



# Community Pub

CASE STUDY

Plunkett  
Foundation

**MORE  
THAN A  
PUB**

## **| The Dog Inn** Belthorn, Lancashire



### **| KEY DETAILS**

Name of organisation	The Dog Inn, Belthorn
Category	Community owned and run pub
Organisation's county	Lancashire
Legal structure	Community Benefit Society

## KEY DETAILS cont.

Population size	220 houses
Services & Activities	<p>The pub offers many services including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Coffee Shop</li><li>• Basic provisions shop selling local produce including hand crafted cards and stamps, dairy products and eggs</li><li>• In lockdown the shop expanded their very popular bread orders, and since December 2020 meat orders are now available from a local butcher</li><li>• Community room hosting church services, youth drama group and Tai Chi; also offers conference, training and meeting facilities</li><li>• A 'while you wait' car valeting service in the car park</li><li>• Free WiFi</li><li>• Open mic nights and live bands</li><li>• Quiz nights, darts, dominoes and bridge clubs</li><li>• Village notice board</li><li>• Book and DVD exchange</li><li>• Restaurant</li></ul> <p>Other services in the pipeline, offered in response to community needs, include a health drop in centre, a regular MP surgery and much more.</p> <p>The focus of this study is the establishment of the community room.</p>



## KEY DETAILS cont.

<p><b>Overview</b></p>	<p>The Dog Inn is situated in the village of Belthorn, Lancashire, a few miles from Blackburn. It is a small village, traditionally populated by coal miners and weavers. Over the last 40 years, Belthorn has lost all of its services including the church with the exception of the primary school.</p> <p>When the community group purchased the pub in 2015, the first floor had been used as living accommodation and was in need of complete refurbishment. After some in-depth consultation, the need for a space to hold meetings for local community groups was identified.</p> <p>The community raised the funds and created a tea and coffee making area, a community room, a children's zone, and a new energy efficient heating system was installed.</p> <p>The community room is a great use of space being able to accommodate up to 30 delegates. The room is fully equipped for a small conference and offers full state of the art presentation equipment and free WiFi.</p> <p>As well as being able to offer hot-desking and co-working facilities, the room is also used for monthly church services, a youth drama group and many other community activities.</p>
<p><b>Started service</b></p>	<p>The Community Room opened 2016</p>
<p><b>Volunteer or staff led service</b></p>	<p>Staff led (bar) and volunteer led (café and shop)</p>
<p><b>Set up cost for service:</b></p>	<p>Grants of £7,500 were received from the WM AND BW LLOYD TRUST and The Leach Trust which contributed to the cost of refurbishing the Community Room</p>
<p><b>Website</b></p>	<p><a href="http://www.thedoginnatbelthorn.net">www.thedoginnatbelthorn.net</a></p>

## I About The Dog Inn

First and foremost The Dog Inn is the village pub – a place for people, to meet, relax and unwind. From the very beginning The Dog Inn has always aimed to provide a diverse range of services to the community.

The original plans included a coffee shop, an essentials shop and community rooms alongside the bar and the restaurant. Services that Belthorn had lost years ago have now come back into the village based in The Dog Inn.

However, there has been organic growth in new and diverse activities responding to demand from the community, and these have been added over the past couple of years. For example, some months after re-opening The Dog Inn was approached by the church asking if they could hold services once a month. The village lost its last church over 40 years ago, and Sunday afternoons are generally quiet, so it was agreed that on the third Sunday of every month The Dog Inn community room would become the village church.

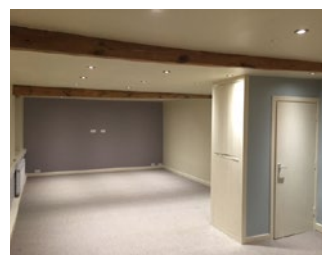
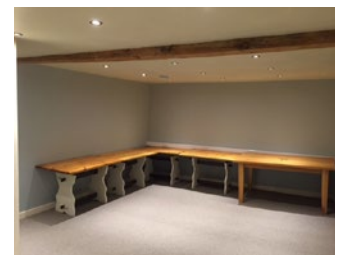
Even in lockdown, diversification at The Dog Inn is still happening. A mobile car valeting service started to pick up a few customers in the village, and the service now operates from car park on a Tuesday morning.

The great strength of a community owned pub should be that it is in touch with and responsive to the needs of the local community. Locally owned means local decisions can be made by local people. What any community needs will change over time, so diversification should be integral to the idea of a community owned pub.

## I Refurbishment

Ever since contracts were exchanged and the purchase of The Dog Inn was completed in September 2015, the refurbishment of the building has always been a priority. With 4 distinct phases – the pub, the community room, the restaurant area and the community gardens - the project was a long term plan.

Before taking ownership, the management committee invested in a professional full building condition survey to identify areas needing refurbishment, in what priority and at what approximate cost. That survey proved invaluable in enabling the grants team to make several applications, most of which were successful.





## | Coffee Shop



Photo courtesy of J Mark Dodds: *The People's Pub Partnership*

Initial consultations with the community highlighted a need for a coffee shop and basic provisions shop. A place for groups to meet during the day over a coffee and cake and a place to buy those essential, but often forgotten, daily items like milk, eggs, bread and emergency teas. It is also important that where possible, during winter when its not been unknown for Belthorn to be completely cut off from the outside world, that daily provisions are available locally.

An area was identified within the original pub layout which would ideally suit a coffee shop and so conversion began, new shelving, counter tops, electricity supplies, lighting, water supplies etc. With thick walls, no drainage and no dedicated utilities, this was a large task but with the help of Pub is the Hub, our goal was achieved.

## | Community Garden

As well as offering indoor facilities, the ability to offer small areas for the community to sit and enjoy the outside is very important, and the pub also wanted to offer space for grazing of horses and to hold chickens.

New decking and a balcony have been erected at the rear of the pub with commanding views all the way to Morecambe Bay. Sitting outside on a sunny Sunday afternoon, or having a meal al fresco has become a popular village fixture.

## | Biodiversity

The views to the south and west of the Dog Inn are outstanding so a beer garden and children's area are important and priority additions. Quite a lot to fit in within a space just short of 2 acres, but with the help of local volunteers and donations, over 400 trees and hedge bushes have already been planted to encourage more wildlife, and there are plans to terrace the land and divide the space into suitably sized plots to accommodate the needs of the community.

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## | The Restaurant



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Wherever you are in the UK, if you are interested in starting or developing a community pub please contact the Plunkett Foundation - **01993 810730**, [info@plunkett.co.uk](mailto:info@plunkett.co.uk) or visit [www.plunkett.co.uk](http://www.plunkett.co.uk) to find out how we can support you.

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