

CALLING ALL DINERS! CALLING ALL DINERS! CALLING ALL DINERS!

THE GAY HUSSAR NEEDS YOU!

JOIN THE GAY HUSSAR DINERS & STAFF CO-OPERATIVE

Dear

I am writing to invite you to become part of an exciting new venture designed to secure the future of our favourite restaurant, the Gay Hussar. I am doing so on behalf of a group of diners and staff, the 'Goulash Co-operative' www.goulash.coop, a new venture aimed not only at saving the Gay Hussar restaurant but maximising the potential we all know that it has.

You will have heard that the current owners, Corus Hotels, are preparing to sell the Gay Hussar. We have met with them, and they are aware of our intent to bid for the business in early December.

We have formed an Industrial & Provident Society (IPS) in order to bid for the business, take it on and run it with the existing, excellent and loyal staff.

This is a model that has worked well elsewhere, and given the traditions of the restaurant, the solid customer base and the enormous goodwill that exists, we believe that our plan provides a sound new long-term business base for the Gay Hussar. Our aim is not only to keep the Gay Hussar open, but to maximise its potential.

We are seeking to raise at least £200,000 in order to secure the lease for the next eight years.

We are asking if you would be prepared to invest in the new venture either individually or as part of a group. Investment will be in the form of IPS Shares. This type of share, used extensively in co-operative societies, housing associations, clubs and the like, does not appreciate in capital value but is entitled to interest payments or dividend dependent on profits. All the money raised through this appeal will be held in a Unity Trust Bank account. In the event of that our bid ultimately fails, all monies would be returned to you, immediately, in full.

Investments will be accepted in units of £500. The minimum investment will therefore be £500, but with an ambitious target, and time of the essence, we are asking you to consider investing more than the minimum if you possibly can. The legal maximum amount an individual or corporate body (except another IPS) can invest is £20,000.

The attached form provides a safe payment method to the Unity Trust Bank. Please fill it in as quickly as you can – time is very short.

EXPANDING THE BUSINESS, SECURING THE FUTURE

The Gay Hussar, as we all know, is part and parcel of a rich culinary, journalistic and political tradition. It has been serving customers for over sixty years and is the only Hungarian restaurant in London.

Recently a colleague, John Cryer MP, submitted this Early Day Motion, which spoke for all of us, diners and staff alike. In a few short days it was signed by thirty MPs, with many more intending to do so.

‘That this House is saddened to learn of the decision by Corus Hotels, part of Malaysian United Industries, to auction the Gay Hussar restaurant in Soho, London in early December 2013; while recognising the right of Corus Hotels to dispose of its assets, notes that the restaurant’s long-standing and loyal staff have not been consulted in any way; further notes that the Gay Hussar has played an important role in the culinary, political and journalistic life of the capital for more than 60 years and as such is an important national institution; and applauds any initiative, including a possible diners’ and staff co-operative venture, as a means of keeping the Gay Hussar alive for future generations of rebels and Rabelaisians to enjoy.’

The Gay Hussar has been profitable until recent times, but as with many businesses has felt the effects of the recession and suffered from a lack of investment. However, the financial situation is now improving and our business plan sees the restaurant returning to profitability by the end of 2014.

As part of our plan to develop and expand the business, generate dividends for investors and secure good terms and conditions for the staff, we are proposing the following:

**Increasing dining capacity, by a) extending and improving the second floor dining area into the existing small bar and kitchen and b) creating a new, exclusive dining area on the third floor*

**Extending trading over the weekend and into Sundays*

**New, lighter, summer menu*

**Afternoon trading, snacks, coffee etc*

**More private events, such as weddings etc*

**More cooperation and joint sponsorship of culinary, media and media events – for example, joint ventures with Politicos Publishing, The Guardian, New Statesman, Tribune, etc*

**Meet the Editors; sponsored dinners with editors of national press, broadcasters and social media*

**Leaders lunch; sponsored annual lunch for political and trade union leaders*

**Seasonal dinners for trade union executives*

**Personal sponsorship of dining rooms: each dining room to be named in perpetuity after customers who provide the co-operative with substantial funds*

**Personalised brass plaques from those prepared to sponsor individual banquettes*

**A lunch and sitting with award winning cartoonist and Gay Hussar habitué, Martin Rowson, where your framed caricature will join the restaurant's 'hall of fame' – for a consideration!*

** Other member benefits to be developed in collaboration with you – our members*

The Gay Hussar must be able to capitalise on its powerful brand, connections and resonance in the political and media worlds. These are just a few of the plans that we are considering – much more will follow and especially with your support and involvement.

This is our one chance, not only to give a new lease of life to a great restaurant – but to show that there is a better way of organising and running a venture, one that is co-operative in nature.

So please, come aboard!

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Watson" with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Tom Watson MP
Honorary President**

On behalf of the Goulash Co-operative

John Goodman, Bill Hagerty, Chris Kaufman, Julia Langdon, Martin Rowson, Mark Seddon

Registered in England by the Financial Conduct Authority, no.32257R