



Newsletter No. 1

November 2025

At a packed meeting at St. Luke's on 15th September there was unanimous agreement to try to buy the pub and run it for the community. The Railway inn Steering Group was formed to take on this task. Since then we have been on a steep learning curve. This is our first newsletter outlining progress to date.

Timeline of events to date:

- Site visit
- Public meeting at St.Luke's
- Formation of the steering group
- Website and Facebook page creation
- Contacted Plunkett for guidance
- Questionnaire issued
- Fortnightly steering group meetings
- Communicated with MP and Councillors
- Collected questionnaire data
- Discussing business plan
- Establishing a legal structure
- Arranging for an accurate valuation

Next steps:

- Setting up a Community Benefit Society
- Creating a business plan
- Crowdfunding to raise funds needed to continue the project
- Pledges and share issue to raise funds for purchase

Establishing a Community Benefit Society

Community pubs are owned and run democratically by members of the community and there needs to be a suitable legal structure in place. This will enable us to raise share capital to make an offer to buy the pub. our chosen structure is a Community Benefit Society and we are working with Plunkett.uk to mentor us through the process of registering our organisation with the Financial Conduct Authority.

Plunkett.uk

Plunkett UK is a national charity which supports people in rural areas to set up and run a wide range of businesses in community ownership. They are supporting us through each stage.

Business Planning

We have been considering the business model for the Railway Inn, but more detail is needed on the management options for the pub - financial planning etc. Plunkett are, once again, helping us with this. The community feedback will inform this process.

Community Refurbishment Projects

We have been in contact with Volunteer It Yourself. This organisation specialises in refurbishing community halls and centres. Students gain valuable hands-on experience in construction, along with accredited qualifications. They may be able to help with refurbishment.

Raising Finance

Once we have established our legal structure we can start offering shares in the pub to raise the finance needed, but to ensure that we would be able to raise sufficient finance we may ask for **Pledges** first. However, our first fundraising task is to raise the funds needed to continue the project, specifically for independently assess the value of the pub, to pay for Plunkett membership and other startup costs. Therefore we will be Crowdfunding to raise these funds. Further details will be made available soon.

Steering Group members:

Sue Wardle (Chair)
David Wills (Vice-Chair)
Rachael Drinkall (Secretary)
Margaret Ainsworth Hickman
Andy Burdon
Sylvia Burdon
Neil Butler
Holly Douglas
Kris Douglas
Fran Drinkall
Ian Willshaw

Supporters

We have made contact with Borough and County Councilors and Leigh Ingham, MP for Stafford, Eccleshall, and the villages, to outline what we are doing and they have offered their support.

Thank you to everyone who completed the questionnaire.

We will be crowdfunding soon. Watch out for details of how to donate

Our Vision - A community pub that:-

- Operates as a community hub, that provides more services than a traditional pub
- Supports local businesses and the local community
- Makes the most of its railway history and the local link with Izaak Walton
- Is welcoming to all

Community Consultation

Our community questionnaire has been a great success - thanks to everyone who took the time to complete our survey to find out what people wanted from their community pub. 76 people responded.

Nearly all lived locally, or had a connection to Norton Bridge, either currently or previously lived there, or had family in the village.

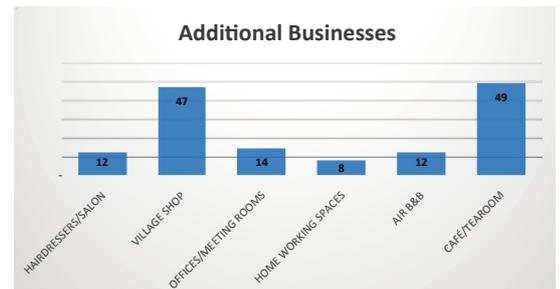
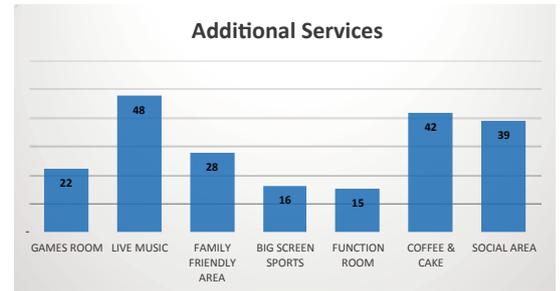
Nearly 70% would drink in the pub at least once a week.

Nearly 40 people would use the pub for dining at least once a week.

Live music, coffee and cake and a social area were the most wanted additions to the pub.

A village shop and a café/tea room were the additional businesses most suggested.

Many people volunteered, offering a wide range of skills or their time to help.



As you can see a great deal of work is being undertaken to give the community the best possible chance to purchase, and run, a successful community hub. The Asset of Community Value protection runs out in January so there is a deadline that we are working towards. Thank you all for your feedback and we hope that this newsletter answers a lot of the questions you may have. Please contact us with questions, ideas, help or any other matters you wish to discuss.



Contact us by [email](mailto:contact@railwayinn.org) at contact@railwayinn.org

See our [website Railwayinn.org](http://Railwayinn.org),
or [facebook](#) page [Railway Inn Community Pub - Norton Bridge](#) for updates