



Business Plan to establish the Blue Bell, Stoke Ferry as a freehold Community Pub and Hub



STOKE FERRY COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE LIMITED

Registered with the Financial Conduct Authority as a
Community Benefit Society, Number: RS008415

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[@SaveOurBlueBell](https://twitter.com/SaveOurBlueBell)

Our thanks for support from



Executive summary

It is essential that the fabric of our vibrant community's way of life is secured for current and future inhabitants of Stoke Ferry and the surrounding area. Villagers have repeatedly expressed their support for the Blue Bell to be a community pub and hub that can provide a home for vital services for our large village and end its drift towards dormitory status.

Stoke Ferry is at a major turning point in its history as the feed-mill that has dominated the centre of the village for decades prepares to move to more suitable premises elsewhere in our region. This will pave the way for more housing in the village centre and an increase in population.

More Than a Pub

This business plan sets out our vision for the development of a valuable community resource that will be very much more than a pub. Traditional, commercial pub offerings will help fund initiatives that will:

- reduce rural isolation
- enhance local employment and training
- support the elderly and carers
- bring essential services back to the village
- strengthen community solidarity
- be proactively inclusive
- foster other initiatives to meet new needs as they emerge

The experience of the pandemic has reinforced everyone's appreciation of the importance of local, community-based services and support and has clearly driven even greater support for this project.

The Opportunity

The village has the opportunity to purchase and renovate the premises of the Blue Bell, which ceased operating as a pub in March 2018. A campaign group came together to:

- engage the community in the redevelopment of the Blue Bell
- develop a sustainable business plan for a community pub and hub
- scope activities that a community hub can support in the short term and as a path for growth
- raise funds for the purchase and renovation of the premises
- appoint a manager and recruit volunteers to operate the Blue Bell

Costs and Fundraising

Initial forecast costs of £280,000 are made up of £180,000 to purchase the premises, £80,000 for renovation and £20,000 initial working capital. Where possible, we will reduce renovation costs further through volunteer effort and donated materials.

We will raise the necessary funds from the following targets:

- Community share offer – £150,000
- Power to Change loan + grant – £100,000
- Local Government grant – £30,000

Long-term sustainability

Our business forecast demonstrates how the Blue Bell can operate sustainably as a community pub and hub, making a surplus from its first year of operation. Surpluses will be reinvested into the Blue Bell and used to support community initiatives hosted at the pub or other, independent projects such as the Village Hall, the playing fields, and the forest school.

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1. Introduction

This Plan explains in full the project of purchasing The Blue Bell Pub by the community of Stoke Ferry and the surrounding area. This is a rare opportunity which is unlikely to present itself again. Success will help develop a thriving future for the village and community.

The Campaign to Save The Blue Bell has grown out of strong community feeling that the village needs the amenities of a pub and other services that the premises can support. Public meetings and a very successful consultation, in which around one-third of the village's households had their say, made clear the high level of support for a community pub.

Stoke Ferry's last pub, the Blue Bell, fell into low levels of use in recent years because of a failure to understand and meet the needs of all of Stoke Ferry's villagers. This is due to the challenging economics of running it as a tenant rather than outright owner.

This is an imaginative proposal which encompasses the whole of Stoke Ferry as well as neighbouring villages. It joins the heritage of our lively village with current necessary community activities, businesses, and the social well-being of all its inhabitants.

2. Our vision: to add social value

As a Community Benefit Society, we are raising funds to purchase and renovate The Blue Bell, bringing it back into operation as not just a community pub, but also an all-day café. It will act as a focus and provide support for village activities, create employment, reduce rural isolation, and provide much-needed services. In time, any surplus generated will be used to support other local community initiatives.

The Blue Bell will be open from 10am -11pm Monday to Saturday and Noon to 10.30pm on Sundays.

We will offer a diversity of services that are not currently available in the village:

- A traditional, stylish, comfortable, welcoming, family friendly village local drinking pub with all the modern extras
- Good quality bar food, snacks, coffees/teas, cakes, and a range of non-alcoholic drinks.
- An all-day café services.
- Locally sourced foods and use of organic ingredients where possible.
- A range of imaginative and appealing vegetarian/vegan dishes to eat in or takeaway.
- A small shop section offering essentials; bread, milk, soups, etc.
- A parcel depot and prescription pick-up service.
- A hub for clubs, societies, individuals, retirees, and other social groups.
- A regular Citizens' Café where people can listen to and debate topics of interest e.g. local history, development of the village, Black History Month, Pride.
- 'Café for Carers'; respite for carers to come together for mutual support.
- Host an archive of images, documents & artefacts relating to the history of Stoke Ferry and the surrounding areas.
- Use of recycled/up-cycled materials and purchases through *Stoke Ferry Market Place* and similar local web sites, thus keeping money within the local economy.
- In time, we will look to add a mini brewery.

Our aim through the above is to deliver significant social impact, helping to foster new & existing relationships between individuals & organisations within our community.

- We will employ paid staff and fill volunteer roles based on an applicant's skills, knowledge and, importantly, attitude towards minority communities and the willingness to develop a local pub that offers a genuine welcome to all sections of our community.
 - Having a robust induction and refresher training that reinforces anti-discriminatory

- practice and manages unacceptable customer behavioural situations.
- Having images and marketing materials which refer to minority communities, e.g. Pride beer mats, multi-lingual 'welcome' posters and participation in Black History Month.
- We will create a hub for fundraising/volunteer recruitment e.g. supporting the Village Annual Fair fundraiser, being the host venue for 'Volunteers' Week'.
- We will employ local trades/craftspeople to carry out necessary works, refurbishment and future upkeep.

3. Local community's strength of feeling & support

When the Blue Bell stopped trading in early 2018 concern grew within our village that the premises may be changed to a private residence, thus losing its role as a community and economic asset.

Timeline of events:

- **March 2018** - Blue Bell ceased trading
- **July 2019** - Purchased by Oxygen 56 Ltd
- **December 2019** - Planning Application for change of use to private dwelling refused
- **January 2020** – Open meeting demonstrates support for community pub concept
- **February 2020** – Second open meeting brings together potential volunteers, working group is born
- **March 2020** - Borough Council lists the Blue Bell as an Asset Community of Community Value
- **May 2020** – Community Benefit Society, Stoke Ferry Enterprise Limited is registered
- **September 2020** - Oxygen 56 Ltd's appeal against refusal of planning permission rejected by Planning Inspectorate
- **September 2020** – Stoke Ferry Enterprise Limited secure bursary from Plunkett Foundation, More Than a Pub
- **October 2020** - Stoke Ferry Enterprise Limited carry out a commercial valuation of the Blue Bell
- **October 2020** – Oxygen 56 Ltd submit new planning application with no material changes

The campaign

This Campaign and the idea of establishing a Community-run pub springs from a number of previous village-wide consultations, i.e. the Stoke Ferry Village Design Statement (2005), Stoke Ferry Village Plan (2007) and, more recently, the community-led consultation held in February 2019.

Support for the maintenance and development of small businesses within the village has come from business and not-for-profit groupings across the area. (Please see our accompanying Community Benefit Plan)

There is also anecdotal evidence from residents who wish the pub to remain open in our village and we also have similar evidence from US service men and women who bemoan the loss of 'an English pub'.

Offers of skills have been forthcoming free of charge from within the village, the Parish Council and from the wider community and a working group was formed which has now become the committee of the Community Benefit Society. We have been assisted by Plunkett Foundation advisors on the range of community services that could be provided, e.g. ["The Pub is the Hub"](#).

The business plan reflects all of this diverse input, reflecting the wishes of the community as expressed at open meetings and through the main survey.

January & February 2020

Two Public Meetings were held with over 100 attendees

Spring 2020

Created a mailing list, now standing at 104 individuals, and website www.bluebellstokeferry.org

Our campaign to oppose the planning appeal by Oxygen 56 Ltd was successful and the appeal has been rejected by the Planning Inspectorate, who cited the existence of the community group and representations from villagers in their decision.

A Household Survey (paper and online) was carried out covering every household in the village – to ascertain demand/support to retain the Blue Bell. One-third of all households put in a response. (see findings in [Appendix 1](#))

Summer 2020

Throughout the COVID 19 virus restrictions we continued to engage with local supporters and residents through a range of On-line quizzes, beer, whisky & wine tasting sessions online, etc. On the late Summer Bank Holiday we held a socially-distanced, family friendly event with teas, coffees and cakes for consumption on site and beers and wines available to take away, an online beer tasting in collaboration with a local brewery and a family treasure hunt which raised a total of £1,300 and demonstrated that the pandemic period had strengthened support for the project.

4. Purchasing the premises & affordability

With a freehold purchase, Stoke Ferry Enterprises Ltd will enjoy the freedom of operating a business on its own terms and in its own style as a community run venture, with the surety that shareholders have equity to fall back on in the terms of bricks and mortar.

The asking price for the premises is currently £220,000. However, the owner is also asking for a 20% 'overage' for a term of 50 years. This unacceptable condition would have to be reduced/removed through negotiation. Our forecast purchase price reflects the recent valuation provided by MJD Hughes Ltd, who carried out a full commercial survey of the premises on 6th October 2020. We have based our plans on that business valuation.

Total Costings

Purchase of the premises -	£180,000
Refit, refurbishment -	£80,000*
Working capital -	£20,000
<u>Total capital required -</u>	<u>£280,000</u>

*This is based on an estimate of £25,000 to fit out the kitchen, £15,000 to fit out the trade side and a further £40,000 to renovate the general fabric, accommodation and grounds.

Financial performance

Our cash flow forecast shows profitability from year 1. This is set out at Appendix 6.

Any negative deviation from this is covered by having £20,000 working capital at the outset, based on our minimum start-up funding of £280,000, as set out above.

We explain below how profits will be used to benefit the community. We are confident that our numbers are both realistic and achievable.

We have decided not to pay share interest until our third trading year is complete and then only after the Management Committee have agreed that it is affordable and does not jeopardise the financial safety of the business. Interest would be paid at not more than 2% above Bank of England base rate.

We expect to be able to allow limited withdrawal of shareholdings after our third year of trading. The Management Committee will review the situation during year 3 and will keep investors informed of progress. The Society's rules limit total withdrawals in any one year to 10% of the issued share capital.

Business Valuation

We believe that this is not a normal business valuation situation as it has a unique value as a Community Asset which positions it differently from a purely commercial purchase. In terms of due diligence, we are confident we have researched the realistic value of the pub to a satisfactory level, having the benefit of a full commercial valuation from MJD Hughes Limited, who have extensive experience in community pubs.

Our three-year cash flow projection is at appendix 6. Great care has been taken to ensure accuracy and a cautious approach has been used with all the figures. We have explain below how profits will be used to benefit the community. We are confident that our numbers are both realistic and achievable.

Sources of funds

(1) Shareholders - As a Community Benefit Society we are resolute in the belief that the community should have both a financial and emotional stake in The Blue Bell.

By offering the opportunity of buying a small stake-holding in the business through single shares costing £50, we believe we have made it accessible to the vast majority of local people, thus widening the range of community involvement. Under SEIS rules investors will get tax relief of 50% on each investment (subject to them being a taxpayer and their own individual tax position) up to the first £150,000 of eligible shares purchased. Once that amount is reached, 30% tax relief will be available on the balance of shares held.

This financial and subsequent emotional involvement will have the effect of naturally encouraging a sense of ownership, pride and a 'want' to use The Blue Bell.

The other purpose of the Share Offer is to raise a significant sum of money towards the purchase, refurbishment and re-launching of the Blue Bell.

(2) Share Issue - we are planning to launch a share issue in late Autumn/Early Winter of 2020. The opportunity to buy shares will last for two months. The Directors may extend the offer if they believe doing so may increase the amount of capital that can be raised.

We have set a maximum share target of £250,000 which means we would be able to buy the pub, refurbish it and still have enough money for initial stock and working capital. It would also mean that we would no longer need any loans or grants, although we anticipate a position somewhere between the

two. We assume that we will secure £100,000 from the More Than a Pub scheme and so have set our lower share target at £150,000 to give a minimum total of funds of £250,000.

We are seeking assurance from HMRC about the share offer's eligibility for the Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme (SEIS) or Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR) scheme, which would enable investors to benefit from certain tax relief on their share purchases. We will announce the outcome of those applications when they are available.

(3) Marketing the share offer

We have undertaken a range of activities online and in person and, ranging from events to information leaflet drops to raise awareness of the campaign to reopen the Blue Bell as a community, secure engagement and prepare the community to make cash investment. We have grown our online following considerably and have a highly engaged newsletter subscriber base.

Marketing will make use of all of those channels and our very productive links with the local media. We are approaching prominent local people to act as patrons and others to make significant initial investments to give confidence to others.

We are working on a detailed PR plan with a local consultant, who is offering their services *pro bono*.

If the share offer is less successful than anticipated, bids for grant funding will be adjusted accordingly. If that is insufficient and the loan amount needs to be increased, then a larger loan will be taken out over a longer period to offset an increase in monthly costs.

If the share offer is more successful than forecasted above, grant requests may be moderated to avoid over-capitalisation with the focus on reducing the amount of loan required. However, while bearing in mind that repairs and improvements to the property may not necessarily translate to an increase in its value, it may, none the less, be to the advantage of shareholders if the society utilises any initial surplus to bring forward phase two refurbishment/expansion plans as early as possible within the initial 3-year period of operation, making it easier to create a surplus from which interest payments may be paid after 3 years. The actual amount raised above target will determine the best way to proceed.

If at any point after the closure of the share issue the management committee have serious concerns about the amount of money raised and consequently the eventual success of the project, a meeting of shareholders will be convened in order to gain approval of a way forward. It will be the responsibility of the management committee to propose options, including that the project be abandoned but also the possibility of loans from existing members which may attract Social Investment Tax Relief (SITR). The full position relating to available income to buy and refurbish the property should be clear by mid-January 2021.

(4) Start-up Grant –We have secured a bursary from the Plunkett Foundation of £2,500 to offset some of our initial start-up costs, principally the cost of a full commercial market valuation survey, our application for the Community Shares Standard Mark scheme and initial campaigning costs.

(5) Grants – We are also seeking a grant of £50,000 from the Plunkett Foundation which is contingent on taking out a loan at the same time of up to £50,000. The bid to the Plunkett Foundation is being submitted in October 2020 and if successful will reduce our target for fundraising from the share offer.

Once the Blue Bell is purchased, if necessary, we will also seek further grants to support refurbishment of the property. We aim to bid to the Prince's Countryside Fund and Pub is the Hub and the Norfolk County Council Community Infrastructure Levy fund.

Examples of sources of grants:

- The Key Fund: <https://thekeyfund.co.uk/>
- The Big Lottery Fund: www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk
- Borough Council KL&WN Small Grants Scheme: <https://tinyurl.com/s8qw763>
- Norfolk Foundation: www.norfolkfoundation.com

(6) In kind donations: materials and time from volunteers, professional and trade services. These 'donations' can be used when calculating 'match funding' to obtain future grants.

(7) Loans/Private finance from [Sidney Phillips Business Mortgages](#), [Cooperative and Community Finance](#), etc. **The Aim** is to maximise share income and grant funding and to minimise the amount of loan required but our P&L and cash-flow forecasts suggest that a loan of up to £50,000 is serviceable over a 10 year period.

(8) Community Fund Raising – we have a fund-raising sub-committee with a target of £5-10,000 through local fundraising and crowdfunding initiatives.

(9) Accepting payments for products and services - We are integrating our website and point of sale payments through Square (<https://squareup.com/gb/en>). This will allow us to take card payments immediately both in person and through our website, and manage cash receipts through a till with a laptop/tablet controlled by the Manager. When the pub is operational it will also enable remote ordering of food and drinks to enhance Covid security and issuing receipts. We plan to use the Xero bookkeeping system which also integrates with Square.

Profitability Objectives

Through prudent financial management and attention to detail we intend to run a business that generates profits for the business and the community. Profits will be reinvested in refurbishment, expansion and updating of the pub. Interest may be paid to investors in accordance with model rules adopted from The Plunkett Foundation Guidelines. Once the above are met we envisage that any surplus will be invested in other local community groups; The Village Hall, Playing Field, Youth Club, etc.

5. Risk management

Key risks and mitigation

We have identified the following key risks and mitigating actions.

- The owner refuses to sell at an affordable price or insists on high impediments when purchasing the freehold. In this event all shareholder funds would be returned to the investors and grant money returned to the original sources
- Insufficient funding. The purchase and refurbishment are dependent on sufficient monies being raised by the share issue and grant applications. In this case we would have to persuade the current owner to give further time to raise additional funds to realise the purchase.
- Loss of manager or chef. The manager position would need to be covered by volunteers from the management committee while a replacement is secured. If we were not able to secure a chef or lose one it would not be possible to offer food services until a replacement was found.
- Inadequate trading performance. The pub may not generate sufficient sales and profits to cover operating expenses, pay shareholder interest and develop the business. By diligent

management and measurement of KPIs we believe we can spot inadequate performance quickly and implement plans and actions to correct any negative trends. We will actively encourage customer feedback forums such as Tripadvisor.

- The Blue Bell becomes so successful that we are required to invest more management/staff time than is initially envisaged. This will be a welcome challenge. By its very nature it would mean we are generating sufficient profits to invest in further human resources.
- The effects of the current COVID-19 virus restrictions. While the rate of infection in West Norfolk remains relatively low, local restrictions may come into force. We do not foresee the Blue Bell reopening until mid-2021 at the earliest, thus we should avoid the worst of the effects of any local restrictions. We will build on the 'volunteering spirit' and distinct shift of purchasing habits towards local businesses amongst the population of Stoke Ferry and the surrounding villages.

Mitigating Risks

The areas where the project is most likely to run into difficulty will be best addressed by the adoption of **SMARTER** objective management:

Specific: It will be paramount to address specific issues as they arise. An example of this will be to address the hiring of a manager once the pub is bought.

Measurable: We can only keep the ship on the correct course by measuring performance. Adoption of financial accounting policies agreed KPI's, Gross Profit Margins, and customer satisfaction ratings will allow us to see where the business is heading.

Agreed Action: From our regular measurements, agreed actions can be implemented with the manager and staff colleagues to ensure continuously improved performance.

Realistic: Whilst the Management Committee is enthusiastic and passionate, we must always keep our feet on the ground. We believe our mix of management skills, experience and knowledge provides us with an excellent balance to maintain a realistic approach to running the business.

Timebound: All planned actions will have start and end dates with milestone measurement points to check progress throughout the process. To this end we have developed a Project Plan.

Ethical: The behaviour, culture, and operational practices will always comply with The Plunkett Foundation model rules and code of practice. We will also be governed by FCA regulations. We will also agree and adopt a set of Core Values which will underpin the business.

Recorded: By using sound financial practices and computer systems we will be able to review what has happened and why. All meetings will be minuted and digitally stored.

See also our SWOT Analysis for the Blue Bell in [Appendix 5](#).

6. The Team/Governance/SWOT/etc.

Stoke Ferry Community Enterprises Ltd. operates in accordance with The Plunkett Foundation model rules and code of conduct. We are members of The Plunkett Foundation and we have confirmation of the registration of Stoke Ferry Community Enterprises Ltd. with the FCA as a Community Benefit Society, sponsored by The Plunkett Foundation

Management Team

We have a highly motivated and experienced management team. We are using The Pub Is the Hub and The Plunkett Foundation as our main sources of external support. Both these organisations have been invaluable. We have also received tremendous help from the Management Team of The Kings Arms at Shouldham, a Community Pub about ten miles from the Blue Bell.

- **Chair – Stephen Ward**

Stephen returned to the area recently after many years working in London and Europe. He is a former Civil Servant whose early career was in the Cabinet Office and European Commission. He now works in the legal sector, regulating specialist property lawyers. In 2013 he was a founding Director of London LGBT+ Community Pride, which established a new and sustainable approach to the funding and management of the capital's Pride activities, significantly increased their impact through year-round campaigning, and ensured that the work was rooted in the community.

- **Treasurer – Tom Ryves**

Qualified Accountant (ICAEW), local businessman and Borough Councillor for a neighbouring ward.

- **Secretary - Alan Lury**

Alan is a retired Business/Systems Analyst and Data Manager, who has lived in Stoke Ferry for 9 years.

- **Communications - Sandra McNeill**

Sandra has always been deeply engaged in her community both in Bristol, where she lived for almost 30 years, and more recently in Norfolk. Her involvement has ranged from co-running local arts festivals to serving as a trustee for local charities. Sandra is also a member of the Stoke Ferry Neighbourhood Plan steering group. She has a track record of business expertise. She began her career working for a large manufacturing company in sales and marketing, before taking up a more senior management role. In 2000, she became General Manager of Bristol Blue Glass, a world-renowned artisanal company and under her leadership, the company was recognised by the then chancellor, Gordon Brown with a national award for growth in manufacturing. She became an accredited business advisor and a fellow of the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development. With her husband, Jim McNeill, she set up a training and consultancy company, specialising in providing leadership training and support to the charitable and voluntary sector.

- **Village Liaison - Jim McNeill**

As a local poet, storyteller and social historian Jim has great links within the community. Until recently he was a Parish Councillor for three years and is currently a member of the village's Neighbourhood Plan Working Group. Previous occupations include managing pubs, restaurants, student union bars, cafes and take-away food outlets. Jim has an HCIMA HND qualification and was previously the manager of Volunteering Bristol.

- **Member – Paul Blakeway-Long**

Paul has a background in the hospitality sector. He has worked as Sous Chef and Head Chef in a number of establishments and has assisted with bar work when required. Paul currently works as a Senior Operations Manager, overseeing the maintenance and upkeep of government properties

across East Anglia, the Midlands and Wales and pushing premises-based projects through to conclusion.

- **Member – Rebecca Blakeway-Long**

Rebecca has a background in law and accounts, having qualified as a Credit Manager in 1996 and as a Solicitor in 2003. She no longer practices, preferring to work part-time as a Clerk to the Governors for a number of local primary schools, including The Village Saints. This allows her to participate in a number of voluntary activities, including helping with village magazines and fundraising for charities.

Our sub committees have experience in the relevant areas to work within these committees. These include:

- P.R. and Communications, customer research and surveys
- Graphic Design and Printing
- Fundraising and events

The Volunteer Team

Within the numerous Campaign supporters there are professionals such as electricians, plumbers, builders, decorators, accountants and many others who have pledged their support. We carry out specific recruitment to fill skills gaps in the volunteer team.

We have developed a directory of local businesses who will be approached for special deals for materials such as floor coverings and paint, possibly in return for a small publicity sign at the entrance of the pub.

Organisation and Governance

Fit for purpose:

- By adopting the model rules of The Plunkett Foundation, we are confident that Stoke Ferry Community Enterprises Ltd. will be fit for purpose.
- The Management Committee will identify and communicate to members and shareholders any significant rule changes and ensure they are consistent with the purpose of the society and a community shareholding.

Organisational Structure:

- The Management Committee will operate in accordance with the model rules of The Plunkett Foundation.
- There will be monthly committee meetings and management reviews with our employed manager.
- Regular communication to members will be made.
- No investment will be made in a subsidiary enterprise by the Management Committee in a way that would compromise the terms of the share capital.

Members of the Community Benefit Society

Our strategies for engaging members in the society:

- An annual General Meeting of the Society will be held to communicate the performance of the society.
- Any member of the Management Committee can stand down from the Committee at any point.
- After three years' service members of the Management Committee must stand for re-election to the committee (except in the case of start-up procedures).

- The sub-committee members will be expected to operate in the same way, including in relation to the start-up procedures.
- From time to time the Management Committee may co-opt any appropriate person to the Committee to fill two spare committee positions or to join the sub-committees.
- We want to ensure new ideas and enthusiasm are brought into Stoke Ferry Community Enterprises Ltd.

Staffing

Initially we see the Blue Bell run largely by volunteers and we intend that it will be open all day. In addition to the Committee Members, we have received interest from at least five individuals in helping to deliver bar service and we expect this number will grow as we get closer to reopening the pub. Volunteers will work alongside experienced part-time paid staff. We will not expect volunteers to provide food.

We will use the volunteer policies and systems in place at the successful King's Arms, Shouldham.

While the premises are being renovated, we will recruit a manager, who will begin their work 1-2 months before the reopening of the pub. The position would include living in the flat above the pub. The manager will be appointed through an open competition, promoted through all of our existing channels and through paid-for advertising in the relevant trade press. We will also advertise for a cook in the same way and they will start work 2-4 weeks before the pub opens.

The Manager's role will be to run the business effectively and efficiently with responsibility for all day to day operations including:

- Managing the business aspects of the bar, such as keeping a current license, negotiating supplier contracts, taking inventory, and reordering supplies, managing budgets, and setting goals.
- Hiring and training staff to provide excellent service to customers
- Carrying out effective inductions for staff/volunteers
- Creating effective schedules and quickly resolving conflicts to ensure that bar is well staffed/volunteered during peak hours
- Setting and enforcing quality and safety controls
- Ensuring licenses are updated and in line with current legislation
- Working with diverse personalities of both staff and patrons
- Planning and taking part in promotional events
- Maintaining a fun, safe atmosphere.
- Hiring and retaining a qualified chef who will work to our appropriate standards and values
- Hiring and retaining bar-staff, waiters and cleaning staff as required.
- Stock Control and Purchases
- Sales
- Repairs and maintenance; using agreed tradespeople
- Conducting Customer Satisfaction surveys
- Marketing the Blue Bell
- Monthly Meetings with Management Committee to review performance against agreed Key Performance Indicators
- Agree actions with Management Committee

In time, we envisage staffing to move to 3 full time equivalents by the end of the first year of operation and to still be supported by volunteers, especially in the development and delivery of the community activities set out on this plan.

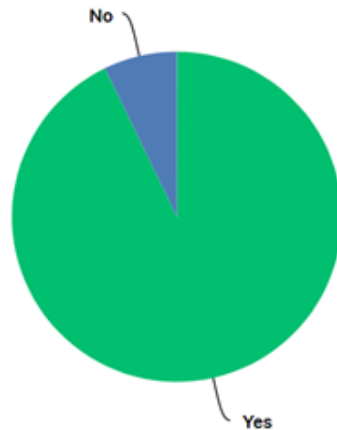
7. Our Route to Market: branding, marketing & promotional materials

- We have developed a robust Media Communications Policy ([Appendix 4](#)) that has yielded significant and sustained coverage in local media – print, radio and online.
- Our logo and those of our funders will be used in all documents and publicity.
- Our Website will be updated as required.
- Facebook and Twitter sites will continue to be used as important community communication tools. We have a highly engaged audience of 279 Facebook followers, 120+ Twitter followers and 105 newsletter subscribers. These audiences continue to grow. Once we have purchased the pub, we will also launch an Instagram page.
- Our Share Prospectus is written and we have begun to invite informal expressions of interest ahead of the launch of the offer.
- We continue to engage with our local supporters and residents through a range of On-line quizzes, beer, whisky & wine tasting sessions, 'Village pub' and 'Family & Children' events, etc.

Appendix 1: Results of village-wide survey, Spring 2020

Do you think there should be a pub in Stoke Ferry?

Answered: 153 Skipped: 1



During Spring 2020 one-third of Stoke Ferry households responded to our village-wide survey asking specific questions on what they wanted from a community pub. The responses gave an extremely reliable idea of what the village wants from a community pub:

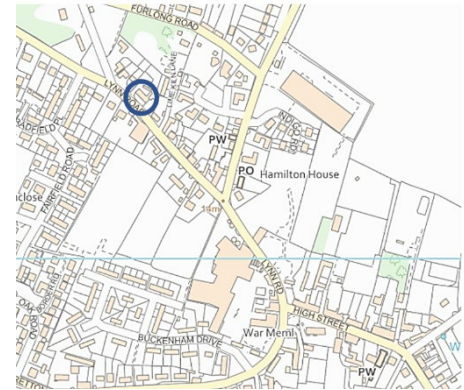
- Over 90% of respondents thought that Stoke Ferry should have a community pub.
- Other than food and beverages, the biggest reason for visiting a community pub was to meet up with friends, family, and community groupings such as carers groups, thus breaking rural social isolation.
- There was also strong support for all-day, café style service with the Blue Bell being more than a pub but also a safe environment within which to meet and socialise both as individuals, families and for groups and societies.
- As a community pub, the Blue Bell should support services offered by other organisations in the village and host community and club meetings.

The full results are available on our website: <https://www.bluebellstokeferry.org/notes-of-meetings>

Appendix 2. Location & Description of the Premises

Location

The Blue Bell is in the village of Stoke Ferry which lies approximately 6 miles southeast of Downham Market, 27 miles north of Bury St Edmunds, and 10 miles west of Swaffham. Stoke Ferry is identified as a 'Key Rural Service Area' which helps to sustain the wider rural community through its role as a commercial and social centre.



It is centrally positioned at the junction of Boughton Road and Lynn Road. Lynn Road being the main thoroughfare through the village. The Blue Bell is close to the A134 from where there is good road access from neighbouring towns and villages.

The village is also the centre of several local circular walks and bridleways which connect Stoke Ferry to nearby villages and the beautiful River Wissey. National Cycle Route 30 also runs through the village and provides an east/west connection

Located on the edge of The Brecks, one of the most important wildlife areas in Britain, the Blue Bell benefits from the nearby attractions of Thetford Forest Park, Weeting Heath Nature Reserve, Centre Parcs Elveden Forest and the National Trust's Oxborough Hall. There are further tourist attractions nearby; two coarse fishing lakes, a large caravan site, and an open farm. While within the village, there are also many holiday accommodations.

Description of the premises

The Blue Bell is a traditional village 'local tavern'; a 2-storey detached property of brick construction with flint stone rendering to the front, under a pitched tiled roof with extensions to the side and rear of the main building, mainly single storey under hipped slate and tiled roofs. Built around 1794 the pub is in the village's extensive conservation area and remains an important unlisted building.

Internally:

Basement: Beer cellar with dray chute. Ground Floor: Entrance porch. Open-plan lounge bar; central bar area and a games area. Kitchen area. Rear lobby with door to rear garden. Access to separate Ladies and Gentlemen's WCs. 1st Floor: Accommodation comprising 3 double bedrooms and bathrooms

Externally:

Car park and grounds extending to 0.186 ha (0.460 acres). The garden is in two sections; the side garden extends through to the rear, while a stone driveway to the side provides access to the rear garden, trade car park, timber outbuildings, brick storage/garage and a covered private area.

The roof, walls and windows all appear to be structurally sound.

Services:

Mains water, electricity, and drainage. Oil Central Heating. There is no mains sewage.

Appendix 3. The local economy & competitor analysis

House ownership. In 2011 there were a total of 487 households in the village¹:

- 71.4% households own their dwelling (King's Lynn & West Norfolk² – 69.4%, Norfolk – 66.9%.)
- 42.5% own their property outright (KL&WN – 39.6%, Norfolk – 37.2%)
- 16.4% are socially rented (KL&WN – 13.3%, Norfolk – 15.9%)

New housing developments. The future of Stoke Ferry is that of a rapidly expanding village:

In the past five years 11 new homes have been constructed and 4 have been started.

186 dwellings have currently been granted planning permission but have yet to start construction (some are unable to do so as they have only outline planning permission)

The Borough Council is currently of the opinion that 27 new dwellings could be built in Stoke Ferry while the Local Plan Review of 2019 seeks an allocation of at least a further 7 dwellings.

The feed mill owned by 2Agriculture lies on two sites in the heart of the village. The mill is due to relocate by 2022. It currently has outline planning permission for the construction of 100 new homes on its two sites.

Population. In 2011, the village population was 1,020; a 13.8% increase from the 896 of 2001. This rate of increase is higher than that of KL&WN (8.94%) and for the East of England as a whole (8.52%).

Of the population 52.5 were female and 47.5% male.

The mean age is 46.4 years.

There is a slightly higher percentage of people aged 45-84 years in the village than in the Borough as a whole

Qualifications.

35.8% of the village population have no qualifications. This compares with 29.3% for KL&WN and 26.3% for the East of England.

Level of Deprivation.

The village itself, is within the Wissey Ward catchment area and is therefore in the top 40% of deprived Local Authority neighbourhoods for education, skills and training

Employment.

62% of the population aged 16-74 is economically active. This is lower than KL&WN (67.3%) and for the county as a whole (68.1%). A breakdown shows that 13.1% are part-time, 33.5% full time, 10.9% self-employed and 1.2% students.

38% are not economically active. This compares to 32.7% for KL&WN and 31.9% for Norfolk. A breakdown shows that 24.3% are retired, 4.9% are looking after home or family, 4.3% are long-term sick or disabled.

¹ Unless otherwise stated all statistics come from the 2011 Census

² Abbreviated as KL&WN elsewhere

10% of the working population are managers, directors or senior officials. 9.6% are employed in professional occupations. 10.4% are associate professional and technical occupations. 12% are administrative and secretarial occupations. 15.3% are skills trade occupations. 10.4% are caring, leisure and other service occupations. 11.1% are process plant and machine operatives and 14.9% have elementary occupations.

5. Competitor analysis

Currently the nearest hostelrys are:

Public Houses

George and Dragon, Wereham 3 miles

The Green Man, Methwold Hythe, 3.5 miles

The George, Methwold, 4 miles

The Crown, Northwold, 4 miles

Community Owned Pubs

The King's Arms, Shouldham, 6.5 miles

Hotels

Bedingfeld Arms, Oxborough, 4.5 miles

Berney Arms, Barton Bendish, 4.5 miles (currently closed)

We take the approach that we are 'growing the cake' rather than competing for a share of an existing one. We strongly believe this is achievable because of our unique offer.

Public Houses: Of the four pubs the recently relaunched, The Crown could provide the greatest competition. However, the Campaign Group members have worked hard to forge good relationships with the current owners, and we will continue to work in such a way that we compliment their business offer and differentiate our 'brand' in a very meaningful way. For example, focusing on being a community run venue for local village groups to meet, art exhibitions, being a venue for the *Arts East* circuit, etc.

Hotels: We would offer visitors to the area a very different experience from the two rather anonymous corporate one on offer at each of the hotels.

Community Owned Pubs: *The King's Arms, Shouldham* is the nearest community-run pub to Stoke Ferry. This pub reopened in the summer of 2014. Since that time, it has won many accolades including an award as The Plunkett Foundation's best example of a community venture in the East of England. The Directors and staff at the King's Arms have been active in helping our campaign. Whilst not on the same scale as the King's Arms, we envisage that the Blue Bell will also become a 'destination pub', attracting customers from a 10-15-mile radius through the presentation of attractive art/music/performance events.

Appendix 4: Media Communications Policy

1. Statement of purpose

This communications strategy shows how effective media communications can:

- help us achieve our overall organisational objectives
- engage effectively with stakeholders
- demonstrate the success of our work
- ensure people understand what we do
- change behaviour and perceptions where necessary.

2. Our current situation

The Save the Blue Bell Campaign Group have an excellent track record of working with Mainstream and Social Media. We have developed a messaging framework for the current phase of the campaign that will be reviewed at key points of the evolution of the project.

We have a positive story to tell but it is vital, for the success of the venture, that these relationships are maintained, strengthened, and revisited and updated on a regular basis.

To this end one member of our Management Committee is responsible for overseeing our communications.

4. Communications Officer role:

- Prepare Press Releases and clear with the Campaign Chair
- Ensure necessary reports to funders are completed on time
- Update Media contact list
- Writing a monthly perky column about the Campaign for the Village Pump
- To advertise the Campaign's programme of events each month in the Village Pump (deadline 15th of each month)
- Maintain presence of local Facebook and Twitter accounts
- Keep Richard Bristow info@norfolkpubs.co.uk updated on significant developments to enable update of www.norfolkpubs.co.uk

5. Campaign Chair's role:

- To be the media spokesperson for the Campaign Group
- Write a short monthly update to Stoke Ferry Parish Council
- Update our email data/newsletter base
- Send regular updates to those on our email list

Appendix 5: SWOT Analysis

Strengths:

- The main strength we have is that we will be a community-owned pub
- Whilst we recognise this does not guarantee success it leverages the very real desire by the local community to use a local pub that will benefit its own community by being a central hub for numerous activities.
- A strong management team: experienced in the hospitality trade & leading community initiatives
- Experienced communicators
- We have at least one celeb in the village
- Good financial controls
- There is an identified need
- There is identified support

Weaknesses

- We will have to resurrect a closed business
- Extensive refurbishment is required
- New kitchen required
- 1st floor bedrooms and bathroom need overhauling
- Gardens are neglected
- Outbuildings are in a very poor state
- There are some voluble elements within the village who think it cannot be a success
- The layout of the building has some restrictions as to how we can utilise space.
- The internal space is limited for dining
- There is limited passing pedestrian traffic

Opportunities:

- The local community has demonstrated real enthusiasm for The Blue Bell to open again.
- A growing emailing list (104 individuals³) that is highly engaged. Newsletters achieve very high open rates (greater than 60%) and high click-through rates (greater than 20%)
- Selling essential foodstuffs along with, home-made cakes and local produce
- A parcel pick-up depot
- Become a 'Destination Pub' for different clubs and associations.
- Run a café / tearoom as part of the pub business. This would be open during the day selling quality coffee, tea, and home-made cakes.
- Harness the large group of volunteers who have put their names forward to help

Threats:

- Opposition from other local pub businesses.
- Opposition from neighbours on the grounds of noise/traffic/light pollution
- Being seen as competition by the 'Corner Shop', Stoke Ferry
- Economic fluctuations in disposable income.
- Reduction in enthusiasm for the project as time elapses
- Burn out of leading activists/volunteers
- Becoming comfortable in what we are doing and not striving for excellence.
- Staffing challenges.

Appendix 6 - Cash Flow

				start up	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
INCOME					163,500	179,860	197,846
Plunkett grant				2,500			
Donations etc				5,000			
Share Issue				180,000			
Grants				50,000			
Short Term working capital				-			
Long Term Loan			5	50,000			
operating profit					20,785	29,901	33,023
total income				287,500	20,785	29,901	33,023
EXPENDITURE							
Property cost				180,000			
Acquisition costs				6,000			
Refurbishment					100,000		
Property maintenance fund			12%		2,494	3,588	3,963
Legal and professional					1,000	1,000	1,000
Capital surplus Y1				101,500			
Opening bank balance				-	101,500	18,791	44,103
Operating profit					20,785	29,901	33,023
Additional expenditure				186,000	103,494	4,588	4,963
Closing bank balance				101,500	18,791	44,103	72,164