

FISHERS ARMS HORNCLIFFE

Community Pub Buyout



COMMUNITY BENEFIT PLAN

THE FISHERS ARMS COMMUNITY PUB HORNCLIFFE LIMITED

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Version 2.1

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Horncliffe Parish is a small community of 403¹ residents in rural North Northumberland. The parish has an overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)² score of 4. The parish scores very low on two of the seven categories of deprivation, scoring 1 for the Living Environment and 1 for Barriers to Housing and Services. This puts the parish in the bottom 10% of deprived areas in the country for these two categories.

IMD score of 1 for the Living Environment

This measure relates to the indoor and outdoor living environment and housing in poor condition. This score is reflected in the Northumberland 2015 residents' perception survey where 34% of those surveyed believed affordable and decent housing was most in need of improvement. The village does not have access to mains gas, and households rely on oil, wood burning and fossil fuels for heating.

IMD score of 1 for Barriers to Housing and Services

This measure relates to the physical and financial accessibility of houses and local services. It looks at road distance to essential services such as a general store, post office, primary school or GP surgery. This level of deprivation measure was echoed in the parish surveys we undertook in 2018 and 2021. Parish residents give a wish list of; a local shop, newspapers, post office, parcel drop off/pick up and prescription pick up as the most requested services they would like to see reinstated. 7% of the parish have no car in the household and bus services are limited to two per day. There is no local authority school in the village, but Longridge Towers private school is situated within the parish.

The Northumberland 2015 residents' perception survey shows residents score their overall wellbeing as 24.7 on a scale between 7 and 35. 71% of residents perceived that they cannot influence decisions that affect their lives. 16.8% of people in Horncliffe parish are in single households aged 65 and over. 14.6% of people are in one family households aged 65 and over, so 31% of the village population are 65 and over. 11.5% of houses have no usual occupants so are empty or used for holiday letting. 1.1% of houses do not have central heating. The parish is significantly worse off compared to the whole of England for people delivering unpaid care, with 6.7% of people delivering unpaid care for 1 hour or more and for 2.7% delivering unpaid care for 50 hours or more.

¹ Figures taken from NOMIS 2011 Census key statistics

² This is a measure of deprivation from 1-10 where 1 shows high levels of deprivation and 10 shows low levels of deprivation

What does this mean for Horncliffe parish?

Higher concentrations of private sector households in fuel poverty are found in more rural areas such as Horncliffe which is not connected to the mains gas grid. Rurality has been linked to fuel poverty and social isolation as well as creating barriers to accessing services and employment due to the reliance on private road transport. This can have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health especially for elderly and disadvantaged groups.

The fact that 71% of Northumberland residents perceived that they cannot influence decisions that affect their lives can be alleviated by local community projects. The campaign to buy the Fishers Arms has galvanised our local community. It has brought together a number of people who are lending their skills and who are working towards a common purpose. People are financially invested in the project but as a Community Benefit Society that investment means one share gives them one vote. They are therefore also emotionally invested in the project and can directly influence decisions that affect their village and their lives. We can already see a pride of place and a positive spirit emerging from the project. We are currently developing a qualitative survey to understand more clearly what the quantitative data is telling us. We will offer volunteering opportunities to our local senior school to video our one to one and focus group interviews.

How can buying a community pub help?

Community businesses make a critical difference to their communities by addressing priority needs. Community pubs are a social lifeline for small rural communities.

- They are open for long hours
- They are open to all the community
- They can host a wide range of services
- They generate employment

Who can they benefit?

- New residents who want to meet their neighbours
- Individuals who might feel isolated at home
- The retired seeking opportunities to volunteer and remain active
- Those who live alone
- Carers who might have no other way of meeting people
- People who have no transport

How can they improve health and wellbeing?

- Creating a social space to alleviate social isolation and loneliness
- Hosting clubs and activities
- Hosting walking and cycling groups
- Hosting dementia and Alzheimer cafés
- Offering fresh local healthy food
- Offering pensioner's meals
- Offering access to a social space on the doorstep

Horncliffe community pub Management Committee have identified some early quick wins which would be deliverable as soon as the pub fully opens for business:

- Pensioner's meals
- Hosting the local 'Horncliffe Hookers' hooky mat crafting club
- Hosting weekly music sessions
- Ensuring the pub is a place of refuge in severe weather events
- Drop in café
- Darts and pub games
- Pub quizzes
- Charity fundraisers

The Fishers Arms premises are not large and will not be able to host all the services on our residents' wish list. The figures below give us confidence that the pub will be a sustainable and viable business. This will provide income that can be ploughed in to other premises to host these community services. Support for these services is currently planned in year three of our business plan. We will deliver them earlier if possible.

- In 2019 the community pub sector grew by 19% with 19 new pubs opening
- 119 community pubs were trading across the UK at the end of 2019
- The amount raised by the 19 newly opening pubs was circa £3.7 million from 3,718 new community shareholders
- Approximately 57% of capital required for start-up was resourced from community shares
- No community pubs closed or transferred out of community control during 2019

QUICK WINS

Pensioners' lunch club

The Fishers Arms previously hosted a pensioners' lunch once a week on Thursday. It offered a set price menu with a starter and main course priced at £9.50.

Proposal

Pensioners' lunch at a discounted price of £10.00 for three courses. To be available Monday to Friday 12pm to 2pm. To offer a limited menu and smaller portions.

Cost

The business plan projected profits show a desired gross profit percentage of 65% for viability. At a cost to make of £4.00 and a selling price of £10.00 the gross profit percentage for this offering would be an optimistic 51%. It would not be making a loss but it would be making a smaller profit than other offerings. It might be possible to increase the profit margin by reducing portion size and sourcing cheaper ingredients. As business builds there will be economies of scale. It will also be offset by bar takings and tea and coffee. However, the aim of this offering is to deliver benefits to over 65s so we would run it at lower profit to provide a service for this group.

Business Benefits

- It builds footfall for the pub
- It builds the reputation of the pub for good food
- It encourages return business; people will return for lunch but also for evening meals and celebrations
- It encourages custom at times when the pub is quiet

Community benefits

- It offers warmth and food to those that may be affected by the low score for Living Environment.
- It provides a local service for those affected by a low score for Barriers to Housing and Services
- It offers informal and flexible employment and volunteering opportunities
- It is a safe and familiar place for dementia and Alzheimer sufferers
- It offers a social space for carers who may suffer from loneliness and isolation
- It builds community engagement and interaction

Hosting local clubs

Prior to closure the Fishers Arms hosted the Horncliffe Hookers, a village group interested in traditional Northumberland rugmaking. They met regularly in the pub once a week on Wednesday. The pub also hosted a weekly Monday night music session where local amateur musicians met to play music from jazz and blues and folk and traditional tunes. The traditional tunes included keeping alive the tradition of music from Northumberland and the borders.

Proposal

To invite these clubs to return to the pub on a regular weekly basis

Cost

These clubs took place during usual opening hours so the costs would be nominal. The operating cost to open the pub for 1 hour is approximately £5.00 so the cost would be approximately £10.00 for a 2-hour session. The clubs do not have exclusive use of the premises so it continues to be open to all other guests. Previously a small buffet was provided for the music sessions. This would be at the discretion of the tenant in future. Costs are off set by bar sales and tea and coffee. Guests at the music night also ordered bar meals so the events encouraged food sales.

Business benefits

- It builds footfall for the pub
- It brings in a regular dependable income
- The music nights bring in people from a wider area such as Wooler, Duns. Kelso and Berwick which builds reputation outside the village
- It encourages custom at a time when the pub is quiet
- Regulars visit specifically to listen to the music sessions

Community benefits

- It improves the Living Environment and breaks down barriers to cultural services
- It supports local Northumbrian Arts and Culture
- It builds community engagement and interaction
- It provides a community meeting place
- It enters the life of the community by supporting the Beer and Music Festival and the Salmon procession

Drop in café

Prior to the closure of the pub there was an unmet demand locally for a small café where people could meet for tea and cake. Cyclists and walkers often diverted off the local Tweed trail and cycle paths looking for refreshment, but were disappointed

Proposal

To set up a small café in the restaurant area of the pub where people can drop in for a coffee and a chat. It is envisaged as a self-serve area with people able to serve themselves and stay for as long as they like during the mornings and afternoons. We will offer opportunities for volunteers to set up and run a book corner in the café for book exchange and leisure reading activities. Opening hours Monday to Friday but this could be adjusted according to demand. Regular bake sales take place in the village and cake is extremely popular! We have both a regular supply source and ready-made consumers.

Cost

The business plan has set aside £3000.00 to set up the café area though we will be applying for grant funding for this. Sales are assumed at £12,000.00 annually using an estimated baseline of 10 customers a day, 5 days a week with an average spend of £4.00 per person. This would give a gross profit percentage of 70%

Business benefits

- It delivers relatively high gross profits
- It is a previously untapped source of income
- It does not require a large investment of time or energy for the tenant
- It increases the reputation of the pub
- It encourages tourists, cyclists and walkers who may stop for coffee but then return for an evening meal
- It encourages customers who are not regular pub drinkers

Community benefits

- It provides a local service and improves the Living Environment and breaks down barriers to services
- It welcomes customers who are not regular pub visitors
- It supports local tourism and increases local tourist investment
- It provides a community meeting place
- It offers opportunities for local volunteers

Ensuring the pub is a place of refuge in severe weather events

The pub has been in the village since 1760 and has always served as a place of refuge during severe weather events. The pub closed in October 2021. When Storm Arwen hit the north in November 2021 both entrances to Horncliffe village were cut off by fallen trees, and electrical power was cut off for three days. The village is not on the mains gas grid. The Fishers Arms has open fires and it cooks on propane gas. In the past anyone with no heating or hot food was able to take shelter in the pub, get warm and get hot food. Storm Arwen brought home to us how much our resilience was impacted by the closure of the pub as we could no longer protect our frail and elderly in this way. We have a 15% contingency cost of circa £38,000 in our initial refurbishment cost. Some of this contingency will be used to make the pub accessible. We will seek professional advice and capital investment to enable all users to access the pub. Currently we are unable to cost this expenditure because the pub is closed and we cannot access the building. Capital funding would allow us to accommodate those with reduced mobility.

Proposal

The pub will continue to act as a place of refuge during severe weather events and will provide warmth and shelter whenever necessary.

Cost

Operating costs to remain open 24 hours for three days would be £355.00. The pub would continue to serve food and drink during that period but would also cook meals and make hot drinks for anyone in need. In this event the pub would be likely to make a loss.

Business benefits

- No financial benefit
- It increases the reputation of the pub

Community benefits

- It protects our frail and vulnerable residents
- It increases the resilience of the community
- It provides a local service, improves the Living Environment and breaks down barriers to services
- It gives a sense of pride of place and belonging
- It allows us to make decisions that influence our lives

WORK OF ART FROM 'HORNCLIFFE HOOKERS'

□ The 'Horncliffe Hookers' who created this tapestry to commemorate the village hall's fiftieth anniversary. Every week the ladies met in the Fishers Arms to work on the tapestry which will now hang in the village hall where this week-end they are holding a rag rug exhibition. Picture by Michael Reilly.



Music night in the Fishers Arms

Environmental benefits

A tale of early self sufficiency

‘The cottages that lined the road had large gardens which helped the occupiers with food supplies. Many also kept a pig. A hated job was collecting nettles for the pig! There is a tale told of the Fishers Arms pig which was given the dregs from glasses and was often tipsy, to the delight of the children.’³

Car travel

89% of all petrol use and 40% of all diesel use in the UK comes from households. Counties outside major cities account for 74% of emissions. The more rural the district the higher the per capita transport carbon emissions. Median car journey length is 5 –25 miles which accounts for the bulk of emissions. Areas often look to transport for solutions to deeper seated problems, for instance the closure of shops or pubs. Preventing the closure of services, or shifting the delivery of those services back to the local areas can prevent short single occupancy car journeys to the nearest shop to pick up bread or a paper. In this way we can reduce emissions. There is potential to provide opportunities for volunteering to set up and run a ride sharing initiative. Horncliffe village is popular with walkers and cyclists. By providing a place of rest and refreshment during a journey we can encourage a shift away from cars to encourage increased tourist use of walking and cycling routes to benefit the environment.

How do we plan to make the pub more environmentally friendly?

- We have registered an interest in a grant application for solar panels
- We will use upcycled/recycled furniture
- We are exploring the use of recycled kitchen & beer dispensing equipment
- We will be targeting walkers, campers & cyclists in our advertising
- Dependant on capital funding we will invest in environmentally efficient chilling solutions for beer delivery.
- Dependant on capital funding we will use energy efficient lighting & signage, & use automatic controllers to reduce energy consumption
- Using local beer & food suppliers will reduce our carbon footprint
- We will limit our dependency on single use plastics
- Recyclable containers will be used for take away food & disposable glasses, for example Vegware, to be used outdoors
- Our cleaning & washing products will meet high environmental standards.

³ Taken from HORNCLIFFE A Northumbrian border village by Sheila Elliott