

Kenton Pub and Community Group Business Plan – 11/07/25 Version 1



The Dolphin Inn Kenton Ltd

T/A Kenton Pub and Community Group

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Please note: This business plan is a living document liable to change. This version published 11/07/25 supercedes all previous versions. Future versions will supercede this document.

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1. Summary

The Kenton Pub and Community Group (KPCG), under the registered name The Dolphin Inn Kenton Limited (TDIK) has a clear purpose: to carry on business for the benefit of the community by working with local people, organisations, and authorities to purchase, restore, and revitalise The Dolphin Inn in Kenton. Through community ownership, we aim to transform The Dolphin into an inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable space that celebrates its historic character while serving the present-day needs of Kenton residents and visitors. *(This is referred to as the ‘objects’ in our governing constitution.)*

This plan focuses on four key areas:

1. Community Value and Viability

We set out the strong case for The Dolphin as a vital asset to Kenton, contributing to the village’s social fabric, cultural life, and local economy.

2. Fundraising Strategy

The plan outlines how we will raise the funds needed to buy and reopen the

pub, including through community share pledges, grants, and loans – ensuring a broad and resilient funding base.

3. Operation as a Community Hub

We describe how The Dolphin will be managed as a lively, multipurpose venue that brings people together, with events, activities, and services that reflect the needs and creativity of our community.

4. Reassurance for Supporters and Funders

The plan provides clear information and reassurance to anyone considering investing in or supporting the project – including projected finances, risk assessments, and a well-defined path forward.

By laying out these four pillars, we hope to show the strength and potential of the Kenton Community Benefit Society and invite broad support for the return of a much-loved village pub.

2. A valuable and viable initiative

2.1. The history

The Dolphin Inn is a traditional village pub, with paned glass bay windows, reception rooms featuring original fireplaces and period features, and a small courtyard.

Situated in the heart of Kenton, opposite the village car park, and right on the A379, the pub is close to the visitor attraction Powderham Castle, surrounded by wonderful countryside walks, and with excellent links to Exeter.

Originally owned by the Powderham Estate, The Dolphin Inn was rebuilt in its present position in the late 1860s, following the ‘Great Fire of Kenton’ in 1856. The most recent tenants ran it predominantly as a ‘wet pub’: a pub that does not serve food and relies entirely on the sale of drinks.

After well over 100 years of trading, The Dolphin Inn closed in 2019 and was put up for auction. A group of committed villagers worked together to set up The Dolphin Inn Kenton Limited (TDIK), a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society (CBS), with the goal of raising funds to purchase The Dolphin for the community.

Registration as an ‘Asset of Community Value’

To improve their chances of purchasing the pub, TDIK nominated The Dolphin Inn as **an asset of community value (ACV)** to the Local Planning Authority. After demonstrating that the pub furthers the social wellbeing and social interests of the local community, the pub was successfully registered as an ACV.

Once an ACV is registered, if the property owner decides to sell the asset, the local authority may trigger a moratorium period, which gives community groups time to develop a bid to purchase it.

TDIK was unsuccessful in its attempts to purchase The Dolphin at the time as, having failed to sell at public auction, it was sold privately to the current owner for £220,000 before TDIK could raise suitable funds.

2.2. Current ownership

A planning application was submitted to Teignbridge District Council (TDC) in May 2022 for 'sub-division' of the pub into a separate three bed dwelling with rear garden, while retaining a smaller pub venue and pub manager accommodation.

The plans were refused by TDC in March 2023 because it had not been demonstrated that the reduced pub offering would be of 'equal or higher quality' than the existing pub, and there were concerns regarding the potential for flooding.

Since this initial application by the current owner, all further planning applications have been refused. As a result of the pub sitting derelict for several years, the current owner was served an 'Untidy Land Notice' by the council in 2024, stipulating urgent improvements must be made to the building. Having suffered two floods, neglect, and trespasser damage, the building has become an eyesore and is in danger of declining beyond repair. Thankfully, it has not quite reached that stage and we hope to be able to step in and save it before it is too late.

2.3. Our opportunity

Having been unsuccessful in attempts to partially convert The Dolphin for residential use, the current owner notified the local authority of their intent to sell in January 2025 triggering the moratorium period, ending July 30th 2025.

After a well attended village meeting with majority support for a renewed attempt to purchase The Dolphin, Kenton Pub and Community Group (KPCG) was set up. Thanks to a handover from the original TDIK Committee, the new KPCG took on the running of the TDIK Community Benefit Society, registering it with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) under the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2013, and adopting Plunkett UK model rules.

As part of an initial feasibility study, the KPCG circulated a community questionnaire to gauge levels of support for the project. **94.3% of the 245 respondents supported the idea of the community purchasing The Dolphin**, with 33.1% considering purchasing a share. As Kenton has a population of approximately 1,000 residents and the survey received 245 responses, the sample size is considered statistically significant. We can be 95% confident that the results reflect the views of the wider community, within a margin of error of 6.4%.

We (the TDIK trading as KPCG) are now working towards raising the funds necessary to purchase The Dolphin Inn by the moratorium of the 29th July 2025. It is our intention to offer community shares in the establishment in order to raise the requisite funds to purchase the freehold. We want to re-establish The Dolphin Inn as not only a thriving village inn, but as a community hub providing facilities and hospitality for local residents and serving the wider community.

2.4. The vision and the reality

We don't just want to bring back the local boozer. As lovely as a cold pint in the sun is, or a roast on a Sunday without the washing up, village pubs have the potential to be so much more.

This project represents a rare and powerful opportunity to secure the future of The Dolphin Inn and breathe new life into the heart of our village. By bringing the pub into community ownership, we can help strengthen the vibrancy, resilience, and sustainability of Kenton and the wider area by:

- Re-establishing a welcoming, informal space where friends and neighbours can connect, helping to reduce isolation and foster a stronger sense of belonging.
- Creating jobs and training opportunities for local people, including young people and those looking to return to work.
- Providing a showcase and sales outlet for local food producers, brewers, and artisans – supporting the regional economy and celebrating our area's talent.
- Encouraging more footfall to the village, supporting other local businesses and boosting tourism.
- Offering space for community events, performances, workshops, and social groups, making the pub a lively hub of village life.
- Reducing the environmental footprint of pub ownership by embedding sustainable practices and local supply chains into the business model.

We acknowledge that it's a tough time for the pub industry with The Guardian reporting that *'more than 400 pubs called last orders in 2024 amid rising costs and cautious consumer spending.'* We all know or have driven past pubs boarded up, demolished, or turned into housing. There's a sinking feeling that 'community' is disappearing alongside our local meeting houses.

And yet something wonderful is happening. CAMRA (The Campaign For Real Ale) reports **'As of April 2025, 217 pubs are community-owned with another 28 community-run and some 78 active campaigns under way'**. Of those 217, eight are in Devon!

Plunkett (a national charity which supports people in rural areas to set up and run a wide range of businesses in community ownership) says that **'all types of community-owned businesses have a 92% long-term survival rate'**.

The key to success is that as a community hub with a focus on connection and culture, community owned pubs offer more than just traditional pub services. They have become a place for communities to express themselves, connect, create, help one another, spend time together, and offer opportunities.

2.5. The funding is possible

The Dolphin Inn was last sold in 2019 for £220,000. Since that time it has been left empty, flooded twice, and been damaged by trespassers. As a result of this, significant restoration work is required. The current owner has indicated an asking price of £250,000, whilst initial surveys suggest a value closer to £200,000 with restoration estimates of around £80,000. Initial opening and running costs are estimated to be approximately £75,000 for the first year. This leads us to have a goal of raising £400,000 to cover all costs and contingencies. If we raise close to £250,000 but less than £400,000 in share capital by the deadline of the moratorium (30th July 2025) then the shortfall will be addressed by extending the share offer period and seeking out appropriate low interest loans.

Raising the funds to purchase The Dolphin Inn may sound ambitious, but it's far from impossible – in fact, it's a well-trodden path. Across the UK, **communities have successfully bought and revived over 217 pubs through community shares**, supported by people who care about the future of their village. It's a model that works.

Community shares are a way for local people and supporters to invest directly in a project that matters to them. Every shareholder has an equal vote, no matter how much they invest, and the money goes straight into bringing the pub back to life.

To reach our goal of **£400,000**, we'll need a mix of investment sizes. Shares will start at **£100 (1 share)**, with a maximum investment of **£50,000 (500 shares)** per person (further information to follow). This flexibility means everyone can get involved at a level that suits them.

Here's what that might look like in practice:

Investment Amount	Number of Investors Needed	Subtotal
£5,000 (50 shares)	30 people	£150,000
£1,000 (10 shares)	100 people	£100,000
£500 (5 shares)	100 people	£50,000
£200 (2 shares)	200 people	£40,000
£100 (1 share)	600 people	£60,000

Total	1,030 investors	£400,000
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This is just one example of how the target can be reached. Some people will invest more, some less – but together, we can make it happen. Every share purchased takes us closer to reopening The Dolphin as a vibrant, welcoming space for everyone.

Kenton is a small community with around 500 dwellings and 1100 residents - but investors needn't live in Kenton. We welcome investors from not only surrounding communities such as Dawlish, Exminster, Kenn and Exeter - people who may still consider The Dolphin in Kenton a 'local' of sorts, but also people from places further afield such as Exmouth, Budleigh, Teignmouth, and even country wide. Whilst many people will want to invest in something they can be a physical part of, it is not unusual for philanthropic souls to purchase shares in a story they believe in.

3. Our constitution and purpose

3.1. Our legal structure

The Dolphin Inn Kenton Limited is a Community Benefit Society registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014. This legal structure is designed specifically for organisations that operate for the benefit of a community — in our case, to bring the Dolphin Inn back into community ownership and restore it as a thriving social hub for Kenton and surrounding villages.

As a CBS, we are:

- **Accountable and transparent** – We submit annual accounts and reports to the **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)**, who regulate all CBSs under the 2014 Act.
- **Community owned** – Anyone can become a member by buying shares, giving them a democratic say in major decisions. One member, one vote – no matter how much is invested.

- **Not-for-profit in purpose** – All profits must be reinvested for community benefit. This ensures that the Dolphin Inn remains a public asset for generations to come, not a private business run for personal gain.

Asset Lock

The Dolphin is registered as a Community Benefit Society (CBS), a legal form regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

As a CBS, we are required to operate for the benefit of the community, not private individuals. A **statutory asset lock** is in place to ensure that, if the Society is ever wound up, its remaining assets cannot be distributed to members. Instead, assets must be transferred to an organisation with similar objectives and an equivalent asset lock, ensuring the long-term protection of community wealth.

Additional information can be found in our Society Rules on our website.

3.2. Working with the Plunkett Foundation

We are proud to be working closely with the Plunkett Foundation, a national charity that supports rural community businesses. Plunkett has helped establish and guide hundreds of community-owned pubs, shops, and enterprises across the UK including the Drewe Arms in Drewsteignton and The Tally Ho in Littlehempston.

Their support includes:

- Legal and governance advice
- Business planning guidance
- Access to funding opportunities and model rules
- Ongoing mentoring and sector expertise

By registering with Plunkett and adopting their model rules, we are part of a trusted and growing movement of over 217 successful community-owned pubs across the UK. This means we're not starting from scratch – we're building on a tried-and-tested foundation that works.

3.3. The stated aim of TDIK

The Kenton Pub and Community Group (KPCG), under the registered name The Dolphin Inn Kenton Limited (TDIK) has a clear purpose: to carry on business for the benefit of the community by working with local people, organisations, and authorities to purchase, restore, and revitalise The Dolphin Inn in Kenton. Through community ownership, we aim to transform The Dolphin into an inclusive, welcoming, and sustainable space that celebrates its historic character while serving the present-day needs of Kenton residents and visitors. *(This is referred to as the ‘objects’ in our governing constitution.)*

3.4 Our Purpose: Preserving and Reviving the Heart of the Village

Our aim is to secure the long-term future of The Dolphin Inn as a cherished, community-owned pub — a thriving social hub and a sustainable business that serves the people of Kenton and the surrounding area.

Sustainability is at the heart of our vision. While respecting the heritage and constraints of the traditional building, we are committed to updating the building in a way that minimises waste, uses energy-efficient solutions wherever possible, and by sourcing products locally and responsibly. We are building a community hub for our community’s future.

To **preserve** The Dolphin means protecting its unique historical character while breathing new life into it as a living part of our village. We want it to remain a place that reflects Kenton’s past, present and future — a pub with true authenticity and purpose.

As a **social hub**, The Dolphin can be so much more than a place to enjoy good food and drink. Its accessible and central location, beautiful surroundings, and rich history make it an ideal base for a wide range of community activities, cultural events and local enterprise — a place for people to connect, celebrate, collaborate, and belong.

By bringing The Dolphin into **community ownership**, we can ensure it remains open, welcoming, and beneficial for generations to come — run for people, not for profit.

3.5. Our guiding principles

At the heart of our efforts to revive The Dolphin Inn is a shared belief in what a pub can mean to a village: not just bricks and mortar, but a living, breathing space where community happens. These guiding principles shape every decision we make — from how we raise funds to how we hope to run the pub once it's open:

Community First

The Dolphin will be owned by the community, for the community. We will prioritise inclusivity, affordability and accessibility, ensuring everyone feels welcome and represented in the pub's future.

Local Roots

We are committed to supporting local producers, craftspeople, trades, and talent. Whether it's food, drink, music, or maintenance — where possible, we'll keep it local.

Integrity and Transparency

We will act openly and honestly in all that we do. As a Community Benefit Society, our operations will be accountable to our members and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Sustainability

We aim to make responsible choices that respect the environment, the building, and the long-term needs of the village. From reducing waste to energy efficiency, sustainability will guide our decisions.

Participation and Collaboration

We believe The Dolphin should reflect the people it serves. We will create meaningful opportunities for people to shape its future — through volunteering, investment, partnerships, and community events.

Resilience and Stewardship

We're not just reopening a pub — we're building a legacy. Our goal is to ensure The Dolphin thrives not just today, but for generations to come, with solid planning, good governance, and a focus on long-term impact.

3.6. How are we organised?

The Dolphin Inn Kenton Limited (and by extension the KPCG) has no ownership ties to any other business or body and will hold the freehold of the pub, retaining full community control over the site.

Once the share offer has concluded and the building has been purchased, the Committee will stand down (although be eligible for re-election), allowing candidates from the new shareholder body to stand for election so that the Society's governing body reflects the voices of its members. Going forward, this Committee will continue to be made up of local volunteers, elected by shareholders, and will operate without salary or financial reward.

The Committee is responsible for setting the long-term vision, strategy, and values of The Dolphin Inn. Once the pub is operational, the committee will appoint and oversee an experienced Operations Manager who will manage the day-to-day running of the business, supported by a wider pub team.

While the pub manager will have autonomy in daily decisions — including staffing, suppliers, and service — the Committee will ensure accountability through regular updates, reviews, and oversight of key decisions. Clear structures and delegated authority will help ensure smooth and professional operations, rooted in the needs and aspirations of the community.

A vital part of the Committee's role is to ensure the Society stays open, transparent, and inclusive. This means:

- Making it easy for members to understand their rights and responsibilities
- Sharing key information in accessible language
- Encouraging participation in decision-making and meetings
- Actively listening to feedback and ideas from the community

By staying true to these principles, we aim to foster a vibrant, community-led future for The Dolphin — one where all members feel valued and involved.

4. Meet the team

The current Committee is made up of local residents who bring a rich mix of skills, experience, and perspectives. This diversity equips the group to meet the many opportunities and challenges involved in bringing The Dolphin Inn back to life.

From project management and finance to communications, community organising and hospitality, the team has the knowledge and commitment needed to guide this project through its next stages. By combining their expertise and working closely with the wider community, the Committee is confident in their ability to deliver a successful and sustainable future for The Dolphin.

Committee Member	Bio
Jon Hare Chairman	I've been running my own Photography Business since 2006 (www.fullfatphotography.com). Before that I worked in retail with a few years working in pubs and bars through College and Uni. I've already assisted in the renovation of a number of properties including two Pubs / Bars. I've been living in Kenton for 10 years this Summer and love being a part of this Community.
Jayne Archer Treasurer	Following 30 years' sales experience and regional manager status, I had a very successful pet care and pet transport company for 15 years. Having sold that in 2024, I now have more time in the Village and am delighted to be involved with such a dynamic, eclectic group, with masses of energy to organise the purchase of a great community space.
Denise McMurray Company Secretary	I moved to Kenton with my family in October 2022. I am a Chartered Fellow of CIPD and an experienced HR Director with experience working across the public, private and charity sectors. I've also run my own consultancy business and I'm a qualified coach and

	mediator. Once upon a time (many years ago) whilst studying I was known to pull a pint or mix a cocktail at my local.
Dave Everson Vice Chairman	I was married in Kenton church over 40 years ago and have lived in the village for all that time. I have previously served as treasurer and subsequently chairman of the village hall and am currently chairman of the Kenton Past & Present (history) society. My career was entirely in the IT industry, starting as a programmer and ending managing teams involved in IT security, based around the UK and liaising with colleagues in both the USA and India. Having now retired, I have been working parttime as a tour guide at Powderham Castle for the last 15 years.
Daniel Grahns-Doan	I have an RAF engineering background, 25 years' property renovation experience and 4 years, while at university, as a barman and stand in manager at Ye Olde Cider Bar in Newton Abbot
Robin Calderwood	Having trained as a chef, I am now a primary school teacher and parish councillor. I am a strong advocate for a sense of community and lover of real ale.
Susan Godwin	I am currently working as an Exam Invigilator. I previously ran two successful businesses over 15 years, one of which was in hospitality. Self-employed for 24 years, I moved to Kenton 4 years ago, and am renovating my cottage.
Andrew Bryant	I have over 30 years' experience as a bid manager, managing multi-million pound bids. Before retiring I was a self employed consultant offering business winning services across a range of sectors. I'm Devon born and bred, having grown up in Dawlish. We moved to Kenton 3 years ago.

In addition to the Committee members, the Society relies on a wider network of volunteers and contractors, including the outsourcing of specialist tasks and the seeking of expert advice where appropriate, to ensure sound decision making and effective project delivery.

5. The plan

5.1. Project stages

Stage 1–3: Starting Up and Initiating the Project

During the **Start-Up** and **Initiation** stages, our focus has been on laying the groundwork for a well-governed and community-supported project. Key activities have included:

- Engaging with the local community to confirm need and support
- Forming a Committee and Management Committee (Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer) to guide the direction of the project.
- Registering as a Community Benefit Society
- Completing necessary administrative, legal, and governance structures
- Registering the pub as an Asset of Community Value

Outputs: Established governance, confirmed community support, formalised CBS structure

Success Criteria: Project Mandate approved; stakeholders aligned and engaged

Stage 4–5, and ongoing: Managing the Fundraising

This stage focuses on **Managing Product Delivery** and **Controlling a Stage**, where the main product is the capital needed to purchase and reopen The Dolphin Inn. Key activities include:

- Launching a Community Share Offer
- Applying for grants from public bodies and charitable foundations
- Ongoing communications and marketing to sustain interest and trust

Outputs: Share capital raised, grant applications submitted

Success Criteria: Minimum fundraising target met (£400,000); broad shareholder base established

Stage 6: Managing Negotiations

This stage aligns with **Managing a Stage Boundary**, ensuring readiness to move into acquisition. Key activities:

- Commissioning surveys, architectural reviews, and planning permissions (as needed)
- Negotiating the purchase of The Dolphin Inn with current owners
- Finalising legal processes, due diligence, and agreed timeline for transfer

Outputs: Heads of Terms agreed; draft contract in place

Success Criteria: A legally binding agreement to purchase the pub

Stage 7: Renovation and Repairs

Once the purchase is agreed, the project enters a **dedicated stage for works**.

Activities include:

- Undertaking essential repairs and improvements to ensure safety, compliance, and functionality
- Preserving the historical features of the building while upgrading key infrastructure (e.g. heating, electrics, kitchen)
- Preparing for fit-out, decoration, and furnishings

Outputs: A safe, functional, welcoming premises ready for trade

Success Criteria: Renovations completed to budget and on schedule; building fit for phased reopening

Stage 8 Onwards: Managing Transition and Realisation

This final delivery stage encompasses the **Transition** from planning to operation.

Key areas of focus include:

- Phased reopening of The Dolphin Inn, initially with a drinks and limited food offer, events, and community activities
- Hiring staff, and creating operating procedures
- Stocking, and preparing for service
- Implementing community benefit and sustainability initiatives

Outputs: Fully operational community-owned pub

Success Criteria: Successful relaunch; strong community participation; financial viability; early indicators of social impact

5.2. Looking Ahead – Growing Community Value

Although not part of the initial project delivery stages, our long-term vision includes plans to build on early success and enhance the impact of The Dolphin Inn as a thriving, sustainable community asset.

Future Growth & Development

Once reopened and operating smoothly, we'll enter a phase of long-term value-building. This includes:

- Planning and delivering major refurbishments to enhance the space
- Developing a high-quality, locally sourced food offer
- Hosting regular events to bring people together and attract new visitors
- Continuously reviewing operations and evolving based on community and customer feedback

What success looks like:

The Dolphin becomes not just viable, but a vibrant community asset— a profitable business, an employer of choice, a warm and welcoming meeting place, and a cornerstone of village life.

Sustaining Success & Reinvestment

In the years ahead, we will explore reinvestment opportunities that align with our community values and support the long-term sustainability of the pub. These could include:

- Upgrading the upstairs rooms to provide simple accommodation
- Improving the courtyard/beer garden to better serve community and visitor needs
- Developing the community kitchen as a space for shared learning, enterprise, or social initiatives

Long-term aim:

To preserve The Dolphin Inn's heritage while continuously adapting to serve the evolving needs of the community — ensuring that it remains a cherished asset for generations to come.

5.3. Our Pub and Community Proposition

This section sets out how we plan to run **The Dolphin Inn** as both a successful pub and a vibrant community hub — what we call our *pub and community propositions*.

Our aim is to make The Dolphin a welcoming, characterful, and sustainable space that brings people together. Our 'brand' isn't something we've invented — it's rooted in the building's history, the village's spirit, and the people who love it.

Here's how we see it:

- **A building with real soul** – full of history and local heritage, with its quirks and stories celebrated, not covered up
- **Food and drink that hits the spot** – simple, affordable, seasonal, and locally sourced wherever possible
- **A place to gather and celebrate** – full of charm and character, perfect for everything from a quiet pint to a lively party
- **A brilliant team** – friendly, inclusive, well-supported, fairly paid, and proud to be part of something meaningful

Together, these elements will make The Dolphin not just a local favourite, but a destination — a place people are drawn to.

While the pub itself is the heart of the operation, other spaces offer exciting potential:

- **The function room** will be a key part of our *community offer* — hosting activities, workshops, and events for all ages
- **The outdoor space** offers a potential space for outdoor events, performances, and informal gatherings — and we plan to improve and develop it over time

Our vision blends hospitality with community spirit. This is more than just running a pub — it's about creating a place for connection, celebration, and belonging.

5.4. Income streams

For the purposes of this business plan, we separate the business into what we are calling the **'core' pub proposition (our main revenue generating activities)** and **our Community+ activities that aim to add wider community value** and ensure The Dolphin's longevity.

5.4.1. The Dolphin's Core Pub and Community Offering

The 'core' pub offer at The Dolphin Inn will be developed in collaboration with our future Operations Manager, and local suppliers. Our aim is to create a well-run, welcoming pub rooted in sustainability, diversity, community, and quality — aligned with our guiding principles.

Drinks from the Heart of the Village

The main bar (102 sqm), with its traditional fireplace and spacious layout, will be the central hub for serving drinks. Our focus will be on **local, sustainable options** — beers and ciders from regional brewers, minimal packaging, and a reduced reliance on bottled products. Where possible, wine will be served from eco-friendly formats (e.g. kegs or carafes), cutting down on glass waste and emissions.

The bar's heritage feel and generous floor space lend themselves well to a lively yet characterful atmosphere, with plenty of room for casual drinkers, local meet-ups, and seasonal events.

A Simple, Beautiful Food Offer

The Dolphin's cosy dining areas (22 sqm and additional room tbc), both with fireplaces, are perfect for intimate meals and relaxed gatherings. Our food approach is **'keep it simple, do it very well'**: a short, delicious menu that's affordable, seasonal, and locally sourced — supplemented by special evenings, community meals, and takeaways with sustainable packaging.

Our kitchen (21 sqm) will initially operate from its existing location on the first floor, with plans to assess potential improvements to optimise workflow and space over time. We are also exploring how to use parts of the existing layout — such as the ground-floor store or hallway area — to support food service operations or additional seating/snug space.

Café and Daytime Trade

In addition to our pub and evening food offer, **a daytime café menu** will form a key part of the Dolphin's offering — ideal for walkers, cyclists, and locals who want a low-key place to meet during the day. We see this as a significant growth opportunity, especially given the limited local alternatives for daytime socialising.

Events, Culture and Celebrations

The **courtyard garden (approx. 40 sqm)** already provides a charming outdoor space for informal gatherings and seasonal events, and we aim to further develop this into a more functional, welcoming area. Pop-up bars, covered seating, and music nights are all on the cards — with opportunities for local musicians, family activities, and community fundraisers.

We will also host **indoor events** in the bar and dining spaces — think storytelling nights, quiz evenings, film showings, and local interest talks — helping The Dolphin become a vibrant centre for community life.

Accommodation

The Dolphin's upper floors offer exciting potential. The second floor includes two sizeable rooms (21 sqm and 19 sqm), while the first floor includes three additional rooms (17, 13 and 22 sqm) as well as a bathroom and office space.

Initially, we will use this accommodation to **attract excellent staff**, offering clean, comfortable living quarters as part of employment packages. In the longer term, we'll explore options to **renovate some rooms for overnight stays**, particularly for walkers, cyclists, and heritage tourists — building on Devon's strong tourism appeal.

This thoughtful, staged approach allows us to open successfully and sustainably — while growing our offer in line with community needs and operational capacity. We believe The Dolphin can become both **a cherished local pub and a destination venue with real community heart.**

5.4.2. Community+ at The Dolphin

As a community-owned pub, The Dolphin Inn will be more than a place to eat and drink — it will be a space for **connection, creativity, care, and local pride.** We're calling this extended offering **Community+.**

Community+ sets out how we'll use the Dolphin and its grounds to generate wider social value — from social inclusion to local skills development — often at **subsidised, low-cost, or donation-based rates.** These activities build on ideas from our Committee and the community engagement questionnaire and will be developed **in collaboration with local people, groups, and volunteers.**

The Community Kitchen

Our kitchen is not just central to the pub — it can also be the beating heart of a **wider community food offer.**

We envisage the Dolphin's kitchen playing a key role in:

- **Community meal delivery** for isolated, elderly, or financially struggling residents
- Monthly community lunches — welcoming and sociable
- **Seasonal feasts and celebrations** — like Burns Night or Harvest Festival
- **'Cook and eat' workshops** — to share skills, recipes, and intergenerational know-how
- **Partnerships with local growers** and food initiatives — supporting a circular, local food economy

Through these events, the kitchen becomes a place to build relationships, grow skills, and nourish both body and community.

Living and Working Well

As a warm, welcoming space in the heart of a rural village, the Dolphin can support **better wellbeing, inclusion, and connection**.

We will explore offering:

- **Hot-desking space with Wifi** for home-workers and freelancers
- **Low-key social clubs** — for older people, carers, or parents
- **Wellbeing classes** — such as movement groups, meditation, or creative workshops
- **‘Quiet times’ or dedicated zones** — for people with sensory sensitivities or those who just need a moment of calm

The aim is to reduce isolation, stress, and digital fatigue, and help people feel part of something larger.

The Dolphin as a Community Hub

The Dolphin’s **central location, size, and charm** make it the perfect venue to act as a **hub for community life** and social connection.

We will actively offer the space for:

- **Clubs and groups** — craft circles, board game nights, choirs, and more
- **Events and celebrations** — from quiz nights to storytelling, acoustic gigs, and local film screenings
- **Partnerships with local organisations** — such as schools, health providers, or charities
- **Visitor engagement** — offering info on local walks, wildlife, and history (e.g. Dartmoor, the Two Moors Way, the River Exe)
- **Possible services** — such as parcel collection, a community noticeboard, or access to postal services

This part of our plan is all about **connection** — between neighbours, generations, interests, and ideas.

A Flexible, Responsive Offer

Community+ will evolve as needs shift and energy allows. We will work with volunteers, local talent, and partners to pilot ideas, learn as we go, and respond to feedback.

At its heart, Community+ is about **maximising the social potential** of The Dolphin — making sure it thrives not just as a pub, but as a **community asset and catalyst for good**.

5.5 Initial operating model

The Dolphin will open on initially restricted hours whilst we get up and running, staffed largely by volunteers as we gauge the most appropriate opening hours and staffing model. After the first operating quarter we may then be able to increase the opening hours and review the staffing model.

Initial operating model:

- Open 3-4 days/week (Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday)
- Additional opening hours (repeating or bookable) for community use including but not limited to: community society meetings, youth groups, private hire, and workshops
- Opening hours will begin reduced, potentially 5pm - 10pm Thursdays and Fridays, and 10am-10pm weekends
- Dinner service each operational day, with additional lunch service at weekends (limited menu to start)
- Community café element during weekend daytimes
- Events and community use
- Mixture of indoor and courtyard space
- Plans to grow food, events, and community+ over time

6. Recruitment and retention

6.1. Our People: A Team to Match the Vision

At the heart of the Dolphin's success will be the right people with the right skills and experience — a dedicated team who understand the pub's heritage, share our values, are inclusive and are excited to help shape its future.

We intend to attract and retain an exceptional pub manager (or management couple) by offering a unique and inspiring opportunity: to run a historic community-owned pub, with comfortable living accommodation, a supportive management group, and the chance to become a true part of the village's story.

We're looking for individuals who are not only experienced and capable, but who genuinely connect with our vision — people who care about good food and drink, community, creativity, and sustainability.

We aim to foster a **positive, inclusive, team-focused culture**, where everyone feels valued and motivated. This includes:

- A clear commitment to fair pay and good working conditions
- **Profit-sharing and performance incentives** that reflect the team's contribution to the pub's success
- Opportunities for **professional growth** and input into how the business develops

By supporting and rewarding our team we'll build a workplace where people want to stay and thrive; helping to create a welcoming, consistent, and vibrant atmosphere at The Dolphin.

6.2. Operational Oversight and Key Roles

The Dolphin's operations will be overseen by **the Society Committee, comprising a Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer**, and leads for **Marketing, Sustainability, Operations, and Community+**. This Committee will meet regularly to review progress and provide strategic direction. While these roles are voluntary, modest

remuneration or expenses may be considered to support commitment and accessibility.

To support the successful day-to-day running of The Dolphin, the Committee will delegate core operational responsibilities to one paid role (with the potential to expand the number of salaried staff as The Dolphin grows):

Operations Manager

This senior role will ensure strong **leadership, strategic continuity, and alignment** between the Committee's objectives and the pub's delivery. They will also play **a pivotal role in shaping its character, performance, and reputation.**

Responsibilities include:

- Supporting the recruitment and onboarding of key staff.
- Owning and regularly updating the operational plan.
- Monitoring compliance with the operational plan and standards.
- Holding weekly performance reviews with the pub team
- Negotiating supplier contracts in line with our sustainability and local sourcing goals.
- Reporting to the Committee and ensuring ongoing strategic alignment.
- Personally leading food preparation or overseeing kitchen staff/volunteers, depending on the team model.
- Recruiting, training, and managing the wider pub team.
- Ensuring smooth, welcoming, and efficient day-to-day operations.
- Working closely with the Committee to evolve The Dolphin's offer.
- Maintaining regular communication with the Committee on financial performance, customer feedback, and staffing.

This leadership structure ensures professional and consistent management while maintaining strong community accountability. It provides clarity of roles, fosters collaboration, and helps safeguard the values and long-term vision of The Dolphin.

6.3. Estimated staffing model

The right staffing model will depend on a few factors, such as our intended opening hours, food offer, events programme, and the scale of community activities. The following model is based on fulfilling requirements for the initial operating model in section 5.5.

Initial staffing model

Role	Hours	Role type	Notes
Operations Manager	Full-time Weds (for admin work) - Sunday inclusive	Salaried	The Operations Manager will not be expected to work all opening hours as this would exceed reasonable shift lengths. Their working pattern will be focused on peak times and managerial duties with other shifts supported by volunteers.
Chef/Cook	Part-time rota	Volunteers	Food safety trained kitchen volunteers serving pre-prepared local food such as pies
Bar Staff	Part-time rota	Volunteers	
Kitchen Assistant / Pot-washer(s)	Part-time rota	Volunteers	
Event/Café Helpers	Part-time rota	Volunteers	
Gardener / Maintenance	Ad hoc	Volunteer	When required for general upkeep and planting
Operations/ Events Coordinator	Part-time	Volunteer or	Helps with comms, booking, marketing, events, admin

		Committee member	
Cleaner	Part-time	0.2	Early mornings/after close, 2–3 hrs/day May be a contract service or an employee

Seasonal Boost (Spring–Autumn)

- Extra bar and kitchen staff for:
 - Outdoor events
 - Tourist season
 - Community festivals / weddings
- Possibly 1–2 **seasonal part-time roles** (e.g. students or hospitality workers)

6.4. Recruitment and reaching the right people

Objectives

- Recruit a values-aligned, experienced Operations Manager who is excited by community ownership, heritage buildings, and local impact.
- Secure high-quality core staff who bring professionalism, warmth, and creativity.
- Balance skills and experience with cultural fit and long-term commitment.
- Recruit in a transparent, community-first way.

Phased Recruitment Timeline (example)

Phase	Month	Key Actions
1. Planning & Promotion	Month 1	Finalise job specs & pay; promote the opportunity
2. Applications Open	Month 2	Accept applications (4 weeks)

3. Interviews & Selection	Month 3	Interview top candidates, trial shifts if possible
4. Appointments & Contracts	Month 3–4	Make offers, confirm start dates
5. Onboarding & Training	Month 4	Begin induction, team building, soft launch prep

Steps in Detail

1. Role Definition & Job Descriptions

- Write clear, inspiring job descriptions for:
 - Manager / Management Couple
 - Chef / Kitchen Lead
 - Front of House Lead
 - Cleaner
 - Operations/Event Support
- Include salary, accommodation, benefits, share of profits/incentives, working hours, and values.
- Ensure they reflect community ownership, sustainability, and heritage care.

2. Recruitment Strategy

Promote the roles widely, especially in networks that share your values:

Channel	Notes
Plunkett Foundation Jobs Board	Targeted at community enterprise professionals
Ethical job boards (e.g. Escape the City)	Appeals to value-led applicants
Hospitality recruitment sites	For professional reach
Local newspapers & radio	For community interest

Your own newsletter & social media	Builds trust and transparency
Posters in local pubs, cafés & farm shops	For a word-of-mouth, grassroots reach
Partner organisations (e.g. NT, Dartmoor-based projects)	Shared audience with community spirit

Optional: Host a 'Working at the Dolphin' open evening where potential applicants can meet the Committee and get excited about the vision.

3. Application Process

- Simple application form or CV + cover letter.
- Emphasise values and vision alignment in questions.
- Option to apply as a management couple or as individuals.
- Make accessibility and inclusivity a priority in your process.

4. Selection

- Shortlist collaboratively - include community members on the panel.
- Host informal first-round interviews (in person or remote).
- Invite top candidates to:
 - Visit the Dolphin
 - Meet key community members
 - Take part in a short trial shift or practical task, if relevant
- Prioritise warmth, leadership, adaptability, and sustainability awareness.

5. Offer & Induction

- Offer contracts with clear terms and expectations.
- Provide time for relocation if needed.
- Offer strong onboarding: pub history, systems, values, key contacts, local suppliers, and a community meet-and-greet.
- Prepare for a **soft opening** phase to trial service and build momentum.

Optional Add-Ons

- **Community Q&A** with shortlisted candidates (if appropriate)

- **Welcome package** including info on local walks, groups, suppliers, etc.
- **Professional development fund** or access to Plunkett events and training

7. Marketing

Pubs in this day and age cannot rely on only ‘regulars’ to keep the doors open. In fact, our model for The Dolphin aims not only to cater to the pub-lovers in the village, but bring diverse members of our wider community together, from Kenton and beyond.

Reaching our audience and engaging them will require a marketing lead on the Committee to ensure a consistent, strategic, and engaging approach to marketing and communications, and to help develop The Dolphin’s brand identity as a vibrant destination.

7.1 Initial marketing strategy

Launch and First Quarter (Months 0–3)

Split into 3 phases

Goals

- Build awareness and local buzz in the lead-up to opening.
- Drive strong attendance to the opening weekend.
- Establish regular visitors and community engagement.
- Position The Dolphin as a must-visit destination for locals and visitors.
- Gather feedback and build mailing/social lists for ongoing comms.

7.1.1. Phase 1: Pre-Launch (1–2 months before opening)

Key Activities:

- **Brand Reveal:** Share The Dolphin’s brand identity (logo, colours, values) on social media and in local press.
- **Opening Date Announcement:** Publish a save-the-date with teaser content (photos of renovations, sneak peeks of menus, team introductions).
- **‘Meet the Team’ Content Series:** Post weekly intros of the manager, chef, and volunteers, showing faces behind the mission.
- **Behind-the-Scenes Stories:** Use Instagram/Facebook Stories and email to show renovations, menu tastings, and community input.

- **Local Press & Radio:** Share a story with press and community radio on why the Dolphin matters and how people can help.
- **Printed Flyers/Leaflets:** Distribute in neighbouring villages, community hubs, and tourist points (e.g. walking routes, visitor centres).
- **VIP Launch Invitations:** Send invitations to supporters, press, local officials, and business collaborators.

Channels:

- Instagram / Facebook / Twitter
- Local radio and press
- Mailchimp or Substack mailing list
- Physical posters, flyers, blackboards
- Word of mouth via local groups

7.1.2. Phase 2: Launch Week

Key Activities:

Launch Weekend Event:

- Live music
- local vendors
- 'first pour' ceremony or ribbon cutting
- Tastings of signature dishes or drinks
- Welcome speech from team/committee
- Free drink with first meal or raffle for free meal

Opening Offers:

- Limited 'Founders Menu'
- 'First Pint on Us' for early bookings
- Discounted coffee for locals from 10–11am
- Photo & Video Capture: Hire or assign someone to capture content for social media and archives

Channels:

- Real-time social media updates and Stories
- Press release for post-launch coverage
- Local community groups sharing and tagging

Phase 3: First Quarter (3 months post-launch)

Key Activities:

Regular Themed Events:

- Friday Folk Nights
- Sunday Roasts & Stories
- Community Coffee Mornings
- Heritage Talks
- Pub Quiz Thursdays

Midweek Promos:

- Loyalty cards for locals (e.g. buy 6 coffees, get one free)
- 'Worker's Lunch' deal for trades/remote workers

Feedback Drive:

- Printed and digital feedback forms
- Ask for Google and TripAdvisor reviews

Press Follow-up:

'How it's going' story pitched to press/blogs

Newsletter Launch:

Monthly update with menu highlights, events, community news, and behind-the-scenes content

Collaboration Highlights:

Spotlight suppliers, artists, and community groups we work with

Channels:

- Bi-weekly social posts
- Monthly newsletter
- Google Business profile
- TripAdvisor and review site listings
- Posters and chalkboards
- Local event listings
- KPIs (Key Performance Indicators)
- Opening weekend attendance
- Newsletter signups

- Social media engagement/followers
- Google reviews (target 4.5+ stars)
- Event attendance
- Repeat visitors / table bookings

8. Finances

To develop a robust financial plan for an organisation that is not yet operational, we drew on a range of external sources and expert insights. We reviewed business plans from other successful community-owned pubs, analysed profit and loss accounts from a similar community venture, and consulted with experienced pub operators and advisors, including those familiar with running hospitality businesses in rural settings.

By combining this collective knowledge with our vision for The Dolphin as a thriving, welcoming community hub, we have created a financial plan that is both grounded in real-world precedent and tailored to the unique opportunities of this site. This approach ensures that our projections are realistic, considered, and aligned with both industry expertise and the aspirations of the community.

8.1. Sales

Projections have been made across key trading areas. These estimates reflect realistic, steady growth as The Dolphin reopens and re-establishes itself as a valued and vibrant community pub.

Drinks (The Dolphin Bar):

We anticipate steady growth in drinks sales as the pub becomes a trusted and welcoming local once more. Year 1 will begin with modest trade as awareness builds, followed by organic growth through strong word-of-mouth, community loyalty, and improved marketing.

Food (The Dolphin Kitchen):

The kitchen will launch with a limited menu in Year 1, building capacity, consistency and local reputation over time. As we grow, we expect to develop a seasonal menu and attract a strong regular trade for both lunches and evening meals. Weekend lunches will be a particular focus.

Café Trade:

We plan to open during the day for coffee, cake, and light bites. This is expected to provide a valuable daytime income stream, particularly on weekends, and will evolve based on local interest and volunteer support.

Community Events:

Low-cost, high-value events such as quiz nights, games evenings, seasonal celebrations and live music will contribute to turnover while building footfall and strengthening local engagement. This income is expected to grow slowly and be balanced with accessibility and affordability.

Community+ Programme:

This programme includes outreach, shared meals, and collaborations with other local initiatives. It is not intended as a profit generator but is forecast to be broadly cost-neutral, supported through grants, donations, or cross-subsidy.

8.2 Strategic Approach

The financial model assumes that to be viable, the Society must:

- Secure enough funding to buy the pub
- Complete essential Year 1 repairs and equipment purchases

Once The Dolphin is operational and cash flow allows, we will consider bringing forward later-stage capital improvements, if this makes good strategic and financial sense.

8.3 Funding

As with many community ownership projects, it is difficult to precisely quantify investor confidence at this early stage. However, initial conversations, community feedback, and pledges all suggest there is strong local support for bringing The Dolphin into community ownership.

The financial plan is based on the following approach:

- **Community Shares:** Our goal is to raise £400,000 through a community share offer. This will fund the purchase of the pub and cover essential renovation and equipment costs in Year 1.

- **Grant Funding:** Where possible, future improvement works (e.g. heating upgrades, energy efficiency, or community facilities) will be funded through grants on a project-by-project basis.
- **Shortfall Funding:** If we raise more than £250,000 but less than £400,000 in share capital, we will seek to make up the difference through continuing the share offer, grant funding or, if appropriate, a small ethical loan. The amount raised will determine the pace and extent of renovation works, but we will not proceed with the purchase unless the funding required for viability is secured.

8.4. Cashflow, budget and Capital Expenditure calculations

Please see Annex 1 (Annex 1 Cashflow, budget, CAPEX Year 1) for these spreadsheets.

9. Fundraising

In order to support the initial costs of the project, we have engaged in various successful fundraising initiatives including events and raffles.

To date we have held 17 events, which have been attended by a good number of people from the village and beyond and have already raised c£3,000.

9.1. Community Share Offer

The community share offer is the cornerstone of our fundraising plan. Full details, including how to invest, projected returns, and use of funds, are available in **Annex 1 – The Community Share Prospectus**.

9.2. Grants

Despite a thorough search, **we have not yet been successful in securing significant grant funding** for The Dolphin. Many funding streams either do not apply to our situation (due to postcode, building status, or sector focus) or are currently paused or closed to new applications.

That said, we continue to explore options and welcome support from anyone with fundraising or grant writing experience. Potential sources under ongoing consideration include:

- **The Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF)** – While The Dolphin is not a listed building, AHF occasionally funds projects that have heritage or local landmark value. This may be a long shot, but still under watch.
- **The Plunkett Foundation** – We have received **initial advisory support** from Plunkett and are in discussions about further consultancy time or small development grants.
- **Power to Change** – Although their main community business grant programmes are currently closed, we are monitoring for any upcoming funding relevant to rural pubs and community hubs.
- **The National Lottery Awards for All** – Could support small-scale community activities and events at the Dolphin once we're open.
- **The Reach Fund** – Although not yet applied for, this may offer funding to help us strengthen our case for social investment or loans.

At this stage, **no grant income is included in our financial model**, and we are not relying on grants to complete the purchase or fund initial operations. If secured, any grant funding will be treated as **project-specific** and applied to improvements or community activities beyond the core business plan.

9.3. Loans

We are open to using ethical or commercial loans to **bridge any shortfall**, particularly in scenarios where we raise over £250,000 in shares but need to reach the full £400,000.

We are researching **community lenders such as Co-operative & Community Finance, Big Issue Invest**, and others. Any borrowing would be carefully assessed to ensure it is **affordable, fair, and does not compromise our financial sustainability or the interests of our shareholders**.

10. Sensitivity Analysis

What could go wrong – and how we plan to manage it

Even with the strongest plans and community support, things may not always go as expected. This section outlines the main risks to The Dolphin project and our

approach to mitigating them. Sensitivity analysis helps us understand the potential impact on finances (particularly cash flow), reputation, and long-term success.

10.1 Share Funding Shortfall

Our target is to raise **£400,000** through a **community share offer**, based on strong early interest.

However, if we raise **less than £400,000 but more than £250,000**, we will aim to **bridge the gap through a mix of ethical loans and/or carefully phased spending**.

- **Above £250k**: acquisition can proceed; short-term borrowing may be needed for setup.
- **Below £250k**: acquisition will only proceed if viable matched funding or lending is secured.

We are confident that EIS/SEIS eligibility and the clear social purpose of The Dolphin will sustain momentum in our share offer.

10.2 Lack of Grant Funding

We have not yet secured any grant funding, despite thorough research. This means:

- Our financial model does not rely on grants to proceed with the purchase or immediate reopening.
- Some Community+ projects and future capital works may be postponed until appropriate grants or project-specific funding become available.
- We will continue to monitor and apply to relevant grant opportunities.

10.3 Staff Recruitment Difficulties

The hospitality sector continues to face staffing challenges. To mitigate this:

- We have designed a strong package for our landlord/chef couple, including good pay, autonomy, and community support.
- We will appoint an operations manager to support recruitment and ongoing HR management.

- We are also exploring local recruitment, working with community members and potential partners to fill part-time roles across the pub, kitchen, and events.

10.4 Failure to Meet Sales Targets

Sales targets are ambitious but grounded in evidence:

- Our community survey and fundraising campaign suggest a strong appetite for The Dolphin's return.
- With diverse income streams (drinks, food, events, accommodation, etc.), we have flexibility — one stream underperforming may be offset by another exceeding expectations.
- We will regularly monitor performance and adjust marketing, pricing, and offerings accordingly.

10.5 Unexpected Challenges

Loss of key personnel

We are fortunate to have a committed and skilled steering group, supported by a growing network of volunteers and supporters. If a key team member leaves, we are confident others in the community will step up. We also have access to external expertise and consultants through Plunkett and other networks.

Delays or changes in purchase process

At the time of writing, our agreement with the current owner is progressing as planned. However, property sales are always at risk of delay.

We are maintaining open communication and legal oversight, and believe the community sale remains the best and most viable option for all parties.

Events outside our control (fire, flood, theft, etc.)

We will ensure comprehensive insurance is in place, and maintain high standards of risk management, hygiene, and health & safety. While such events can cause disruption, our planning prioritises continuity, adaptability, and safeguarding community assets.

