

11th February 2020, Shareholder Bulletin

Dear all,

We hope you have all recovered from New Year and that those who attended enjoyed the celebrations for the Church a couple of weeks ago which was held in The Bell.

Since then there have been a few changes to the committee. Marianne Taylor is now Chair of the Mortimer Community Benefit Society; Jim Ainsworth is Vice Chair, and Samantha Morgan is Treasurer. Alex Jenkins continues as Secretary. We would like to thank Jill Grant, Chris Howell and Mike Bending for their service.

As the Committee is now smaller and leaner, we intend to push on rapidly with the task of finding new tenants for the pub. Here is an update on developments:

Of four applications in January, one was unsuitable. One has visited twice and met with members of the Committee. He is now preparing a detailed business plan in readiness for a formal interview. A third has visited once, and has requested information to enable her to consider making a business plan. She is a career publican and we have put her in contact with two chefs who had applied last year without front-of-house support – both of whom have expressed an interest in helping re-launch the food offering at The Bell. The fourth is a chef (male) and his wife (front of house) who visited us on 10th February. Their approach to the challenge of creating a profitable but community-friendly business sounded most encouraging, and they are now preparing their business plan.

In February, new enquiries are coming in, the latest of which is a duo where both are experienced chefs with Front of House experience, and we plan to meet them next week.

These responses have come from our listing on “FindMyPub”, through a Plunkett word-of-mouth contact and via social media. A new Social Media campaign is about to start, we are going to advertise again on Sunshine Radio and create a profile for The Bell on LinkedIn.

Meanwhile, members of the community and of the Management Committee continue to run a series of events, keeping the building warm, clean and supported, as well as raising funds to cover insurance and utilities costs. It is undeniably hard to find exactly the right tenant: breweries allow six months for the process, and many community-owned pubs have had similar experiences to our own, having one or more ‘false starts’. We have learnt much from the process already, and we are completely focused on finding the applicant whose vision and style aligns most closely with that of the MCBS as well as having the knowledge necessary for success. We are cautiously optimistic!

Following the success of the ‘pop-up’ events held over the last couple of months we have the following dates for your diary:

14th February Valentine’s Day Meal. Book by emailing: themortimercbs@gmail.com

28th February Music Night “A lively mix of traditional Folk tunes from the British Isles and beyond”

6th March Fish & Chip Night, from 6.30pm. Please place your order which we will collect from Dimarco’s by emailing: themortimercbs@gmail.com

We are also looking at the following in the interim whilst we look for the permanent tenants, but we need some volunteers to help make it happen:

1. Opening Friday nights, all day Saturday and Sunday for lunch.
2. Pop-up Saturday night restaurants

We feel it is vital to have the pub open and active for the community, employing our own young people, using local suppliers, and being the hub we all want The Bell to be.

We look forward to seeing you all soon.

Marianne Taylor (Chair)