

The Fox and Hounds Beccles

A Community Benefit Society



BUSINESS PLAN 2025-6

<https://foxandhoundsbeccles.co.uk>

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Fox and Hounds Beccles (F&H) is more than “just a pub”. It is was one of the most important community hubs, supporting a wide range of local social support activities, and serving a diversity of groups.
- However, as with many local pubs, it faced increasing costs and inevitable closure. It has been closed for a year and if it stays closed, we will lose an employer, and a buyer of local supplies and service. Most importantly, we will lose at the heart of our town a facility that has featured greatly in people’s life events.
- We have a clear and practical plan, based on community ownership through our Community Benefit Society (CBS). With the help of the community shares and grants, we will carry out further refurbishment and open as soon as possible. Work will be carried out to the highest standards by reputable local companies.
- Moving the F&H into community ownership will massively increase the sense of pride and ownership in the community. The CBS will do all it can to repay that support for the benefit of the whole community for generations to come.

BACKGROUND

Summary

Saving the Fox and Hounds is important, not just for the people of Beccles, but for tourism, local suppliers, employment, and for the sense of community.

We cannot afford to another local pub and facilities, this plan shows how we can save the Fox and Hounds and make it profitable again.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to preserve and enrich the heart of our community by providing a welcoming space where people can gather, connect, and celebrate. Through our community hall and pub, we aim to foster belonging, support local initiatives, and create a vibrant hub for social, cultural, and charitable activities. We are committed to keeping this cherished space alive—not just as a venue, but as a symbol of shared heritage, resilience, and togetherness

Legal Status

The Fox and Hounds Beccles Limited is registered with the Financial Conduct Authority under the terms of the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, register number 22788R. The registered office is: 25 Ravensmere, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9DX. It is the sole owner of the property being used

It is a Community Benefit Society, and no-longer a members only social club, so is open to the public.

It has an open share offer scheme so people and companies have the opportunity to purchase shares to ensure its continued existence and vote at general meetings. Shareholders are members, but only have 1 vote regardless of the number of shares purchased.

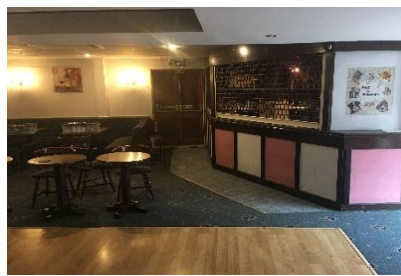
Recent History

Initially the Society was incorporated into the British Legion, and more lately in 2021 became a co-operative social club. After three years of trading, insurance was no longer available due to a number of safety and maintenance issues. The old committee resigned, and the club was closed in August 2024. At a special AGM in Jan 2025, member ship was dissolved. a new temporary membership extended to those at the meeting, and a new committee was recruited.

Markets and Products

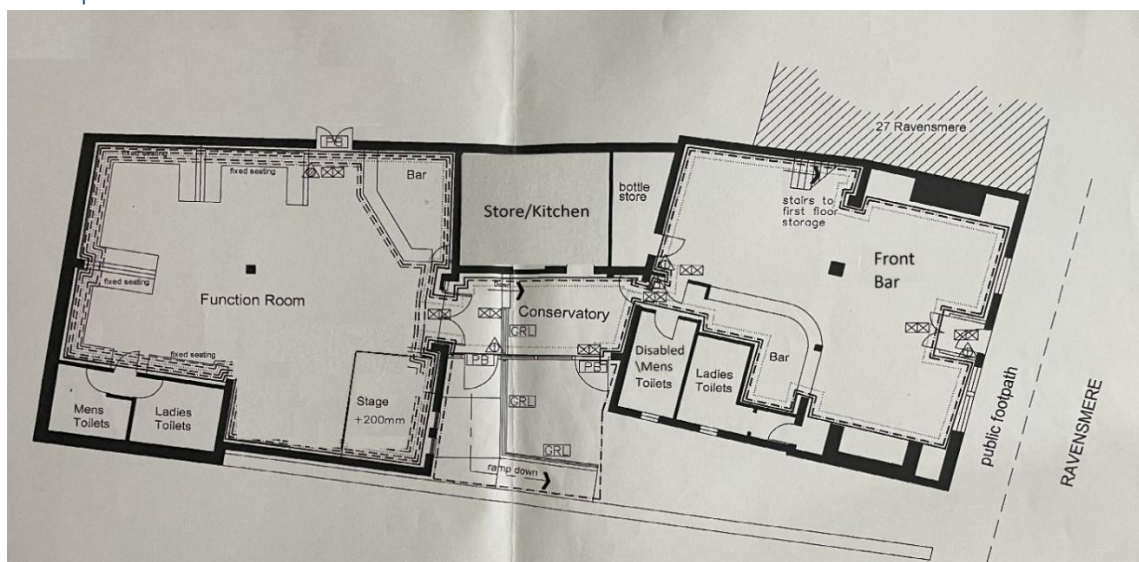
The Society property consists of a main Front Bar, with rooms upstairs and a large function room at the rear, the capacity being 60 and 120 respectively. There is also a central conservatory and room between the two which was used as the cellar, but in future will be used for catering and later a kitchen.

The function room has been used by many local people over the years for major life events, and is seen as an attractive proposition for hire as it has a dance floor and bar.



The Front Bar was opened most evenings, and weekends and drew a regular group of members, and occasional visitors. Most of the takings were from the Front Bar, however, due to a leaking roof over the bar entrance, the bar and rooms upstairs cannot currently be insured and used.

Floor plan.



Management Committee

The members of the current Management Committee are:

- Paul Cook; Chairman
- Chris Cox; Secretary
- Carole Moore; Treasurer
- Jena Mason; Membership Secretary.
- James Gardiner
- Robbie James

MARKET ANALYSIS

Geographic Market

Beccles, Worlingham and North Cove have a population in excess of 15,000. In addition, the nearby towns such as Bungay, Halesworth, and Loddon would be included in the scope of any marketing.

People from these areas are all potential customers, especially for the function room due to its size and bar facilities, and the excellent public transport.

Competition

A survey has been performed on the available room hire options and the function room is an asset to Beccles that is only rivalled by the “Club”, and the Caxton Club in size and facilities.

These are the two clubs that offer a room and a bar and would be the main competition, except for Fridays and Saturdays when they are either not available or excessively expensive.

PROPOSED SCHEME

Main Goals

The main priority for 2025 is to re-open the Function Room as soon as possible. This requires less work and cost, and can provide an important revenue stream to cover the basic utility bills. This will also provide time to apply for grants, and raise the funds needed for the essential improvements needed to meet safety regulations.

The Front Bar requires work on the roof and has other safety issues, as well as needing modernisation, which makes it a more expensive and a longer-term objective.

The first step will be to open the community share scheme, and start receiving income from the new members.

It is also expected that the new members will contribute to the decisions as to the future use of the Front Bar, as there are a number of options.

What are ‘Community Shares’?

Community shares are a way of raising money. Those buying shares must understand their financial commitment is primarily for the greater good of the community. There is no promise of financial gain. Shares can only be issued by a recognised, registered organisation (e.g., a ‘Community Benefit Society’ or CBS.). A CBS raises money by selling shares to community members. If the business succeeds,

members can gain interest from their shares. Shareholders cannot transfer their shares to others, but they can withdraw their shares (sell back to the CBS if approved by the Management Committee) at face value under terms to be defined and shared by the CBS in advance.

What grants are available?

We potentially need to find an additional £25k from grant sources. Grants do not need to be repaid (they are not loans). The following organisations have all made grants to a range of community causes, including supporting community-owned pubs:

Community Ownership Fund (COF), and The National Lottery (TNL).

Grants from these organisations come with conditions, all of which we meet, including that the community:

- has been consulted, is supportive of, and involved in the project
- is willing to make a financial contribution (which can then be matched by some grantors)
- has established a Community Benefit Society
- has an 'asset lock' (meaning the money granted can't be redistributed to shareholders as profit but must be kept in the CBS for the community's benefit).

Work Completed

To date the Function Room and adjoining rooms have had the following work carried out

1. Full fire risk assessment by D. W. Consulting.
2. Installation of Smoke Detection and alarm system by Anglia Electrical & Security.
3. Electrical Installation and Condition Report by DCI Net Electrical.
4. Boiler service by Aqua Gas.
5. Fire extinguisher inspection and service by Waveney Valley Fire.
6. The old cellar has been refurbished to provide storage and space for catering, and future kitchen.

Work still to do

1. Flash Testing of the emergency lighting by DCI Net.
2. Plumbing in of Dishwasher and removal of old sink in the bar.
3. Further refurbishment of the old cellar.
4. Disabled Toilet changes.

Other Requirements

5. Purchase of additional appliances for catering.
6. Purchase of stock for the bar.

Legal Requirements

1. PPS (Live only).
2. Council Tax.
3. Insurance.
4. TV Licence.
5. Premise licence.

Ongoing Costs

The currently monthly costs are about £300, but this will rise as the rooms are used:

1. Utility Bills.

2. BT.
3. Waste collection.

Projected Start-Up Costs

The work has been split into four approximately monthly phases, with income possible at the start of the first phase.

Each phase creates an opportunity to build up income, as follows:

Phase 1 Start (Sep)

- Function Room rental

Phase 2 Start (Oct)

- Function Room rental and bar sales
- Weekend opening
- Sales of pre-packed snacks and food products such as sausage rolls.

Phase 3 Start (Nov)

- Function Room rental and bar sales
- Weekend opening
- Sales of pre-packed snacks and food products such as sausage rolls.
- Provision of cooked foods
- Catering for events

Phase 4 Start

- Front bar\cafe

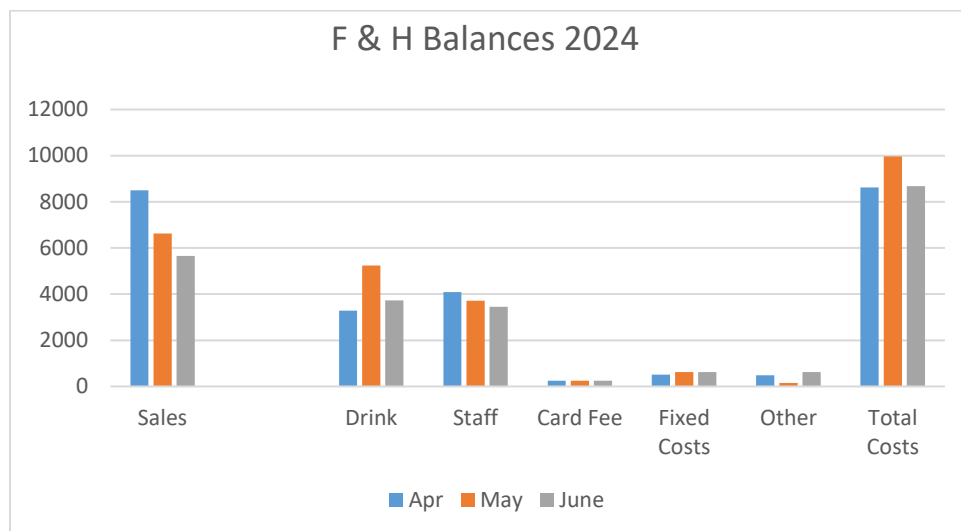
The total estimated costs are:

	Function Room	Bar & Catering	Kitchen	Front Bar	Total
Opening Funds	£612	£4,156	£6,255	£20,545	£31,568
Shares Required	0	83	125	411	619

FINANCIAL PLAN

Previous Earnings and Costs

The costs and income over three months prior to closing are shown below:



The sales were reasonable, amounting to an annual income of around £70. This was mainly in “wet sales”, with little food and snack products being sold.

Lessons Learned

The previous financial situation was made worse by the reluctance of the old committee to raise the prices to ensure there was a sensible profit, but other lessons are:

- It is best to have as few staff as possible, there were 5-6 staff on the books at the time
- The cost of hiring bands and marketing etc was not covered by the increased sales, and resulted in a loss
- Weekly events such as bingo also failed to generate any serious additional income
- Too many purchases were not properly documented and accounted for
- Too much reliance was placed on beer sales.
- Opening hours were unpredictable

OPERATING PLAN

Opening Times

Apart from ad-hoc events and hall rental, it is envisaged that when the Function Room has a bar, it will be opened on weekends from 12 – 10pm. There will be TV for sports, darts, pool and board games available.

Events such as Bingo are catered for by the other two clubs in Beccles, and so more imaginative solutions such as open-mike nights will be arranged during the week.

There will be no seats at the bar, families and dogs will be welcomed.

Staff

Initially, the Secretary will be the licensee, calling upon the assistance of other members when required.

This situation will then be reviewed after a few months when the income is confirmed.

Stocking

The bar will have two stand-alone pumps that can provide keg beer and lager supplied by the Lacons Brewery, and Bookers for snacks and soft drinks.

There will be chilled white wine, cider and bottled beers available. Chasers and soft drinks will be sold via bottles. A small selection of red wine and sprits will also be available.

Snacks will be stocked, as well as pre-made cakes and pastries.

Coffee and Tea will also be available.

Projected Earnings and Costs

Staff costs are not included at this point as they would exclude massively impact any profit, when sales are unpredictable.

Full cleaning will be done by an external company on a monthly basis, with routine cleaning performed by members.

Bar Sales

The following sales and profit estimates have been made for the bar, not including tea and coffee.

	Sales	Profit
Lacons	£1,182.40	£784.11
Bookers	£147.00	£82.50
Total Week	£1,329.40	£866.60
Total Month	£5,317.60	£3,466.45
Monthly Fixed Costs	£600.00	£2,866.45
Other Costs	£600.00	£2,266.45

Tea and Coffee

We would aim to have 1 drop in session each week, serving soft drinks, tea and coffee, raising £100 pre month.

Function Room Hire

We would aim to be renting the room for at least 6 hours a week, raising £400 per month.

Function Room Events

We would aim to be holding 1 main event every month, raising £600 per month.

Grants

We would aim to win 1-2 grants every year, raising £15,000 per year, with the following applied for in September:

1. East Suffolk Community Centre and Village Hall Repairs & Improvement Fund

MARKETING PLAN

Key Messages:

- Don't let another pub be lost to Beccles.
- The Function room is a great asset to Beccles.

Marketing Activities:

The following promotion options will be used to increase awareness, new members, web site traffic, and bookings

- Beccles and Bungay, and the East Anglian Daily Times Newspapers
- Direct email and mail to previous members (over 400)
- Word of mouth
- Fixed signage, ie Notice boards
- Digital marketing such ie social media, search engines, and online directories

Online Presence

Internet

The F&H has a website which provides not only a market presence for google searching, but also allows people to make Function Room booking enquiries, and Purchase Shares, and contact the society. It also has an Events section so people can see what is planned.

See: <https://foxandhoundsbeccles.co.uk>

Social Media

There is also a Facebook group page where people can follow us and post comments. This is also a simple way to communicate with members and the public. It is expected that photos of events and parties will also be posted to the group.

See: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/983651237242137>