

# Mortimer Community Benefit Society – Membership Strategy

The Strategy of the Mortimer Community Benefit Society (MCBS) is to grow its membership.

## Goals

1. To increase the number of members. Share income provides funding which augments income and reduces long-term reliance on loans. Care must be taken to ensure share value does not exceed the property's value considering all other liabilities, e.g. loans.

*More Members = More Supporters = A Stronger Future*

2. To manage the Bell successfully as a community venture, following the failure of the third tenancy. This will allow people once again to enjoy the facilities and benefits of a community-owned pub in the village.
3. Once the viability of the community pub business is re-established, after around 6-12 months, the Committee will reconsider the best model to adopt for running the business.
4. Engage members to participate in the venture - from simply enjoying the atmosphere of a traditional village pub to sharing the volunteer spirit or just supporting the aims of the MCBS.

## Membership Organisation

The MCBS is a democratic organisation governed by a Management Committee who are elected by, and drawn from, the membership. It operates on the principle of 'One member one vote, regardless of the number of shares owned.

There are currently around 255 members, both individuals and organisations. The first Annual Members' Meeting took place in September 2019 when elections were held for continuing and new Committee members. The current Committee consists of nine members, with additional support from other volunteers.

## Membership Criteria

- Membership is open to any person over the age of 18.
- Members do not need to live in the Parish, in fact, there are shareholders in many parts of the UK and overseas!
- The individual share value is £50 with a minimum holding of 2 shares (£100) and a maximum of £10,000.

## Benefits

Membership provides the opportunity to be actively involved (either by applying to join the Committee or by volunteering) in managing this valuable community asset, which provides facilities and services for everyone.

Members can have a say in how the MCBS is managed at the Annual Members' Meeting (AMM) and they can actively shape the MCBS.

Members can influence the overall direction of the project and provide feedback on progress. Many comments were offered at the last 2023 Annual Members' Meeting (AMM). Where appropriate, these are being taken forward by the Management Committee, which is working towards incorporating as many of these as possible.

All members will receive:

- Regular updates via email
- An invitation to the AMM
- Invitations to member-only events
- A copy of the Annual Accounts

The current members are mainly those who bought shares initially to enable the purchase of The Bell in 2018 and keep it in community ownership. We would like to increase this membership and there will be new recruitment initiatives from time to time. Why not join now? We're a lovely group!

### **Communications**

The MCBS website can be found at <https://themortimercbs.org/> where there is further information available.

This is where information on the MCBS, details of Committee members, key documents and much more are held. This is updated as details change, and the business evolves.

Members can contact the MCBS by emailing - [themortimercbs@gmail.com](mailto:themortimercbs@gmail.com)

Articles are published in 'The Parishioner', the local parish newsletter.

Information about the MCBS is in the Welcome Pack, provided to new households in the Yarpole Parish.

The Bell has its own website <https://thebellatyarpole.co.uk/>

Information about the MCBS and The Bell is also held on The Yarpole Community website <https://www.yarpole.org/>

Events are posted on Parish noticeboards.

The Annual Members' Meeting is held in the Autumn.

### **Background**

Yarpole has a strong sense of community, with a nationally recognised track record in getting together to achieve local benefits. When it was announced in February 2018 that the village pub was to be sold, this inspired the residents to collaborate to buy the pub - ensuring its place in the community for the future.

The Mortimer Community Benefit Society (MCBS) was incorporated in May 2018 to purchase the Bell at Yarpole. The first Management Committee consisted of ten volunteers who organised setting up MCBS and running the venture. With an amazing response, both from the local community and further afield, enough shares were sold to support a successful bid pre-auction in September 2018.

The first Annual Members' Meeting took place in September 2019 when elections were held for continuing and new Committee members.