



The Bayford Inn

The Bayford Inn – Business Plan

To buy and run the village pub in Bayford as a
Community Benefit Society

Background

There has been a pub in the village of Bayford for over 250 years (at one time there were three!). The Unicorn Inn (formerly The Peacock) was unexpectedly closed in April 2024 and the pub – including the Annexe and car park area – subsequently put up for auction.

In Summer 2024 there were some discussions about buying the pub for the community; after all the council had previously designated it an “Asset of Community Value” until 2025, making it unattractive to buy for development.

The decision of the sellers to go to auction meant we did not have the luxury of time in order to carry out a full feasibility study etc, but there were sufficient informal pledges of investment that this did not dampen our enthusiasm, so we set off on the following journey:

- Phase 1 – Auction Purchase – October 2024 (keys obtained November 20th)
- Phase 2 – Clear out; Annexe refurbished; Set up CBS – November 2024 – January 2025

- Phase 3 – Annexe rented out; Raise funds through share offer to purchase as CBS; Refurbishment and rewire – January – April 2025
- Phase 4 – Decorate; Pub ready to open for drinks; manager in place – April/May 2025
- Phase 5 – Kitchen Ready – June/July 2025
- Phase 6 – Accommodation ready – September – November 2025

Phase 1 – Auction Purchase

In September/October a team was formed (see Interim Committee below) and, backed with sufficient pledges of investment from residents in the village, Parish, surrounding towns and from further afield, we bid for Lot 136 “The Unicorn Inn” at auction in London.

We were successful and secured the pub (including the Annexe and car park) for £200,000.

Completion needed to happen within 20 working days after the auction and we were simply not set up to pay the remaining fees, mainly down to the legalities of Money Laundering! So the Pub was therefore bought on behalf of the Community by an individual with the full intention of selling back – at cost – to the Community when the correct legal entity was in place.

Alongside the purchase/completion, the Interim Committee, with advice from The Plunkett Foundation, began to set up a Community Benefit Society (CBS) – a specific type of limited company, designed for community initiatives like this one, and regulated by the FCA. Formally creating the CBS would be necessary to open a bank account, and to give us an appropriate legal structure to raise funds through a share offer.

Phase 2 – Clear out; Set up CBS – November & December

Day One – We own a pub

We took possession of the keys on Wednesday 20th November and 'opened' on Friday 22nd November 2024.

The initial tasks involved some housekeeping basics – such as organising electricity and water as well as some big clear out tasks.

Over the first week we cleared the properties of accumulated rubbish and waste and pulled up carpets, removed out-dated sanitary ware, radiators and excess kitchen equipment. Many local residents supported the Interim Committee to help with weeding, rubbish disposal and clearing.

We cleaned up the main pub area and WCs sufficiently to invite the local community for a special Community Meeting event on Sunday 1st December. With mulled wine and minced pies brought by neighbours, the Interim Committee was able to update everyone on the status and initial plans for the pub. Over 70 people attended, and on the night we signed up a new member to the Interim Committee, and captured details of interested parties for potential financial support, volunteer labour, advice and expertise.

We shared as much detail as we could at the time about the plans. The CBS, Bank Account and Share Offer were all still being finalised at the time.

One thing unanimously agreed by the community present was a rename of the pub to *The Bayford Inn*. The process for officially renaming began in January.

Continuing the clear up and clear out around Christmas, we held our first official on-site Committee meeting on 30th December with a long list of actions, one of which was to rally the community to a New Year's Eve gathering! Over 40 people popped over on NYE to share food, drink, ideas and memories, and we started 2025 with lots of enthusiasm!

Phase 3 (in progress) – Get funds in and Purchase;
Renovations– Jan–March

In January we launched a website – www.bayfordinn.com; a Facebook page (200+ followers) and an Instagram account. We have over 60 people on the newsletter list.

The Annexe was cleaned, decorated and recarpeted, electric and gas checked and certified, and welcomed its first tenant. This brought a valuable income stream to help support the vital works, renovations and refurbishments in the main building.

The Bayford Inn Benefit Society Limited was set up and approved by the FCA, we opened a bank account and issued a shareholder offering, which is still under way.

In the meantime, we are in parallel continuing with extensive refurbishment works.

Next steps

Apart from investments by members of the community, we also intend to apply for any available grants, including green/sustainable options where possible.

Costs and Budget

We are raising funds to cover both the purchase cost of £200K +VAT* (and covering legal fees, auction fees etc).

Assuming the necessary funding is secured, we will continue with the purchase of the Freehold, with the aim to complete this by the end of Q1 2025.

Costs to Purchase Freehold

Freehold	£200,000
VAT – will be reclaimable in part	£40,000

Repayment of initial purchase fees inc Auction Fee, Legal Fees, Duties & Bridging Loan	c. £10,000
Legal Fees (Sale to CBS) inc Duties	c. £5,000
Legal Fees (CBS purchase) inc Duties	c. £5,000
Additional Costs incurred (est)	c. £2,000
Total	c. £264,000

*VAT will need to be paid on the purchase price by the Society but we will be able to reclaim.

We are also seeking to raise sufficient funds to cover key renovation work, modernisation, and working capital; we are currently aiming for £150K.

The following renovation works are essential:

Key Works:

- **Electrics** – we need to completely re-wire and make safe. When we do this in the main pub, we will relocate the meter and consumer units, and prepare for new lighting, both wall and ceiling. This will include fire alarm system and lighting.
- **Fire Escape/Stairs/Doors** – to prepare for re-instating Guest Accommodation (First Floor) and the Landlord Accommodation (Second Floor) we will need to meet Fire regulations, including “losing” the smallest of the four bedrooms in favour of a fire escape.
- The **Guest Accommodation** will be reconfigured from four rooms with en suite to two rooms – a large family room with en-suite bath & shower and a large double room with en-suite shower.
- The **staircase to the Landlord Accommodation** has to be reconfigured to meet fire & building regulations (the old one was extremely steep!)
- **Roof & Guttering** –Roof repairs and guttering are needed; while scaffolding is in place the **woodburner** (which previously suffered a chimney fire) will have a new flue installed.
- The **two skylight windows** in the second floor accommodation need to be replaced.
- **LPG replacement** – the pub central heating and kitchen formerly used LPG, fuelled by a large tank in the car park. We have decided this is no longer fit for purpose and will be removed.

- **Heating options** currently being considered include oil. We will be installing new radiators throughout with sufficient capacity to support a potential switch to heat pumps in future.
- LPG Gas cooking is likely to be replaced by **Induction** – we are seeking expert advice on this.
- We may consider installing solar panels with a view to reducing ongoing energy usage..
- The original **front door** facing the road will be re-instated with an internal porch.
- The back door landlord entrance will become the main entrance for the Guest and Landlord accommodation, and will be replaced with an (externally-opening) fire escape door.
- We intend to create an **accessible toilet** with baby change facilities on the ground floor, near the kitchen.
- The big **green wooden gates** are to be removed as they are damaged beyond repair. A proposal has been made to re-instate metal gates.
- The Main Pub area needs redecorating, and tables and chairs will be refurbished and re-upholstered.
- The **kitchen and bar/cellar** need expert fit outs before use. Flooring for this and the toilets also needs redoing.

Cost estimates for Renovations and Refurbishments:

Renovations & Modernisation	
Surveys	£ 500
Pub & Accommodation – Electrics – rewiring	£10000
Pub & Accommodation – Fire & Security	£5000
Pub – Scaffolding Hire	£3000
Pub – Roof & Guttering Repairs	£2000
Pub & Accommodation – Fire regs requirements	£15000
Landlord Accommodation – New Sky Lights x 2	£2000
Landlord Accommodation – Stairs Relocation + new steel support for upper floor	£5000
Pub – New Front door and porch	£2000
Pub – Wood Fire refurbishment	£1500
Kitchen – Extractor relocation	£1500
Pub – Oil heating and radiators	£15000

	£64500
Refurbishment and Decoration	
Landlord Accommodation - Floors & Carpets / En Suite & Decoration	£6000
Guest Accommodation 1 – Family Room Carpet, fixtures & fittings/ furnishing & linen /new ensuite (bath) & decoration	£5000
Guest Accommodation 2 Carpet, fixtures & fittings/ furnishing & linen /new ensuite (shower) & decoration	£5000
Bar Refit and Re Equip/Cellar Renovation	£0
Kitchen - Refit and Re Equip inc storage and shelving	£10000
Kitchen - Decoration & Flooring	£2500
Pub area - Decoration	£2000
Ladies WC - Flooring & Decoration	£1000
Gents WC - Flooring & Decoration	£ 1000
Contingency 10%	£8000
	£50,500
OVERALL TOTAL (Not including £35k working capital)	£115,000

Phase 4 – Decorate; Pub Ready for drinks; manager in place – April-May

- We will be using local interior design expertise to create a great look and feel from top to bottom (Manager Accommodation, Guest Accommodation, Main Pub, Kitchen, Men and Ladies WCs (and hallways).
- We aim to source fixtures, fittings and furnishings locally wherever possible and to create high-quality accommodation with a cosy, luxury feel.
- We will be putting together some rotas for decorating if you have time to volunteer!
- We would like to open in some way or form to Shareholders and the local community at Easter, to give a full update on progress.

- By **August/September** we hope to have Guest Accommodation fully ready for rental. We will be marketing through Booking.com as well as word of mouth from locals.
- We hope to have identified and employed a suitable manager to take the reins on running the bar.
- We are looking for at least £35,000 for working capital.

Phase 5 – Kitchen Ready – June/July

The kitchen is being completely overhauled and we may look to follow the Alhampton Inn (a successful Community owned pub) by using a pop-up kitchen model.

We have explored the management options for the business including volunteer-run, managed and tenanted options. We have looked at the experience of other community pubs and consulted with experts and believe that we will start with a managed model.

We will proactively be recruiting a new manager, ideally a couple who can oversee both the licensed premises and eventually the food. The idea is they would live rent-free in the second-floor accommodation. The terms of how the pub would be run will be dependent on the candidate and experience. The pub will operate as a free house, which will provide the manager with the freedom to choose suppliers to secure the best quality products and better value for money on the beers, wines, spirits, soft drinks, and food that the pub will sell.

Recruiting the right manager will be critical to the success of the business and meeting our wider community and economic goals. There are people within the community that have experience of the licenced trade who may be interested in applying for the role. We will also advertise more widely through the licensed trade press and through word of mouth. The selection of the manager will be undertaken through a competitive process managed by the Board but with co-opted support from experts with experience in the trade – again some local residents will be helpful in this process.

We would like to be operational as a licensed (wet pub) as soon as possible.

We have a Premises licence in place and will have a designated premises supervisor (DPS) – this may well be the manager. We will need to be compliant on Fire safety, First Aid, Food Standards and all other certifications.

We may need to operate an interim solution until we find the right management.

It would be great to soft launch the Pub in the Spring. One way or another we plan to open in some shape or form at Easter – April 20th. This will give an opportunity for everyone to have a look through the doors to see how things are progressing.

Phase 6 – Accommodation ready – September

By **September** (if not before) we hope to have Guest Accommodation fully ready for rental. We will be marketing through Booking.com as well as word of mouth from locals.

We should be able to operate at a small profit in year one. Any profits will be re-invested into the Pub.

Income Projection to November 2025:

Share Offer	£ 350,000
Grants/Donations (Parish Council)	£ 5,000
Grants/Donations (Other)	£20,000
Annexe Rental (February to November)	£7,000
Bar Takings (May to November)	£30,000
Food Takings (kitchen v pop-up)	£20,000
Accommodation (B&B) 50% occupancy (assuming available from September)	£13,000
Café (7-11) – assumes kitchen operational	£15,000

	£ 460,000

Beyond June

Not only will The Bayford Inn be a great place to stay, drink, relax and eat but assuming we have a manager in place we can promote the pub as an event space complementing the Bayford Village Hall, we can run as a café in the mornings making use of the super-fast broadband. There are many uses including:

- Celebrations – birthdays, anniversaries
- Evri pick up
- Post Office Counter/supplies
- Food bank
- Meetings
- Quizzes, Bingo
- Pop up barbers
- Dog walkers meet
- Cyclist meet
- Wine tastings and pairings
- Themed nights – Italian/French
- Wine/Cider/Whiskey tastings
- Seasonal events
- A place to pick-up your paper!
- Craft evenings – wreath making

We are debating on whether to have a (projector) screen for sports and we plan to have the relevant licenses for TV/music. We would welcome thoughts on this.

AGM – play your part

We will be organising the first official AGM in the Summer. This will be a chance for you to join the Committee, vote, feedback on and celebrate the successes to date.

The Vision

Imagine our welcoming landlord and landlady, checking out some overnight guests on a Friday as some local “work from home” people grab a speciality coffee with a bacon butty. A local calls in for the daily paper and brings along some eggs. The afternoon dog walking club meet for some tea and cake with doggie biscuits and water bowls ready. Happy Hour comes along and the fire is ready for the family to gather in the snug and play board games. A call comes in to book a table for the match on Saturday and another for fish and chips on the evening pop up.

Your bookings, your time, your money and your imagination will help make this work. We don't need to make a profit, we do need to break even and keep our GM/ landlord and/ landlady happy!

Send your ideas to committee@bayfordinn.com, become a shareholder, or invest your time either way together we can make this happen!

Appendix 1 – The Interim Committee

Ben Giles, Chair
Oliver Lockwood, Secretary
Roger Perry, Treasurer
Samantha Lane
Phillipa Coward
Kevin Higgins
Mel Giles