board and members alike. However we still have to achieve that position and no-one should be complacent at this time.

The 'books' to 31st March 2012 have been audited (by the same auditors used by the Parish Council) and the statutory accounts have been signed by the directors and are available to view on the SOSVIC web pages.

8. Questions

In response to questions;

Geoff Martin said that an Official Opening is still planned. It will not be until all units are in occupation and trading and he hoped that our chairman would be fully involved in such an event.

Mike Johnson described the notice board he intends to erect giving information about tenants and went on to talk about a more durable method for recognising the many people who had so generously supported the project. He has an idea to erect a notice board containing all the names, perhaps in place of the existing temporary board, and made clear that he is open to alternative ideas from members, should they wish to make contact.

9. Chairman's closing remarks

Geoff Martin reminded the meeting that SOSIC had been very pleased to be awarded the Wiltshire Council award for Community Leadership and endorsed the earlier comment that the standard set by the Post Office Stores could have been a contributory factor.

He thanked Mary Clements and the Congregational Church for allowing us to use the British School Room and for their generosity in not charging for its use.

He thanked all members for coming to the meeting and for their continuing encouragement and support.

G C Martin
Acting Chairman