



## Annual General Meeting – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2017

### Chair's Report

Welcome to the third annual general meeting of the Fox and Goose (Hebden Bridge) Limited. Whilst shareholder members had an update at the general meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> October 2016, this focussed on the finances and electing Directors. I have therefore given an overview below of the whole year below.

#### 1. Staffing

- 1.1. As reported at the April 2016 AGM, the Board of Directors (Management Committee) appointed Hannah Thurman as Pub Manager with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> March 2016. Hannah came to the Fox and Goose with a wealth of experience in the hospitality business and is fondly remembered by the longer-term regulars when she used to work behind the bar. Hannah's initial focus was on financial management, as well as reacquainting herself with the pub, staff and customers. She then focussed, sequentially, on cleaning (in particular the dreadful smell that came and went at will), the garden, the range of drinks and snacks on offer, the cellar, events and artwork for sale.

As a result of Hannah's efforts, staff now have clear financial procedures, both gross profit and turnover have improved significantly and the Directors receive regular, comprehensive financial information. From our customers' point of view, they now have a clean, smell-free environment, a much-improved outdoor space in the beer garden and an improved range of drinks and snacks in response to their feedback (eg prosecco and vegan beer). Whilst the cellar is still far from ideal in terms of space and the need for heavy lifting, it is now much easier to keep clean and the required temperature range is now monitored and maintained.

- 1.2. By the time of the AGM Cayn White will have left the Fox and Goose to take up his new post as Pub Manager at the Gardeners' Rest in Sheffield: another pub that has recently gone into community ownership. Cayn's passion for delivering a range of high quality ciders and cask ales, many of them local, has done much to cement the Fox and Goose's reputation as a real ale pub. Cayn leaves with our best wishes for the future.
- 1.3. Hannah Thurman has appointed Julia Andrus as Deputy Manager. Regulars will already know Julia since she already works at the Fox and Goose. At the time of writing, Hannah Thurman is in the process for recruiting a Cellar/Stock Controller. These new appointments will ensure that the priorities for the future can be fulfilled.
- 1.4. The Fox and Goose continues, as it has done from the outset, to pay as a minimum the 'proper' living wage to all its staff. This is the living wage as defined by The Living Wage Foundation. The Living Wage hourly rate increased from £7.85 to £8.25 (a 5.1% increase) at

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the beginning of 2016; and then from £8.25 to £8.45 (a further 2.4% further increase) at the beginning of 2017.

## 2. Volunteers

- 2.1. Volunteers have continued to support the Fox and Goose in many and varied ways. This ranged from building work, painting and decorating, clearing the barrel store, clearing and extending the beer garden (including the shelter and solar lighting), creation of a wood store, running the Monday quiz, serving beer behind the festival bar, taking part in the annual Co-ops Clean-up day, hosting the Fox and Goose's website, donating a brand new tea/coffee machine, organising a successful International Women's Day event over three evenings, weekly trips to the wholesalers and a volunteer has started much-needed work to overhaul the Fox and Goose's website.
- 2.2. We recognise that volunteering has not been co-ordinated as well as it could be. To this end, Hannah Thurman and George Parker are working together to run regular, monthly volunteering sessions for maintenance and gardening: the first Sunday of the month for gardening from 10:30 am and the second Sunday of the month for maintenance and painting jobs from 10:30 am.
- 2.3. Hannah Thurman is also offering training and short, day-time shifts for volunteers to work behind the bar.
- 2.4. The work of volunteers is much appreciated by customers, staff and Directors, with its purpose being to involve the community in the business and create a more engaged community pub.

## 3. Board of Directors

- 3.1. Of the three Directors who remained on the Board since their re-election in April 2016, one has resigned and one will be resigning at the AGM and is not seeking re-election. Two Directors were co-opted in May 2016 and subsequently resigned. The two Directors elected at the October 2016 general meeting have indicated their wish to remain as Directors.
- 3.2. In summary, there are currently four Directors, one of whom will be resigning at the AGM. The Board of Directors is therefore seeking up to four Directors to be elected to the Board of Directors.
- 3.3. Director nominations have been received and details of these will be circulated at the meeting.

## 4. Finances

- 4.1. Turnover and gross profit figures for 2016 have greatly improved when compared with 2015. An interim report for the year to date was given at the October 2016 general meeting and demonstrated a massive turnaround from the situation reported at the 2016 AGM. Please see

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the Treasurer's report and the 2016 accounts for a full report on the 2016 financial year and budget for 2017.

## 5. Drinks - Quality and Range

- 5.1. The high quality of the beers and ciders at the Fox and Goose has been maintained and the Fox and Goose continues to remain in CAMRA's Good Beer Guide.
- 5.2. The Fox and Goose continues to subscribe to the LocAle scheme: local beers providing local employment and reducing beer miles. This links well with the Fox and Goose's sustainability and environmental ethos.
- 5.3. Special brews, available only at the Fox and Goose have included Leathered Fox (Pictish Brewery), brewed to celebrate our third anniversary. Leather: traditional third anniversary present (no, I didn't realise that either until it was explained to me!).
- 5.4. Following customer feedback, gluten-free beers continue to be regularly available and have been supplemented by a regular vegan/vegetarian cask ale and prosecco. In addition, mulled cider have proved to be very popular, whilst the addition of a tea/coffee machine has proved popular with walkers and people coming in for events. These initiatives have widened the range of people who come to the Fox and Goose.
- 5.5. Whilst the pub already responds to feedback from customers, there is scope to further improve the range and quality of drinks available in order to meet the needs of customers (see shareholder consultation analysis).

## 6. Spring and Winter Beer Festivals

The beer festivals in November and May continue to be very popular. The theme for the May 2016 festival included beer from the wood", ie wooden casks. If you want to find out more, have a look at the [Society for the Preservation of Beers from Wood's](#) website. The theme for the November 2016 festival was Ales and Tails. The May 2017 beer festival will have a historical twist.

## 7. Music

Supporting and promoting live music continues to be key part of what the Fox and Goose has to offer. These events encourage new visitors into the pub, some of whom become regulars. Below are some of the events we've had in the Fox over the past year.

- 7.1. Atilla the Stockbroker
- 7.2. David Rovics
- 7.3. Trip and Stumble
- 7.4. Henry Cluney
- 7.5. Events as part of the Hebden Bridge Folk Roots Festival

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- 7.6. Catfish Skillet
- 7.7. The Shabbycats
- 7.8. Pennine Piperholics
- 7.9. Breton musicians
- 7.10. Christmas carols
- 7.11. Impromptu sessions

## 8. Publicity

- 8.1. The Fox and Goose is listed as ninth most popular pub nationally by “Beer in the Evening”.
- 8.2. Hannah Thurman was featured by Power to Change, a national organisation promoting and supporting community enterprises, as part of their work promoting women leaders on International Women’s Day. If you’re looking at this on-line see the article by clicking here.
- 8.3. Mark Steel came to the Fox and Goose as part of his “Mark Steel’s in Town” series on BBC Radio 4.
- 8.4. Facebook, Twitter continue to be used to publicise the pub and events, with plans to improve the website very soon, with support from a volunteer.

## 9. Community Involvement

Community involvement is key part of what we do at the Fox and Goose. It demonstrates that we are part of the wider community and more than just a pub. Examples of community involvement over the past year are listed below.

- 9.1. Involvement in the Big Co-op Clean as part of Co-operatives Fortnight.
- 9.2. The Fox and Goose has sponsored the 2015, 2016 and 2017 Hebden Folk Roots Festivals.
- 9.3. The Fox and Goose has sponsored Halifax and Calderdale’s beer festival.
- 9.4. The Fox and Goose has raised money from various events and made repeated donations to the Calderdale Flood Relief Appeal.
- 9.5. The Fox and Goose hosted and donated to a board games evening organised by a volunteer in support of the NSPCC.
- 9.6. Regulars, staff and Directors were involved in Recycle Radio’s four-day broadcast.
- 9.7. The art work for sale and displayed on the pub’s walls promotes local artists.

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- 9.8. The Fox and Goose held events linked to Hebden Bridge's Alternative Christmas.
- 9.9. The Fox and Goose promotes local businesses and events on its website and via social media.
- 9.10. The Fox and Goose supported Hebden Bridge's successful bid to be nominated as "Best Small Market Town" as part of the Great British High Street Awards 2016.
- 9.11. The Hebden Folk Roots organising committee, plus other groups, use the Fox and Goose for their meetings.
- 9.12. The Fox and Goose hosted a get-together as part of the United Nations' International Day of Co-operatives.
- 9.13. Pub volunteers organised a successful International Women's Day event over three evenings, with the money raised being donated to the Women Centre in Halifax.
- 9.14. On more light-hearted note, the Fox and Goose hosted a traditional pub games night: Calderdale and Halifax CAMRA vs The Fox and Goose.
- 9.15. In terms of the wider co-operative community, we have met and/or spoken to groups who are in the process of setting up their own community pub. In addition, Hannah Thurman, Hannah Nadim and Nigel Sagar visited the Dog Inn in Belthorn and the Charles Napier in Blackburn, to take part in the Plunkett Foundation's community pubs event.

## 10. Refurbishment

- 10.1. At the annual general meeting we reported on refurbishment work, costing over £15,000, which had been undertaken during 2015. During 2016 we spent over £5,000 on refurbishment work, with the priorities being:
  - Further improvements to the beer garden (wooden seating on wall tops, gazebo, solar lighting, additional seating, replacing the few remaining gravel areas with flagstones and repointing between the flagstones);
  - insulating the beer cellar, installing a new beer chiller and making it easier to clean;
  - installing a new 'fridge and glass washer.
- 10.2. I am pleased to confirm that this work has been fruitful, resulting in:
  - improved income during the summer months;
  - a cellar that is easier to keep clean and more energy efficient, whilst maintaining the required temperature for cask beer;

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## 11. Shareholder Consultation

- 11.1. Shareholders were asked in March to complete a survey an anonymous survey which had the following foci:
- options regarding any interest payments to shareholder members;
  - requests for share capital withdrawal; and
  - priorities for the Fox and Goose during 2017/18- linked to the ten-year management plan.
- 11.2. Attached to this report is an analysis of the results of the recent survey and the action taken/to be taken as a result of feedback from shareholder members.
- 11.3. The Directors have agreed implement the top six priorities for 2017/18 identified by the survey respondents:
1. Paint the outside of the building and window frames – 47% of respondents.
  2. Range/quality of drinks on offer – 41% of respondents.
  3. Make the darts room (up the step on the right, near the coat hooks) more welcoming and comfortable – 29% of respondents.
  4. Customer service – 26% of respondents.
  5. Financial profitability – 25% of respondents.
  6. Feasibility study (and installation, if feasible) of photo-voltaic (solar) panels to generate electricity – 24% of respondents.
- 11.4. Hannah Thurman recently launched a survey about the drinks, snacks and food offered at the Fox and Goose. Her intention is to keep what people like and consider how she can extend what's currently available in order to meet customers' needs.

**Hannah Nadim**  
Chair

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