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**Subject:** King William Inne

Hello All

I give below my notes of the meeting and the written responses previously received from Mr Jones.

I have had two email addresses bounce back so if any of you have email addresses for either of these people perhaps you would let somebody know:- Jackie Lewis and Eamon Wynne.

I'll let you all know if we are able to book the school hall for an hour on 21st July at 6.30pm. It is very near the end of the school year and might not be possible.

After that meeting other arrangements will need to be made but Edington School Room or the Committee Room at the Village Hall are both available for hire. Catcott Parish Council would not pay for this as the Council will not be involved.

Good luck.

Julia

## **Notes of a meeting held at Catcott School Hall on 8th July 2025**

Initial consideration of the possibilities of running the King William Inn as a community venture.

Present:- G Barnett (Chairman of Catcott Parish Council and Chairman of this facilitating meeting), Jim Jones (Trade Director, Palmers Brewery), approx 100 members of the public.

The Chairman started the meeting by reading aloud Mr Jones' responses to various questions which had been forwarded to him in advance. Mr Jones arrived during this reading.

Mr Jones then spoke of the possibility of a community venture relying on collaboration between the brewery and any group formed to run the pub. He outlined the family values behind Palmers Brewery which had been regarded as the best tenanted pubs in the country.

However, there would be a lot to take into consideration. 500 pubs had closed in the last year. The need to abide by a Code of Conduct. Any new venture in the pub industry would take a long time to get going. Other activities such as a shop, post office, private groups/clubs etc could make a difference.

There were many questions from the floor which were covered.

There is definitely a need for a manager and somebody to live on the premises - a couple is ideal. A licensee is easier to find.

Mr Jones would draw up some profit and loss sheets to indicate the possibilities of running the pub in different ways.

There is no set proposal for the KW (King William). That would be on a negotiated basis.

### **How can it be made profitable and how busy could any volunteers make it?**

The amount payable to Palmers would be variable on a turnover % basis - the busier it is the more Palmers would take. However, this works both ways and to start with the brewery would give all the support it could, including their takings. For example, if not much income was taken to start with then Palmers would take no rent at all. It would be regarded as a long game.

Palmers do not like selling pubs - they need to sell beer - they need pubs to sell beer.

There was some discussion on the number of pubs to let today.

Only Palmers ales would be tied. The pub could sell other sorts of beverages - cider, spirits, etc from any firm

There would initially be no business rates as the pub's income would be below the threshold. Palmers employees are sometimes paid above the minimum wage. There would be NI contributions to take into account as well.

Rent would be based on turnover - either nil or low at start. Pint of beer - 54% profit.

It could not be run as a locked pub - insurance, etc.

The living accommodation for the manager would be refurbished.

The KW would benefit from making the garden available again.

The White Lion at Broadwindsor, which is run as a community venture, is packed every Sunday at 3pm.

A percentage of food sales would go to Palmers. Food could be sourced from wherever the management wanted.

Palmers need at least 19% profit in order to cover repairs.

Palmers cannot run it themselves as it is too work intensive.

Sheets were available for anybody interested to leave their emails addresses for updates.

It was made clear by the Chairman of Catcott Parish Council that the parish council would not get involved in this venture. If possible another meeting would be held in the school hall on 21st July at 6.30pm under Mr Barnett's chairmanship - this would need to be acceptable to the school, particularly as it is so near the end of the school year. There would be an email update sent confirming any meeting.

## **Responses from Jim Jones to questions put to him in advance of the meeting on 8th July.**

King William Catcott: Responses to initial questions from the Parish Council

### **Last annual turnover when trading, split between wet and dry product**

The last set of trading figures from when the pub operated with consistent opening hours and a working business plan was in 2017. Turnover was £275,000, made up of £99,000 in wet sales and £176,000 in dry sales.

Figures since COVID have been lower, with £124,000 in 2021 (£42,000 wet and £82,000 dry), and the most recent full year's trading in 2023/24 at £78,000 (£52,000 wet and £26,000 dry).

### **What annual turnover would be required to break even?**

This depends entirely on the business model. Key factors include how food and drink margins are managed, control of utility bills, the level of rental support, and staffing costs, which are the main controllable expenses. I would be happy to put together a sample profit and loss account to show how these areas impact profitability.

As part of our code of practice, we always ask that a full cash flow forecast is produced by an accountant acting for the prospective licensee and submitted with the application.

### **Business rates**

The current rateable value of the pub is £9,500. This is under the threshold, so no business rates are currently payable.

### **How much were annual energy bills?**

This would vary depending on the business model, particularly opening hours and how much food is produced, as the kitchen is a significant contributor to energy use.

Energy costs have increased sharply in the last two years, so we always recommend using a broker to find the best deal from reputable suppliers.

For a pub turning over the same £275,000 that the King William did in 2017, on a standard operating model, energy bills would typically be around £2,000 per month for electricity, £1,250 for gas or LPG, and £200 for water at current rates.

**How much was insurance?**

We do not have exact figures, but based on similar properties, public and employers' liability plus contents insurance is usually between £700 and £1,500 per year.

**Who is responsible for insurance?**

The licensee is responsible for employers' liability, public liability, and contents insurance. The brewery insures the building.

**Initial proposals on any lease rental terms**

To be discussed. We recognise that rental relief will be needed to help with reopening and cash flow. The level of support would reflect the long-term potential and stability of the business as laid out in an agreed business plan.

**Would the pub be tied to Palmers products?**

Yes. All of our pubs, including those run by community groups like the White Lion in Broadwindsor and the New Inn, Shipton Gorge, operate under the traditional tied model.

**Who has responsibility for repairs and renewals?**

Responsibility depends on the cause of the issue. If the issue is due to a fault, like a leaking pipe or storm damage to the roof, the brewery will cover it.

If the problem is due to user error, like a window being left to slam or a key being snapped in a lock, the licensee is responsible.

The tenancy agreement lays this out in detail to make sure that everyone is aware of both parties responsibilities.

Capital equipment in the premises: Are pumps and chillers working? Is the catering equipment serviceable? What fixtures and fittings like tables and chairs are included?

All equipment will be in working order, PAT tested where required, and certified for legal use.

Pumps and cellar chillers are owned and maintained by the brewery.

Much of the furniture has been removed for safekeeping following a recent break-in. A furniture package will be agreed as part of the process and will form the pub's inventory. The brewery would work with the group to set up a repayment plan for the inventory, most likely starting in the second year of the agreement.

**Would it be set up in trust?**

The pub would remain owned by Palmers, with a committee acting as the named signatories on the tenancy agreement. It would be up to the group to decide what company structure suits them and how the pub is managed day to day.

The Plunkett Foundation is a great source of guidance and was very helpful to the Broadwindsor group when they were exploring options.

<https://plunkett.co.uk/model-rules-for-a-community-benefit-society/>

If the conversation moves forward, I would be happy to introduce the chair of the Broadwindsor group to share their experience working with us and how they operate.

**Legal responsibilities of any trustees**

As above.

**Is the fact that the building will not be inhabited a problem?**

The building would need to be occupied for insurance purposes.

**Could any rooms be sublet for accommodation?**

Yes, though investment would need to be funded by the community group, as our priority would be to see the pub open for food and drink.

There are two flats. One has a private rear entrance and would be the more straightforward rental option, either as a holiday let or for longer-term use. It includes one en-suite bedroom, a lounge, and a kitchen diner.

The rooms above the pub could be converted to letting bedrooms, but this would be expensive and would not see a return on the investment for several years.

**What are the set-up costs?**

An initial deposit of £5,000 would be required. We would also need to see proof of funds of around £15,000 to cover early expenses including utilities, food suppliers, and wages. As mentioned earlier, a payment plan would be agreed for the pub inventory. Much of the 'cost' is likely to be time and effort, and not just financial!

**Other community pubs held a fundraiser. What was this money used for?**

These funds could be used as proof of working capital, as described above, or as was the case at Broadwindsor, to refurbish the pub and tailor it to local needs.

**If there is a community fundraiser, are contributors entitled to profit share? Can they get their money back if needed?**

This depends on how the community group chooses to structure things. The Plunkett Foundation can offer advice on different models and what has worked well for others.

Julia Marshall

Clerk/RFO to Catcott Parish Council

*Please note we now have a new email address:- [clerk@catcottparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@catcottparishcouncil.gov.uk)*

*Our old email address will cease to be monitored soon.*