First public meeting – Fraiser room – 7pm 12th August 2026

Mark Newlands welcomed the attendees and introduced the current board members.

Mel Newlands, Jeff Beardwell, Frances Hair, Maxine Millen and Jane Harris.

Not present – Phil Harris and Jon Millen.

Mark began with the great news that ITV would be coming to The Ship on Friday 14th August at 11.30 to interview and report on our current campaign. CAMRA had encouraged them to come as they are working with ITV on the scale of pub closures. Everyone is welcome. The more, the merrier. We would like to see some support.

Jeff paused the meeting at this point so we could all experience the eclipse, the last one being in 1999 with a 90% moon covering and the next one due in 2050. Given that this a rare occasion we stepped outside.

Mark – This is your meeting. We will tell you how much we know and do not know. We have issued out a survey and all the things on there will be revenue. Jeff will give the survey results and if there is anything else you would like to add, let us know. This meeting is not for any big decisions, it's more to explain where we are and what we need to do next. Please feel free to ask questions after each segment.

Jeff – We will ty to answer all questions but there may be more questions than answers at the moment.

Mark – Most people know us, we are enthusiastic patrons who have made friends through the pub. As some of you may be aware, the pub started to wind down and then it just closed. We tried to find out what went on but there was some contradiction. We heard that internals were being diminished and did not know if it would still be a pub. This prompted us to look into it and so we all got together.

We can agree to do certain things but at the end of all of this, will we all still be on the board?, maybe, maybe not. There will be the community, and it will be the investors who will have a vote to put people on the board. They will want people of their own. We are just getting it to the next level.

ACV update.

As of 23/07/26, the pub is now listed as an Asset of Community value. The owner has the potential to have a review and if he doesn't like the outcome he can appeal. We cannot do anything about this. This appeal would be based on if there was an irregularity by us or the council, or if procedures were not followed. Also, if there is no realistic prospect that it can remain as an ACV. The ACV will stay on the list for 5 years. This will only really come into effect if the owner enters into a legally binding agreement to sell. Then the new clock starts and we have 6 weeks to say if we want to submit a bid. We then have 6 months to put the bid in. Once the bids are in, (price and monies agreed) then we go back to the vendor, but they are not legally bound to accept our offer. I have had a meeting with the owner, nice chap, who is money driven but respects the fact that the community is wanting this ACV. I think he would accept an offer. Under current law, Localism Act 2011, the ACV lasts 5 years and then we have 6 months to bid if there is a relevant disposal. This means if contracts have been exchanged. We should actually have more time than this and currently the law is not in our favour. The new law which is coming in is favourable to us, however, the civil servants have not fully defined the gaps and this could take 6 to 12 months to achieve and then there will be a transition provisions. With the new ruling, the ACV will last 10 years, and we will have 12 months to raise the money. The price will be sought from an independent valuation, and the seller is bound to sell at that price to the community.

Jeff – On the website, we had 340 responses to register interest. We had 70 responses to the survey. (Jeff then went through the survey results)

The website then asks for help with services, such as social media and being involved in running a pub. A majority of the people from the survey were an average age of 46.

Please could you fill in the survey.

Questions

Q – Will we have any knowledge of any offers that come through?

A – They have no obligation to tell us

Q – is it for sale as a private residence?

A – No just bricks and mortar plus 30 -35%

We will get a valuation done; the owner has agreed to this. We have told him, we do not agree to the price. He may give us more time to raise the money if he agrees with the offer. It will be bricks and mortar price.

Q – How long has it been on the market?

A – We think it’s around 7 months

Q – Has a change of use been applied for?

A – No - if an application to change it to a dwelling was made, the council would have to regard the ACV as they deemed the property to be of value. The ACV will have an influence on the planning committee decision. But the ACV is not definitive in planning decisions..

Q – Do you think it is viable?

A – I will cover this later

Q - Did the owner have intentions of running a pub?

A – The owner is a local man who knew the Parkers and knew The Ship was built well. He thought it was a good price so bought it. He thought about running it as pub but was told that it had closed because it wasn't doing very well. The owner has never actually been in the pub to see for himself. We need to prove that it is viable.

Q – There has been some activity in the pub

A- We will come back to that.

Q – Cafés are doing really well lately

A – Yes even if it's just selling sandwiches

Jeff – We have viewed the building as we were worried about what was left due to rumours. The Bars, upstairs and downstairs have been removed, but just the woodwork. Everything else in the bars are intact. There is a self-contained accommodation which has been stripped bare. The kitchen upstairs is still intact with one item missing as there is a space. There is a walk-in fridge, extraction fans, hob, cookers. The function room is the same minus the bar. The 2nd floor is in good condition with 4 large bedrooms all intact and ready to be let. All electrics are in good order and there is separate heating for the annexe. The waste system has recently been maintained. We are submitting for a valuation.

Mark – We need a formal organisation. There are 3 types of business

Community Benefit society – to benefit the wider community

Co-operative Society -to benefit the members, including investors

Community interest company – membership orientated

We do not know everything. We are looking to work with a Charity called Plunkett UK. They advise on how to run a community asset. They give guidance on the rules and what vehicles to use. They work closely with CAMRA (Campaign for real ale). We are also being introduced to investors, so we need to find a happy medium for the community and the investors. We will speak to Plunkett and CAMRA to find out what the rules are for each of the 3 types of company above. There will be some costs with this. We need to make sure the community has say-so as well as the investors. It will be 1 person 1 vote despite the amount invested. I feel we need a community member on the board, and the pub will be owned by the community not the investors. We can apply for grants. There will be an asset lock so nobody can sell shares, it must be kept within the community. And we must make sure the rules are for the community. This may be a hybrid where we have Owners and a trading company working together. If there is any profit, it could go 80% to investors and 20% to the community for example ONLY. Once we have the pub, we need to find staff to run it. Could use volunteers maybe but then we need a rota and that would not work. We need financial advisors and ideally a live in tenant / manager running the whole thing. Being responsible for staff, ordering etc. These decisions will be for the board and investors.

Q – If it must kept as an CBS or similar, what if it doesn't work?

A – Then it is sold and proceeds go to debtors/investors as per the rules and surplus to the community

Q – Can we get finance from the parish council?

A - we went to see the parish council and although they were supportive of the ACV, we didn't ask about any finance, and they did not propose anything.

Mark – I will speak to the parish council to ask about funding on this. ACV's can be raised by parish councils where the pub is owned by the community in agreement with investors.

<u>Pledges</u>

We have had a few pledges so far. A pledge is non-binding it's more to show the amount of community interest and for potential investors. If we do not have enough pledges, it will not be worth pursuing. Ive had discussions with some serious investors and others who have shown an interest.

Please pledge – Please encourage others to pledge. Any amount will help.

Q – Are there any grants available?

A – Yes Plunkett will advise on other sources of funding but time is against us. There is a lengthy application process, but we will go to any source available. We just want the pub open again. If someone wants to buy it that would be great.

<u>Decision point</u>

We will have 6 weeks to decide whether to put in a bid. This will depend on the level on investment, the skills we have. Do we have enough? The next stage is to get more people. We need a business case to give to investors and to everyone. There is still a lot of work to be done. There are risks, prospects may not be accepted. Revenue streams. We need to reverse engineer a business case. This will be issued when the investors have agreed. 1 year ago, it was a viable business, but I believe that people have shown that there is a want for it.

Please keep on pledging and we will make a decision at the end of the month to proceed or not.

We saw this pub 2 ½ years ago and it has slowly declined. We need to go back and start from ground zero. We will ask for the accounts again, but the new owner does not have a copy. As it was a limited company, there may be some information on Companies house.

Q- Will there be business rates?

A – We should be exempt from the rates if we can prove that Surfleet seas end is separate from Surfleet and therefore being the only pub in the village.

Mark – Thank you all for coming – please feel free to come up and speak to us.