

30th November 2019, Shareholder Bulletin

Dear Shareholders,

First of all a huge thank you for the fantastic support we had for our curry and quiz night, we even had a waiting list of people who booked quite late and couldn't be fitted in. It was great to see The Bell open and 'buzzing' and we made a tremendous profit of approximately £900 – absolutely amazing and an incredible start to our fund raising events.

As you know we have two more events planned – the Christmas party on Friday 20th December and the New Years Eve party on 31st December. The Christmas party is a three course meal at a cost of £20 per head, along with other fun and festivities and New Years Eve is free, although we do ask you to bring a plate of food to share for the buffet please. New Year's Eve is optional fancy dress on the theme of 'B', as elaborate or as simple as you choose. To book your place for Christmas on the 20th, please phone Sam on 07803495983 and for New Year either sign up on the list inside the church or email themortimercbs@gmail.com We look forward to seeing you all again for some more village fun and friendship.

Our fund raising events are helping to keep The Bell 'alive' in this interim period whilst we are looking for tenants, as well as providing us with a little bit of income to replace lost rent. We are well into our tenant searching campaign now and the social media contacts, which you have all helped with, have spread the news far and wide. As well as using social media, we have advertised in the Hereford Times, the Shropshire Star and Sunshine Radio, and we are also listed with the 'Find my Pub' online agency. We have had 22 initial contacts expressing interest and, out of these, 12 potential candidates have been to the pub to assess the premises for themselves. Following the visits, and having formally registered an interest in the next stage, 9 have been sent an information pack, outlining facts and expectations for our community pub and giving them enough financial information to enable them to prepare their Business Plan. We have set a deadline of midnight on Tuesday 10th December for candidates to submit CV's, (if we haven't already had these), their Business Plan, their sample menus and any other information in support of their application. The committee will review all applications after that date, and then proceed to the formal interview stage for selected candidates, when references will also be followed up. The interviews will be consistent for all candidates, the format and content having been approved by a professional consultant to the licensed trade. Where feasible, we will have sent 'secret shoppers' to places where applicants are already working, and we are also working out a scheme whereby the proposed chef will be asked to demonstrate his or her ability. If all goes well, hopefully we will have some new tenants in place by the end of January, as Christmas and New Year inevitably slow down the procedures for a few weeks, particularly on the legal side. Having said all this, we are mindful that although we are all anxious to have the pub open again as soon as possible, we do need to appoint the right people and if it means waiting longer, then we may have to face that fact. At the moment things are looking quite positive and we will keep you updated whenever we have more news.

I think that's everything for now, except to say thank you for everyone's support with our social media campaign, which will just run for one more week now.

We look forward to seeing you on the 20th and 31st and in the meantime, look out for further news.

Jill Grant – Chair, Mortimer Community Benefit Society