

DRAFT

Minutes of the Green Gram Committee Monday 20 January 2025

Green Gram

Present

Paul Harding

Helen Harding

Judith Plumley

Wendy Reid

Jo Anderson

Louise Tonkin

Sue Woolcott

Suzy Simmons

Ann Dennis

Tania Baker

- 1 Apologies – none
- 2 Minutes from December – approved subject to action 11.3. Communication to leads by JP
- 3 Action log

From September

9.1 Storing documents on Wix No progress

From October

10.3 Resilience plan Feb agenda

From November

11.3 Safeguarding
WR to circulate updated documents
TB to update website
JP to communicate with Leads
JP to ask leads to confirm they have read

From December

12.1 Management accounts and treasurers report HH/LT
Work ongoing

12.2 Add budget process for 2024/25 to Jan agenda Completed

12.3 Christmas gift for volunteers Completed

12.4 Winter social food Completed

12.4 Nut butter machine On agenda
Speak to BH24 as agreed Completed
Grant bids Completed

12.5 Coffee sales update for Jan On agenda

4 The committee received updates from

4.1 Treasurer

The committee noted the very positive trading in December which completed a very busy quarter 3. Overall revenues were in line with the forecasts needed to cover the additional costs of the full time Business Manager role. January trading had also started well and was ahead of expectations though trading across the days was variable with a mix of quiet and busy days. There was a discussion around margins which were also in line with forecasts.

It was agreed on the P+L that donated income should be shown as a line after the gross margin calculations.

The committee also felt that the Treasurers report worked well in tandem with the management accounts and balance sheet.

4.2 Shop management

JA ran through the learnings from Christmas 2024. One observation from PH was that while the early opening on Saturday wasn't especially busy it did pick up each Saturday into December and it had the added advantage of spreading the sales over a longer time period.

JA has updated the website and is publishing the recipes through her weekly blog. The committee felt this was a significant improvement and the website is becoming much easier to navigate.

The coffee sales report was very helpful and showed an uplift in the volume of coffee sales since the coffee grinder had been acquired.

The Monday stock checks are working effectively and are enabling all the stock to be checked over a four week period. This continues to reveal a wide variety of unexplained variations and remains a concern. For example the popular SESI liquids show large variations in our favour. There could be a variety of explanations for this. It was felt that a video explaining how important it was to zero the scales correctly would be useful and that we should explain to volunteers the implication of getting this wrong.

4.3 Grants

Grant funding totalling £900 had been secured towards the nut butter machine. Some £700 was from Councillor Heron at Hampshire County Council and £100 from each of our New Forest District Councillors. An excellent outcome especially given the speed with which this was secured.

4.4 Volunteers

The volunteer group remains very stable. The serving/support volunteer base is at 51 and of those 46 volunteered for one or more shifts over the last four weeks. We have two additional volunteers in training. In addition a further four volunteers undertake other roles.

Feedback on the social was very positive. JA's talk about suppliers was very well received.

4.5 Outreach

WR is giving talks to the Trefoil Guild about The Green Gram in Fordingbridge and Damerham over the next couple of weeks. Plans are in place for a talk in conjunction with Fordingbridge Greener Living about 'clean and green' – 4 March. WR is also linking in with the Library Green and Thrifty fortnight and is running a session on Saturday 22 Feb to promote SESI products.

The young volunteers are generally working quite well. The DofE scheme runs for 6 months which is somewhat restrictive as for some participants they are just becoming effective when they finish. However, it was agreed we should continue with the programme on a six monthly cycle, especially as we now have a waiting list. On an individual basis young volunteers could be offered the opportunity to join the volunteer base when they finished their programme.

5 Nut butter machine

The committee thanked PH for the work on fund raising which had secured £1950. The machine is now ready to start being used and peanuts are on order. Instructions for the volunteers on using the machine are in preparation.

The film to be used at The Regal will be shot shortly and give recognition to all the businesses and local authorities who have donated.

6 Budget and managing growth

There was a broad discussion about a budget for 2025/26 and how we manage any future growth.

Key points –

- As the shop gets busier one of the key elements of our ethos tends to get lost because its difficult to have a broad conversation with a customer when there is a queue.
- A second shop in Fordingbridge was impractical and would be difficult and expensive to manage.
- December 2024 was extremely busy and possibly represents a revenue ceiling based on our current operating model.
- A fourth till may enable further growth but would require additional volunteers.
- The creation of a click and collect service could be an effective proposition for some customers.
- A washing machine for scoops etc is being investigated which would help improve the efficiency for servers.
- The recipes JA has been publishing during Jan have been terrific though giving customers the confidence and skills they need to try them is a challenge. This led to a discussion about the potential benefits of a community kitchen and how that might link to The Green Gram.
- In addition the resilience of the current operating model needs to be taken into account.
- It was agreed all of these issues needed further consideration but that a sensible starting point would be to work on a baseline budget for 2025/26. This should assume no major changes to the current operating model – so no fourth till, no major increase in the volunteer base etc. The Shop Management committee will work up a monthly revenue budget of sales split between food and non food along with gross margins. With input from LT on fixed costs this will produce a monthly budget P+L. We can then consider this at our next meeting.

7 The date of the next meeting was pushed back a week to Mon 24 Feb again meeting in the shop.

Action log

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JP to ask leads to confirm they have read JP

From December

12.1 Management accounts and treasurers report HH/LT
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From January

1.1 Move donated income on P+L to after the gross margin LT

1.2 Video on using the scales to make sure they are
zero-ed with the customers container JA

1.23 Baseline budget SMC/LT