HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

9th November 2026

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Hospitality Support Fund Application HSFC\100579 - The Railway Inn Community Pub Limited, Norton Bridge

I am pleased to write in strong support of the application submitted by Sue Wardle and The Railway Inn Community Pub Limited for funding through the Hospitality Support Fund to secure the community purchase and reopening of the Railway Inn in Norton Bridge.

I have been aware of this project for some time and have engaged with the group's efforts to secure the future of this important local asset. The proposal represents an excellent example of a community-led initiative that will deliver significant economic, social and environmental benefits for Norton Bridge, Chebsey Parish and surrounding rural communities.

The closure of the Railway Inn in January 2025 left Norton Bridge without one of its most important community facilities. In rural areas such as this, pubs often serve a much wider role than a hospitality venue. They act as places where residents can meet, access local information, participate in community activities and combat the social isolation that can disproportionately affect those living in rural communities. The group's vision to create a sustainable community hub - incorporating a pub, tearoom, meeting space, events programme and other community services - responds directly to needs identified through local consultation.

I am particularly impressed by the strength of local support that has already been demonstrated. The community has raised approximately £110,000 through share purchases, pledges, donations and fundraising activities, providing clear evidence of local commitment and confidence in the project. This level of grassroots investment illustrates both the demand for the facility and the determination of local residents to secure its future for generations to come.

The project aligns strongly with several of the objectives of the Hospitality Support Fund. It will create opportunities for volunteering, training and employment; strengthen the resilience of local hospitality provision; regenerate a prominent village building; provide a safe and inclusive social space; and support new enterprise opportunities through the proposed tearoom and community-led activities. It also offers the prospect of preserving local heritage while creating a more sustainable and energy-efficient facility.

LEIGH INGHAM MP
Member of Parliament for Stafford, Eccleshall and the Villages

I understand that the project has been developed with support from Plunkett UK and enjoys the backing of local partners, including Stafford Borough Council and Chebsey Parish Council. The committee members also bring a strong track record of delivering community projects and managing public funding successfully, giving confidence in their ability to deliver this initiative effectively.

As Member of Parliament for the area, I fully support this application and believe that investment through the Hospitality Support Fund would help unlock substantial community benefits that could not otherwise be achieved through local fundraising alone. The proposed purchase and refurbishment of the Railway Inn would safeguard an important community asset, strengthen social connections, support local economic activity, and create a lasting legacy for residents across the area.

I therefore strongly encourage favourable consideration of this application.

Yours sincerely,



Leigh Ingham MP
Member of Parliament for Stafford, Eccleshall, and the villages