

Notes from 'The Exeter' meeting, 22nd September 2024

Present:

Andrew Saunders (AS), Andrew Foster (AF), Guy Bracewell (GB), Caroline Bracewell (CB), Fiona Truswell (FT), Andy Grzesinski (AG), Ross Compton (RC), Sabrina Compton (SC), Sally Tancock (ST), Simon Hedges (SH), Sheena Hunter-Hedges (SHH), Sue Hyde (SH), Bry Uglow (BU), Sheila (S), Mary Ette (ME), Tim Collins (TC), Trevor Sanders (TS), John Truswell (JT), Martin Tavener (MT), Jerry Parkinson (JP), Amanda Chaplin (AC), Paul Chaplin (PT), Noel Tancock (NT), Caroline Tavener (CT), Helen Ratcliffe (HR – note-taking),

Introduction

AS introduced the meeting with a quick re-cap of what's happened so far:

- Around 48 hours ago we received the green light to take over The Exeter in a caretaker role until a buyer is found. Many of us hope that we will be that buyer and that we might eventually develop the premises into a multi-use community hub - but for now that can wait
- Our understanding is that a license or lease will be drawn up stipulating a rolling 3 month period of notice to be served by either side. We won't be paying any rent but we will be responsible for all other regular running costs
- Whilst there will be numerous matters to be addressed as time moves on, at this point in time, the absolute priority is to direct our efforts towards making sure that we can re-open the doors on Friday the 8th of November if not sooner. We won't be able to do this properly unless we get the message out that we need volunteers, and lots of them!
- Every effort is being put towards opening by the "Keeping the Pub Open" group to whom we are all both appreciative and grateful. One of the things we need to talk about today is just how that group can be supported by the rest of us
- But in amongst all the enthusiasm and excitement at the prospect of keeping The Exeter open, there have been comments about not keeping the wider community informed and involved and the word "secret" has been heard more than once
- This of course is the very last impression that any of us want to give as we need and want the whole community to be on board and to support the project
- Therefore, one of the main purposes of meeting today is to take positive steps to overcome this impression by approving a flyer to be delivered door to door, an article to be placed in October's Focus Magazine and additional information to be placed on the TCLT website
- Among the many reasons why we all love "The Exeter" is the fact that it is a rare example of an ungentrified village pub with enormous character and authenticity
- It is shutting in just over a month, with Matt and Rick leaving on the 4th November
- Our working party then needs to sweep into action and all of the pre-planning that we will have done needs to be put into effect so that we can open the doors, put the lights on, light the fires and offer a warm welcome to our customers on the 8th of November.

The notes from the meeting held on 15th September were agreed and will be made available on 'The Exeter' tab on the TCLT website. All future agendas, notes and papers will also be posted there.

1 Nomination to have 'The Exeter' designated as an ACV (Asset of Community Value)

Unfortunately, Jan Wills had to give her apologies for the meeting, but AS updated the meeting on progress to date on her behalf:

- Some further testimonials had been forthcoming and so the intention is to submit the application this week
- The ACV would provide protection for The Exeter for 6 months and so there could be a potential conflict with the three-month notice period proposed by the current owners.

AF confirmed that the Board of TCLT had formally agreed to the ACV being submitted in its name.

ACTION: JW/AS

2 Keeping the pub open

2.1 Current situation with the owners:

- AF reported that the owners' agent will be drawing up a lease
- It was agreed that two quotes will be sought for legal advice in relation to signing the lease, one from Jan's daughter's firm and one via NT
- It was also agreed that AF/AS/NT should be empowered to make the decision as to which quote to accept as speed is of the essence
- It was noted that, in principle, Matt and Rick would be happy for changeover to take place from 29/10 if everyone else agrees

2.2 Report on progress from RC/SC/ST/NT/KR/SR sub-group

- Unfortunately, SR (bar lead) had to give her apologies for the meeting, but the current bar manager, Shirley, gave the group lots of helpful information about shift patterns, bar processes and procedures and health and safety requirements – and also volunteered to lend her support in the future
- ST (premises lead) reported that she has a band of 24 volunteers, which she will divide into smaller teams, to help with the changeover
- It was agreed that, short-term, the priority should be to clean and spruce the place up a bit, rather than make any radical changes
- The group would welcome some help with 'Keeping the pub open' communications – Matt and Rick own the web domain and are happy for it to be taken over by us, and it would also be helpful for someone to deal with social media (eg the existing Facebook page) – **volunteers required, please**
- SC (kitchen lead) reported that she is meeting with the Environmental Health Officer this week and has sourced a number of EH courses for those volunteering in the kitchen
- In addition, training on the coffee machine had also been set up with a barista
- It was agreed that the food offer should be limited in the first instance, potentially with visiting food vans, to whom a small commission could be charged
- It was noted that it would be helpful to set up a food-oriented focus group as soon as possible, including both cooks/chefs to establish what's feasible and customers to establish what's wanted

ACTION:SC

2.3 *Discussions with Matt re costs and suppliers*

- NT reported that he had met with Matt to discuss handover in relation to utilities and suppliers and it was noted that Matt and Rick would probably like the changeover to be agreed by the end of next week
- It was noted that initial set-up and monthly running costs had been established
- Finally, it was noted that the name on the lease needs to be agreed

2.4 *TUPE - Existing Staff*

- It was noted that there appears to be a bit of confusion around who would actually be eligible for redundancy and how much qualifying time they have
- It was confirmed that we would be liable for any redundancy pay, and that an appropriate amount had been included in the budget

2.5 *Management committee*

- It was agreed that a smaller group than this needs to be set up and empowered to make decisions quickly
- It was agreed the current group of six was in the best position to do this in the short-term, calling others with appropriate skills/experience in to help when needed
- It was also agreed that this should be reviewed once the pub is up and running
- It was noted that PC has agreed to do the book keeping for the moment, and that there are a couple of other local contacts we could approach for longer-term assistance (eg Glen Redler – ShHH to contact) **ACTION: SHH**

2.6 *Volunteer form*

- It was reported that RC and GB hope to finalise the form later that day
- It was agreed that the form should be available to complete on-line and also in paper form from the Post Office (and possibly at the farm shop and The Exeter itself?), and that it should be referred to on the flyer
- There was some discussion about which website should be used for the form – TCLT or the existing Exeter Inn?
- It was noted that the issue of the name of the pub needs to be resolved – Land Registry refer to it as The Exeter Inn; however, when accommodation was no longer offered, the name officially changed to The Exeter

2.7 *Drawing up a licence/lease*

- Covered under 2.1 above.

3 **Short-term funding**

- NT reported that a bank account has now been set up into which donations can be paid
- The target for the short-term fund is £10k, but £5k should be enough for the first couple of months
- It was agreed that requests for donations, with the appropriate details, should be included in the flyer and Focus article and that we should monitor how successful this is for a couple of months before going down the crowdfunding route
- It was noted that it should be made clear that these donations are non-refundable and that, should there be any money left if the pub cannot remain open, any residual funds would be donated to charity

- In the interests of proceeding with this and all other communications quickly, it was agreed that the TCLT website would be used for disseminating information and making forms available.

4 Communications and Community Questionnaire

- The draft flyer was circulated and, with the additions re donations noted above, was agreed
- AF offered to organise the printing of the flyer
- There were several volunteers to deliver door-to-door both in the village and more widely (eg Latchmoor) and it was agreed to split the deliveries into streets/areas to make delivery more manageable
- AF volunteered to laminate some copies of the flyer and attach them to lampposts around the village
- ST's excellent article for Focus was discussed and it was agreed to amend some of the wording slightly to make it more inclusive
- It was also agreed that the article should be made available alongside the volunteer forms/flyers to help disseminate information appropriately and that any approach to Matt/Rick and/or the Farm Shop to locate forms/flyers in either location should be handled very carefully
- It was noted that discussion of the community questionnaire will follow in due course.

5 Community Hub Concept

CB reported that, although several people had expressed an interest in joining Focus Groups, she and HR were still looking for parents with young children and/or teenagers to involve in discussions about the hub concept – but that we would keep trying!

6 Business Plan and Detailed Funding Submission

AG reported that these will be developed in due course.

7 Long Term Funding

It was noted that we all await any announcements from the Government with bated breath. It was also noted that it is important the we work hard to ensure good relations are maintained with all other village businesses.

ACTIONS:

The key priorities are:

- Communications in the village and beyond re volunteering and donations
- Generating a fighting fund
- ACV application

In order to achieve these:

- **HR** to prepare notes
- **AF** to print flyer and organise distribution
- **JW** to finalise ACV application

Date of next meeting: Sunday 29th September at 6pm in The Exeter