



Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government



power to
change

business in
community
hands

**Plunkett
Foundation**

Improving rural lives together

The Gardeners Rest Pub, Sheffield

Location

*105 Neepsend Lane
Sheffield
S3 8AT*



www.thegardenersrest.com



[@gardenerscomsoc](https://www.facebook.com/gardenerscomsoc)



[@GardenersComSoc](https://twitter.com/GardenersComSoc)

About the Gardeners Rest Pub

The Gardeners Rest is nestled in the fast-changing district of Neepsend, one mile to the north-east of Sheffield, and it is the only operating pub in a district that is famous for its connections with the gas, steel and rail industries in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The area lost much of its population in the last quarter of the 20th century as traditional industries declined and shops, pubs and schools closed.

The recent regeneration of the adjacent Kelham Island district, the approved demolition order on the old Neepsend Cannon Brewery across the road from the pub, the conversion of old industrial buildings into flats, and the emergence of a very local bakery and Peddlers Market are early indicators that the formerly industrial area of Neepsend, neglected for many years, is now back on the map.

The Gardeners Rest, which opened in 1898, remains a much-loved base for a diverse community of individuals and community groups, many of whom come together to socialise and choose to make the pub their home from home.



Fundraising

A Community Share Offer Prospectus was prepared and the opportunity to pledge for shares took place, on crowdfunder, during the offer period–October to November 2016. The Society also applied to HMRC for assurance that investors would be eligible for 30% tax-relief on investments under Social Investment Tax Relief.

The groups also received a bursary award of £2,500 which paid for an architectural survey that was completed along with costs and plans for improvements, a promotional video and other essential costs.

The group also received a loan of £50,000 and a grant of £50,000 under the More than a Pub programme which they are paying back over a 7-year period.

Vision

The Society had a vision to preserve the unique character of this historic Neepsend pub, and for it to act as a hub for the many communities of interest that choose to use it.

They wanted the pub to remain a venue of choice for the delivery of many valued community services, namely:

- A traditional local pub serving real ale and a wide variety of alcoholic / non-alcoholic drinks
- A music venue with live music three nights a week, including guest performers and jam sessions to suit a wide range of tastes
- An activity centre with a bar billiards table, a quiz night every week, occasional celebration nights with special attractions and the opportunity for local groups to book the conservatory to pursue interests ranging from photography and chess to local history
- A venue for exhibitions by local artists and photographers
- To offer peace and calm and to be free from jukebox, fruit machine or canned music intrusion – for it to be a place to talk, to read newspapers (always available) and books, to play board games or somewhere just to sit and sip
- To be a garden area full of surprises on the banks of the River Don with a log fire blazing when it's cold

In addition, there was a desire and commitment to:

- Create a kitchen to prepare and provide a range of sensibly priced, tasty pub snacks such as pork pies and mustard, ham and cheese rolls and the occasional 'specials' such as bowls of chilli con carne or home-made pizza are made
- Renovate the extensive space above the pub, comprising two floors, to create comfortable accommodation for our manager and rentable flats for people who need them.
- Provide employment opportunities and work experience in the bar, the kitchen, the garden and the cellar for people who are disadvantaged in the labour market for health related and social reasons
- Open up the pub space (but not the bar!) during the day to provide a focal point for community groups to meet together at modest cost with refreshments available

Legal Model

The Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd was registered by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) in September 2016 as a Community Benefit Society.

Members elect the Society's management committee. Members are entitled to receive information from the management committee at regular intervals and to be consulted on matters of general concern before decisions are made.

The Gardeners Rest is well placed to serve as a hub for the local community and it provides a welcome and a safe haven to everyone who comes through its doors. The health and well-being of the local community will benefit from the energetic and pro-active presence of an enterprise that cares about the individual – about every individual.

For the beneficiaries with additional support needs, the entire raison d'être of what we do will be to meet those needs as a means of improving individual health and well-being.

Mark Powell, Gardeners Rest

Social impact

The Gardeners Rest is a place where individuals can come on their own and find safe company – business is steady but the pub rarely attracts crowds. Everyone is welcome and it would be hard for many to find such an inclusive place elsewhere.

People with learning disabilities and mental health issues use the pub regularly. Some members of the Society have spent their working lives creating employment opportunities for people who are disadvantaged for health and social reasons, and they intend to extend the opportunities provided by the pub to give people employment in food preparation, cleaning and in bar work.

In due course, more work will be created in servicing the refurbished residential accommodation on the two floors above the pub.

The pub is empty until 3pm most weekdays (there is a pressing need for a secure, activity centre for people with learning disabilities in Sheffield). The pub's conservatory, therefore, would make a great space to relax and plan local social and environmental work.

In addition, familiarity will lead individuals to have a place to come to by public transport in the evenings or at weekends and they will be safe in familiar surroundings.

The employment and training opportunities will be offered to people who may never meet the person specification for any conventional job, but who are desperate to play a meaningful part in the world of work and have never been given the chance to do so.

It is often unhelpful to put labels on people – their barriers to fulfilment increase when they don't quite match up to the label – but the beneficiaries will include people with mild and moderate learning disabilities, people with mental health issues (such as depression, anxiety and bi-polar conditions), people with an autistic spectrum disorder, and essentially people who just don't fit anywhere else.

Depending on the individual, work sessions may be short (2-3 hours). It starts with a tailored programme that suits the individual's needs and aspirations.

Training will be provided and it will be accredited where appropriate. Beneficiaries will be accepted as part of the pub family and will add value to what is going on.

Additionally, self-expression groups, led by artists, sport professionals, local historians and faith leaders will take place in the day-time when the pub is closed and sometimes in the evenings and weekends – being advertised as an important part of what the pub does.

Three further services provided by the pub will be; to provide information, advice and guidance through information boards and word of mouth, access to the internet and support in using technology and competitively priced travel support to people who can't access the pub and its services without it.



Raising Awareness

Links were made through social media and the group won a Digital Award for their Social Media Campaign.

Key Strengths

- The vast majority of shareholders are regulars at the pub and want it to succeed.
- The business was sold to the community as a going concern – it needs preservation rather than creation.
- The property and the business are wholly owned by the community – so no-one picking the shareholders pockets.



There is nothing revolutionary about what The Gardeners Rest does – they just know that it works. Over 25 years, people in Sheffield (and elsewhere) have been helped, and lives have been changed for the better through social enterprise development: in plastics reclamation (Reclaim), construction (Rebuild), catering (Buster's), satisfaction surveys (Viewpoint-Research), wood recycling (Sheffield Wood Recycling) and through Yes2Ventures Travel Support Service.

The people who are responsible for the Gardeners Rest believe that the pub offers an excellent opportunity for this excellent and pioneering work to continue. And for the record, they also serve a cracking pint of real-ale!

Mark Powell, Gardeners Rest

Further information

To find out more information about the More Than a Pub Programme visit www.plunkett.co.uk/more-than-a-pub.

If you would like to contact us about support under the programme please fill out our initial contact form at www.plunkett.co.uk/initial-contact-form or email info@plunkett.co.uk or calling the Advice Line on 01993 810730.