

Hare & Hounds (Harlton) Community Owned Pub Community Interest Company

Report for Harlton Parish Council meeting

April 2024

The Hare & Hounds continues to operate successfully as a small pub offering drinks seven days per week and food six days per week. Following the community buyout in 2017, the premises is owned by the Community Interest Company (CIC). The CIC has 160 shareholders, nearly all of whom reside in Harlton and surrounding villages. There are six directors who are elected by the shareholders on a three-year rotation, and one co-opted director.

During the Covid years, the pub was operated directly by the CIC directors. A pub manager and staff were employed by the CIC. Over the past year, we have changed the mode of operation back to the original plan of having a tenant landlord. Tom Canning, who had been the pub manager, became the tenant landlord in May 2023, and he is now responsible for all operational matters in the day-to-day running of the pub, including employment of staff, selection of beers and other drinks, the menu, price-setting, cost control, health & safety, cleaning and sales & marketing. The CIC remains responsible for maintaining the building and the grounds.

Earlier this year, we arranged for the staff bathroom to be refurbished. This was well overdue and has been welcomed by our chefs Tim and Nat. Thanks to local builder Chris McCann and his team for doing a great job.

The pub garden is maintained by a group of gardening volunteers from the village. Many thanks for your great work on those Saturday and Sunday mornings.

The ash tree at the rear of the back garden died last year. We had it felled a few weeks ago, and soon the remaining tree stump will be turned into an attractive sculpture by a local tree carver.

We have started our next project: replacement of the kitchen storage sheds behind the pub. The current wooden sheds have lasted well but now need replacement to maintain compliance with food hygiene regulations. We are replacing these ageing temporary structures with modern temporary structures of similar dimensions. Most customers don't realise these important sheds exist as they are tucked away behind the main building, within the pub boundary. With a very small kitchen, the sheds provide important space for fridges, freezers and dry food storage.

We've chosen replacement sheds of a more modern and hygienic design. The walls and ceilings are powder-coated steel inside and outside, with insulation between. This will provide wipe-clean surfaces and should reduce energy consumption. To overcome the tight access constraints, we have chosen flat-pack units for assembly on-site. The work will be complete by the end of May. Much of the work is being carried out by a small team of volunteers working at weekends. Electrical work will be carried out by a professional contractor midweek. Ben Banks is project managing the work.

There is a beer festival at the pub this weekend. Please come along and enjoy an interesting range of beers, fun music, great company and hopefully...some warm weather.

A Spanish evening had been arranged for 1st June, and Hootenany 4 is taking place on 6/7 July.