

TUCO Midlands Region Virtual Meeting

Thursday 17th February 2021 at 2:00 pm via MS Teams

MINUTES

Attendees:	Stuart Ruty [Chair]	Wolverhampton
	Dan Brazill	Loughborough
	Gavin Brown	Leicester
	Nigel Edwards	NSCG
	Mark Gane	Leicester
	Kate Glynn	Aston
	Ivan Hopkins	Nottingham Trent
	Judith Hoyle	TUCO Secretary
	Sarah McLoughlin	TUCO Academy
	Anthony Midgley	Leicester
	Hannah Myton-Wright	TUCO Category Manager
	David Nuttall	Harper Adams
	Amanda Pettingill	Nottingham
	Richard Plummer	Leicester College
	Clive Singleton	Warwick
	Audrey Taylor	Wolverhampton
	Dawn Vincent	Stoke-on-Trent

Apologies:	Carly Bradshaw	Aston
	Louise Chatfield	Staffordshire
	Libby Granger	Loughborough
	Mike Guest	Halesowen
	Ryan Hanson	RAU
	Claire Hopkins	NTU
	Gagan Kapoor	Loughborough
	Matthew Thorpe	Harper Adams
	Richard Thurman	Aston
	Debbie Tyler	Loughborough
	Ian Williamson	Loughborough

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies as listed above.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were taken as agreed.

3. Presentation by Andy Henderson and Vikki Nicholls of Dawn Foods

A copy of the presentation is included with these Minutes.

Prior to the next item on the Agenda, members discussed Graduations this year. Warwick, Leicester and Nottingham had all cancelled theirs. NTU are looking to do 2020 Graduations in July this year and this year's in November 2021. Next year should hopefully be back to normal but for this year's, social distancing would have to be observed. Harper Adams are planning to hold their next graduations in Easter 2022. In place of a Graduation ceremony, Wolverhampton will be sending their students a gift pack.

4. TUCO Framework Updates (Hannah)

Four framework updates and coming up for tender/renewal. These are IFDC, Temporary Staffing, Meat and Poultry and EPOS which are all currently at the research stage. DipChem price increase requests have mainly been for PPE but Johnson Diversey are looking to introduce increases in April. Mandy is trying to resist these unless they can be justified. On the Soft Drinks framework both CCE and L R Suntory have submitted price increases and on the Alcohol framework there are likely to be increases following the Budget. The updated Brexit Impact Tool is on the website.

Jane Eve has recently met with an organization called "Food for the Brain". They offer an accreditation to caterers who can demonstrate a food offering that optimises consumers' brain health and mental wellbeing. University of Leeds and University of Edinburgh currently hold this accreditation.

NCCO Food Solutions - would like to present the Date Code Genie to members at regional meetings. It is an allergen labelling system and, in light of Natasha's Law coming into force later this year, it's something being considered at present. The system is available via suppliers on the DipChem framework.

TUCO have joined up with Too Good To Go. TGTG is an App that allows caterers and food & drink outlets to sell their surplus food and drink to consumers. Once members sign up, customers access the App and purchase 'Magic Bags,' which are then filled with leftover food and/or drink a collection time set. TUCO members have the first 12 months fees waived.

Contract Review Meetings have now been held on the following agreements – Soft Drinks, Sandwiches, DipChem, Alcohol, Fresh Fish and Seafood and Vegan and Vegetarian.

Regarding Sustainability – Sue Lightfoot the TUCO Sustainability Manager has now retired. CEO Mike Haslin will be issuing a statement shortly on TUCO's Sustainability plans going forward.

Gavin asked if any suppliers had gone into administration during the pandemic. Mark asked about Starbucks not being on the Hot Beverage framework. Hannah replied that they should hopefully be on the new IFDC agreement under 'We Proudly Serve' as they are hoping to bid to be on there and the new framework should be a suitable route to market for that model. There is another model on the table which is not so simple; via 'Master Licensee'. Gavin is not happy with what they are proposing regarding a Regional Franchisee as this would mean they have an outlet on campus over which they have no control.

Amanda added that TUCO are trying to do what they can on this but Starbucks are proving difficult to deal with.

Stuart commented that Costa do not want single person operations but would be very interested to get into universities. They are offering a couple of proposals and are willing to work with the individual universities.

5. Academy Update

The Academy is completely online at the moment and everything is being delivered by webinar. No study tours or development days are being organized. We are concentrating on Compliance courses, Change Management and Leadership Skills. Later in February will be the Level IV Food Safety Refresher. Level III Food Allergens is coming up with an option to get a qualification at the end but for this you would need an on-site invigilator. The upcoming Leadership Skills is sold out but there are places left on the Mental Health Awareness, which is a 4 hour course. There is a qualification attached to the Mental Health First Aid, to be run on 14th and 21st April. Sarah will be doing a case study on the Upskill courses for Mental Health support which includes advice on how to cope with stress and anxiety. Level II Allergens and Food Safety are available as either a qualification or just a refresher. These can be done at home on either a laptop or iPad and are Free of Charge. Level III Allergens and Food Safety cost around £20 to £25 each. We will also be running a Level II Healthy Food and Special Diets course along with a Change Management course which covers returning to work.

On 24th March there will be a webinar on Natasha's Law. We also have coming up a half day session on Plastics and we are looking into offering recipe videos for students. Kate mentioned that when she did her report on in-house catering versus contract caterers she included the fact that in-house staff are more there for the wellbeing of students as they are familiar faces students can relate to as opposed to contracted staff. The group asked if TUCO could compile a new resource focusing on the benefits (and bigger picture) of remaining in-house which would include extra benefits which Contract Caterers can't/won't do such as "deployment during COVID; mental health; agility as in-house operators (e.g. isolation boxes etc). Hannah will follow up on this.

Action: Hannah

6. Board Update

Amanda explained that it had been challenging times for TUCO in terms of framework spend but that we are working with suppliers on this. We have unfortunately had to make redundancies but this has had a positive effect from an Accounts point of view. The budget has been re-done taking into account the decrease in spend and we are where we should be at, at the moment. We are starting to put together a budget for next year and are trying not to be too ambitious about this. The Year End Audit is imminent. ProcureWizard has had considerably less usage so we are in talks with The Access Group to try to reduce the costs accordingly. Phil Rees-Jones is now in place as Chair and has asked members of the Board if they would consider putting themselves forward for the role of Vice-Chair.

Gagan has been working on a TUCO App along the lines of Deliveroo or Uber Eats and whether this would need to fit with the institution's till system or not. Ivan has been looking at a Click and Collect model with a company called Dill. He has also been looking at the return of staff and how they can use that manpower to generate some income. Commission fees on this of around 50 pence per delivery were too high. The ideal solution would be a better option for delivery without the high commission fees. Wolverhampton use YoYo and are currently in talks with them to get Click and Collect off the ground. At Nottingham they use the My Local App which only charges a commission for payments taken; direct payments do not have any commission. However, there is also a Click and Collect App with their new till system.

Ivan was looking at dipping into the High Street as well. This has 30% commission fees if you use their delivery model but dropping to 14% if you just use their website. Gagan will speak to Ivan on this as it could address any potential costs/compatibility issues and save TUCO a substantial amount of money if it's not feasible.

Gavin remarked that TUCO is managing the losses well and reducing costs and will get through the pandemic and come out the other side stronger. The Audit Committee members were able to advise Mike Haslin when they expect to see a return of footfall on campus.

7. Forum Activity Discussion

Stuart explained that he finds this really useful. There had been some discussion on Kinetix computer system as it has trebled in costs and Wolverhampton are tied in for another 18 months but will not be renewing after that. Nottingham have just carried out a massive upgrade with Kinetix on the Cloud based system. Prices have not gone up yet but there was no contract in place. They now have one for the next two years but then will go out to tender. Gavin feels that if TUCO are looking at an App then we should be looking for a complete solution that includes "Hospitality & Events".

Return to Campus – how are people planning for 8th March? Wolverhampton are focusing on the subjects which need to be practically based. Should we be opening more areas to support these additional students? Gavin is looking at the date when the furlough scheme ends as they will have to bring back their staff then. Leicester are currently planning to bring them back after Easter but are not expecting much footfall of students until after then. Ivan is hoping that the scheme will be extended until the end of June. Scotland are not planning to bring face to face teaching back until September. Mark mentioned that in some institutions staff had been asked to take wage cuts as students are looking for refunds for periods when they have not been taught.

Temperature Monitoring – Hannah mentioned two companies that TUCO were currently looking at, Navitas and Monika.

On Site versus Outsourced Operations – the question was asked whether there was any worked being undertaken by TUCO to show the cost difference of in house versus contract caterers? Hannah replied that we capture data with the independent benchmarking that we carry out. Amanda has had a number of contract caterers at Nottingham, including Sodexo, Baxter Storey, Compass and Aramark. She terminated all their contracts as they wanted to charge considerably more.

Gavin added that, as in-house operators we have been able to do things at short notice, for example isolation boxes. Amanda would like to reach out to De Montfort University as they are completely with Compass, to get an idea of their experience. Gavin will speak to his contact at DMU about this.

8. Member Updates

Aston

Executives at the university have decided that they do not want to do hospitality any more. Sales wise they are at about 5% versus last year and staff have been re-deployed in the Covid centre, cleaning and Estates.

Loughborough

The flexi-Furlough scheme has seen substantial savings and the retail staff have been re-deployed to positions in the catered halls. Retail sales are 80% down year on year. They do not have a large number of students on campus (around a quarter) with only 3 dining halls open. Not many international students have returned and isolation numbers remain low. They are hoping for some to come back in March with a Lateral Flow Test on return then a test every 7 days. A Take-Out service is available for students. They have a ProcureWizard completion date of end of May. They are about to award their new Chilled, Frozen and Grocery tender. They are also developing their new Sustainable Health Food Policy ready for the next academic year. They have taken over running of the nurseries from the SU and their VC is planning to retire later this year.

Amanda asked how Loughborough are enforcing tests. They receive a text to remind them then when they come through the dining halls they are asked to show evidence that they have received the test. After 7 days they get an e-mail reminder that they need to be tested. Stuart asked if it would be possible to run a magazine article on how flexible catering staff have been during the pandemic.

Harper Adams

Their VC is also leaving later this year along with several members of their Senior Management. 90% of their staff are furloughed and this is set to end on 26th April. Quite a few students are currently on site and more are set to return on 8th March. It is all going well at the moment with ProcureWizard.

Nottingham Trent

Ivan is in the middle of budgeting for 2021/2022. They are operating 4 outlets across 3 campuses predominantly catering for testing staff. Ivan himself has to be tested every week. At one point he was the only member of staff not on furlough. They have done a mini-competition on DipChem which is to be awarded soon. Their Procurement person Susan Brackenbury has now retired and her replacement Sarah Turton is working on catering on behalf of Procurement. They are at 8% compared to the previous year and have very few students on campus.

University of Leicester

They have 4 outlets operating and it is very quiet on campus but Lateral Flow Tests are taking place there. Medical exams are coming up so they do have medical students on campus. They will be going live with ProcureWizard on 1st March and in preparation for this Mark found that they had over 90 suppliers which they have now cut down on.

He is having issues with suppliers on the Vending framework, First in Service and BRITA – they are proving very difficult to get any response from and he is not hearing back from any of them, even their phones are not being answered. The vending companies have not been on site to clear out the machines and these are too heavy to move so there are products in there which are out of date and they are unable to drain them off. Hannah will feed this back to the Category Manager for Vending, Mandy Johnston.

Their planned new outlets have still not opened but there is a private build on their Space Park which is set to open on 1st July.

Gavin has done a lot of work with their Executive Board to provide Value for Money and reduce operating costs.

They have had a 95% drop in income, have staff on furlough and are operating a Voluntary Severance Scheme. They are looking to lose 33% of their contracted staff through consultation. As a result they hope to have 33% of their workforce on contract and 66% casual labour. By this they are demonstrating their agility as a business. Most of the staff are expected to take advantage of the agile working conditions and opt to work from home. They are working with the O2 Academy in Leicester and are holding ‘virtual’ discos on a Wednesday night under the title ‘Let’s Disco’.

From a procurement perspective, Anthony reported that it has been busy but not on the catering side. However, from April he hopes to get back into this. Gavin feels that the hospitality side may go to a 38 week per annum until it completely recovers.

Leicester College

Most of the staff are furloughed and the ones who are not are only there to support the nurseries. They plan to refurbish an old building for new technical level teaching. Climate change is currently high on their Agenda and they are also looking at term times ready for September.

9. Any Other Business

Presentations for future meetings – a poll will be circulated to ascertain which suppliers members would like to come in to present.

10. Date of Next Meeting

This would be held during the first week of May – exact date to be confirmed.