

TUCO Welsh Regional Meeting
Tuesday 10th January 2022 at 10:00 am
Sir Martin Evans Building, Cardiff University

MINUTES

Attendees:	Jeremy Mabbutt	Aberystwyth
	Jason Edwards	USW
	Judith Hoyle	TUCO
	Annabel Hurst	Cardiff
	Andrew Phelps	Cardiff Met
	Phil Rees-Jones	Cardiff
Via Teams:	Angela Church	Bangor
	Jane Eve	TUCO
	Hayley Jones	Denbighshire
Apologies:	Vanessa Heritage-Smith	Wrexham
	Samantha Jones	Trinity St David
	Ian Kemp	Denbighshire
	Sarah McLoughlin	TUCO
	Dafydd Williams	Conwy
	Sue Williams	Wrexham
	Clare Winfield	USW

1. Welcome, Introduction and Apologies

Apologies as listed above. Jeremy welcomed all members.

2. Presentation by Dale Bentley of Lemon-Aid

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

These were taken as agreed.

4. TUCO Chair's Board Update

This financial year we were looking to make a pre-tax loss of around £500K but the actual figure was just over £100K. We are now looking at the next steps to rebuild the company. We are looking to bring forward the current strategy to start in 2023 rather than 2024 and what our objectives are for the next four years. We want to hear from our stakeholders at summer Conference. We have also booked our Winter Conference for 30th November at Newcastle University.

Cardiff have just adopted TUCO Online and it is working well. Only around 35 of our members are using this and it is free software. However, some people are using alternative software.

We have now run two in-person study tours – the Vegan and Vegetarian ones in London and Newcastle. We also have a summit conference for Menus of Change in New York in June.

Phil questioned what type of research members want going forward. Last year we had the Global Food Trends. It is likely that we will be changing some of the make-up of the Board and removing the cap on the Board members' terms of office. It could be a potential business risk if several members of the Board stepped down at the same time.

Our spend is increasing with Associate (non-university) members but some universities are choosing to work with Pelican going forward. Jeremy noted that TUCO is not just a buying organization but offers other benefits to members too. Phil is of the opinion that there are pros and cons to the Pelican offering.

The office premises will be vacated in October when the lease expires.

We have our summer Conference at Keele University from 25th to 27th July and there are bursary places available for every full member. There will be no Chefs Competitions this year as most members cannot spare the staff to attend. Annabel suggested having regional heats then one national final. Angela wondered if there was an appetite for getting a Chefs group together on a regional basis as it would be good for Chefs to be working collaboratively. Meetings could be held virtually and Angela would be happy to host this. Phil asked for this to be put on the agenda for the forthcoming Regional Chairs' Meeting.

Action: Secretary

5. Frameworks Update

Jane explained that we have two new Category Team members – Natalie Phillips who will be responsible for Meat and Poultry, DipChem and Catering Light and Heavy Equipment; and Li Davies who will be looking after the Sandwich framework and KEMS. Sampling has been done on the Sandwiches so this should be awarded soon.

TUCO White Label Delivery App: has now been awarded

Meat and Poultry: commenced 1st January

Milk and Bread: commenced 24th January

Fresh Fish and Seafood: out to tender

Fruit and Veg: tender was on hold as STS have changed their service, so we have a new provider – Micron 2. The current agreement has now been extended until 2nd October. Jane issued the tender on 16th May if anyone has any suppliers they would like to see on there please ask them to contact TUCO.

Design and Installation: SQs are in and are being evaluated. The results will be into the Tender Working Party by the middle of next week. They have had a lot more responses than last time – some very good and some poor. This agreement was originally put in place four years ago.

Sandwiches: The ICT is currently being evaluated and is due to go live on 1st July. Sampling was held during the previous week.

Soft Drinks: This has been extended into its final year and will expire in September. Tender documents are out and returns are due on 15th June.

We have quite a number of DPS frameworks including EPOS, which has four new suppliers on there.

CICS: The next date for SQ is 18th May. Hannah is in talks with Pret, Greggs and Costa.

Kitchen Equipment Maintenance: Hobart have been awarded onto Lots 1, 2 and 3 but Overclean have asked to be removed from the framework.

Contract Review Meetings

Grocery Frozen and Chilled: This will be done throughout May if anyone would like to join.

Alcohol: Things are improving in terms of stocks and driver shortages.

Kinetics: Jane is working on this with APUC leading but the process has been delayed as we are still engaging with suppliers.

Pricing

We have been inundated with requests for price increases but are making sure that we have justification for all requests. There are severe shortages of cooking oil. The main factors having an impact on prices are:

- Cost of inflation
- Raw materials
- Harvests (particularly in Ukraine)
- Cost of living
- Transport and shipping
- Fuel increases

Alcohol: Between 4% and 6.5% increases on this framework with some wine shortages.

Convenience Retail: Four suppliers have put up their prices.

Fresh Fish: Norwegian salmon prices are at their highest level ever.

Catering Light & Heavy: Price rises in stainless steel and aluminium have had a knock-on effect. More increases expected on crockery.

Sandwiches: Prices have gone up on egg-related products. There is a shortage of eggs due to the outbreak of Avian flu.

Soft Drinks: Jane's Beverages and Brakes have brought in price rises.

Grocery, Frozen and Chilled: Bidfood' monthly market prices are changing constantly mainly on oils and fresh fish. Brakes have actually had fewer price changes than others. The SMEs have been struggling. Many lines are either not available or being replaced. Gluten-free products in particular are in short supply.

Milk and Bread: Bread has been affected by the situation in Ukraine. All consortia are joining together to compile an impact report to show what things are affecting the market.

Jane is looking into a possible Social Enterprise agreement and asked members what they thought about a DPS agreement with regional lots. Would anyone be interested in sitting on the Tender Working Party? Annabel replied that she would be happy to be on the Working Group.

Jeremy asked if Jane thought that prices will continue to rise or if they will eventually stabilize.

We are still experiencing issues with supply chains and problems on the Sandwich framework, particularly with Real Wrap. Sampling for this has taken place recently and Category Manager Li Davies is having regular meetings with Jason at Real Wrap. Annabel asked Jane what happens when a supplier's tender submission is good but then they perform really badly? Jane feels that it is worth keeping clear evidence of poor performance. Members are of the opinion that they hold meetings with Real Wrap but nothing comes from these meetings. Jane explained that herself and Li Davies would arrange a meeting with Real Wrap.

Angela asked about suppliers putting in requests for price requests as at the moment their notice period seems to be getting shorter. Jane advised that we have two market reports – TUCO Intelligence and the Impact Report to keep members up-to-date with market fluctuations. Normally, we would ask for 28 days' notice but at the moment suppliers are not in a position to hold their prices. Milk and dairy products seem to be the worst affected currently. Annabel commented that she gets notifications of upcoming price increases on TUCO Online. She had had some problems with Bidfood but Castle Howell are managing to get the products that Bidfood cannot. Jane advised that contract review meetings for the Grocery, Frozen and Chilled are coming up in a couple of weeks so we can raise these points then. Jason mentioned that he is using Castle Howell more and would like to see them on the TUCO framework. Andrew will speak to Peter at Castle Howell about this.

Sustainability

Matt Tebbit from Reading is the new Chair of the Sustainability Group. They last met on 10th March and are looking at the possibility of a Swap Shop for end-of-life equipment.

Mandy Johnston has been looking at carbon reduction vs offsetting and whether our members have directives in place to reduce their carbon footprint rather than offsetting. Annabel replied that Cardiff have to measure their travel.

6. Training Academy Update

March saw the return of the first Study Tours in over 2 years with 9 delegates on the Newcastle plant-based tour and 14 on the London version. 3 or 4 more UK based tours and a European tour will be on the website in the next few weeks.

June will see the return of Development Days, with a Food Photography class in the Manchester office on the 8th June and a webinar on Food Waste on the 30th. If you are planning to attend the Food Waste webinar, please sign up before the end of May – there is some analysis to complete so that you have data to discuss at the sessions on the day.

We continue to run a hybrid model of webinar based courses and face to face (the face to face is on request) – the number of attendees continues to remain solid for the webinar courses. If you would like to run any face to face at your own institution – please e-mail Sarah, Sarah.McCloughlin@tuco.ac.uk.

Our next two webinars are both this month, a Youth Nutrition session which will be delivered by Marina Wegorek from Pro Youth Nutrition. There are sample bars for the first sign ups.

We will also have a session from Soft Bank Robotics – looking at tech solutions for labour – the booking for this will be available by the end of the week. (You can sign up for the nutrition now and both will be recorded).

Menus of Change conference is next month and the speakers look very interesting. 13 attendees will be coming from TUCO for the 3-day event in the Hudson Valley in New York. We continue to build our strategic partnership with the Culinary Institute of America and the Menus of Change, and we are looking at some extremely useful resources including an MA, online resources from their training team and Plant Forward certification.

7. Sustainability

Annabel announced that Cardiff are doing Menus of Change via TUCO. They have communicated with students on serving “seconds” and have monitored their food waste. They have set up their ‘Green Shoots’ café on the back of student feedback. They also have ‘Baby Shoots’ – a smaller offering with paninis and coffee. They are adopting a flexitarian approach to reduce meat but not remove it completely.

At USW they have 3 outlets at Treforest and are looking to reduce 20% of their meat content.

The TUCO Sustainability Group has set up two smaller working groups – one for Menus of Change and one for Sustainability Insights. People and Planet are considering looking at the Menus of Change principles. Aberystwyth have moved away from the Soil Association as they do not feel that there is any value in it. Cardiff Met have a new strategic plan for the university where sustainability is targeted. Jeremy asked what members are doing about disposable and re-usable takeaway salad pots etc. USW went disposable free last September. They have mugs from Starbucks but some people are using their own cups and some return their re-usable cups after a few days. However, they have had to re-introduce disposable for Open Days and one-off events. Bangor do not really do much on this with Too Good To Go. They have a discount scheme to reduce food waste with leftover food. Aberystwyth also have a similar discount scheme.

8. Updates from Members

Cardiff Met

They have taken over the Students’ Union with all staff TUPE’d over. This includes a bar, shop and a couple of outlets. They have refurbished it all and created a really nice social area. They have turned a dingy old bar into a pleasant social space. Their Starbucks operation has been a commercial success. The Gallery was refurbished during lockdown. A large number of staff are still doing hybrid working. Trading is now looking better, as is conferencing with more bookings. From September there will be 100% face-to-face teaching and also a drive to get staff back into work. Throughout the summer they will be extending the Bench café to create an additional seating area for the students. They have also just put a price increase in from Easter on their hot food.

South Wales

They are having a big push to get staff back onto campus but for the next 12 months 3 days a week will be the norm. They are calculating footfall in the buildings so that they can plan things better. They are in talks with Morrisons for a retail outlet and are looking at ways of diversifying income.

They have 1,200 students at Treforest so are looking at a delivery service but are up against stiff competition from the likes of Deliveroo, Just Eat etc.

Cardiff

Annabel has been in talks with a company called Cakebox who will do all the marketing work with Uber Eats, Just Eat and Deliveroo. During the pandemic, international students returning to campus had a delivery service of 3 meals per day plus snacks. They had the option of free meals or groceries. Cardiff hospitality is up to about 60 jobs per day on delivered catering. On the retail side, one outlet is closed as they do not have the staff to run it. Pay has been re-graded. At Aberystwyth, students new to the job are earning almost the same as the Grade 3s. Grades 1 and 2 have been affected by the Living Wage. Bangor feels this is increasingly becoming non-viable. At Cardiff, 'Green Shoots' has replaced the main restaurant as they cannot sustain the cost of running it.

Bangor

They have completed the refurb of the Student Activity Hub above the bar. Hospitality is on the increase and they have just done four Student Gala Dinners for 250 people. Their next big event will be Graduations, which will last for 2 weeks and 2 days. Staffing and staff coming back on campus is still a problem.

Aberystwyth

They have a couple more weeks of term then the end of the licence agreement. They have some summer events planned. Staffing-wise they have a couple of vacancies but are not in a rush to fill them at the moment and Jeremy will probably not need any more staff until September now. They have extended graduation ceremonies to 8 days instead of the usual 4. Small refurb of the Students' Union next year with a plan to completely re-do it in a few years' time.

9. Ideas for Future Presentations

Annabel would like to see some of the new suppliers on the Catering Light and Heavy Equipment framework but Category Manager Natalie has not started work on this yet. Jeremy suggested a presentation by a kitchen designer on sustainability and knowledge efficiency.

10. Any Other Business

Regarding the Catering Light and Heavy tender, Angela has someone at Bangor who would be interested in sitting on the working party.

With reference to Sustainability Insights, Jason has a cup scheme at USW and Jeremy mentioned a plastic-free chewing gum.

11. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be a virtual one via Teams to be held in the afternoon of Wednesday 7th September 2022.