

Q5 Why do you feel the property is an asset of community value?

This building represents the last chance for a community centre overall of the Highfields and western downs estate. It is perfect in its location as the site is central to the whole of the community. Locals pass this building whilst going to the only local shops such as the spar, shop, beauty salon, chip shop and hairdressers that are located along side it. This pub has become the heart of the community and is the biggest asset we can attend in our locality, without having to go to church. Its typical of a community centre and we lost those buildings along the way so we intend to fight for this with all the energy we can muster.

The pub trades from 1pm until close and has been steadily increasing in their weekly takings over the years. More families have started to frequent the pub and all believe that it should be used for lots of varied events, benefitting our local community. The building has a great enclosed garden to the side and rear, and currently houses unique parrots, a pig named peppa, chickens, rabbits and cats and dogs, this has been great entertainment for the families in our area. In the past it has been rented out, to hold training days for health classes. I believe we could expand on this idea of health and wellbeing for our people and we could use the space to upskill and train the community groups capacity, to run the building successfully for the future. We could get support for this using the local volunteer advice service "Support Staffordshire/Vast" they would be willing to manage us as a community/charity enterprise

Locals from the community donate selections of children's toys, to play on whilst attending the pub garden but also swap things and share items with those less fortunate than themselves. Locals realised, that it is the last pub on their estate and have fond memories for the building. The landlord and community have come together to create lots of programs and events, that help our community, more recently projects that support residents with the current cost of living crisis. We ran a community larder there during covid and would love to operate one from there again. During that time, it was a thriving community larder and over 200 families had signed up to it in the first 6 months.

The pub now has numerous teams including darts, pool, fishing, dominoes and are starting a football team. The pub is used for karaoke every Saturday night which has recently been expanded to include Thursday nights. There is free Pool on special occasions, and a Sunday pool tournament that has grew in attendance so much it has teams in the league.

The Police have said they would support any youth work in the future that could be carried out on the premises. We could look for support from the police and crime commissioner to fund further workshops or courses in the building for young people from the estate. Every bank holiday there are family fundays, with family fun entertainment, taking in some of the best takings the pub has ever seen. She has

events organised for the upcoming Bank Holidays which should exceed further takings.

Debbie started Sunday dinners every week and although it is steady, she has at least 40 sittings every Sunday. Local contractors and labourers who are working in the area have started to use the building over the Tea time therefore expanding the evening time trade. Local families from the Highfields and Western Downs community frequent it regularly again. Various community groups and church organisations use the Oxleathers lounge to have meetings; these have included the Local Scouts committee, neighbourhood forum groups and more recently the pub church who hold quiz nights there.

Debbie has vast experience in the pub trade after running a town pub for many years, the community respect, know and trust her to manage the pub effectively now. Recently we have been in discussions with local residents, to have a weekly project for those at home and feeling lonely and isolated, this is forming as we speak. We have many other exciting new projects to introduce as well, such as community bulk buying and community café idea which could subsidise part of the venture going forward and perhaps get the opportunity to run the larder again.

Currently the community are campaigning to "Save the Oxleathers Community Pub" by taking signatures face to face and online, they have been networking with the community and value their input through this whole project. This in itself is enabling the community to use the skills needed, to negotiate our way through this ongoing process. Saving the pub will encourage others, in the community, to use the facilities and give a little back to their community, it will also encourage better relations throughout the area.

I believe it would be a travesty if we, the community did not get the chance to save the last pub on our estate, potentially together, we could be the first grassroots community group in Stafford to evolve the idea of "pub/hub". We would like to list this building as an asset to our community and give us the space to properly work through our nomination and expression. Thank you for listening to us.

Yours sincerely

Debbie Howe
Manager/Vice Chair HCG