Business Plan for the Gardeners Rest Sheffield

THE GARDENERS REST

MORE THAN A PUB * A COMMUNITY HUB

Prepared by the Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd.

2026

1.0 Executive Summary

The Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd presents a clear, deliverable plan to expand and future-proof the Gardeners Rest, a community owned pub and cultural venue that has served Neepsend since 1898. The project responds directly to rising demand for inclusive community space, the rapid transformation of the surrounding neighbourhood, and long-standing structural and regulatory constraints that limit the building's commercial and social potential.

The Society—owned by around 400 community shareholders—has operated the pub successfully since purchasing it in 2017. Over ten years it raised **£278,000 in share capital**, paid back **£94,000**, and delivered consistent operating surpluses except during a single year affected by major roadworks. Engagement continues to grow, with diverse groups using the venue for arts, education, wellbeing, and social inclusion programmes. Independent evaluation through a Yorkshire-wide Social Impact Study confirms the breadth and depth of this contribution.

The current conservatory has reached the end of its functional life—*"too cold to use in winter and too hot in summer"*—resulting in seasonal closure and lost revenue. Upstairs, occupancy is capped at 25 due to a single escape route, suppressing event viability, private hire, and commercial growth. Accessibility barriers further limit community participation.

To address these constraints, the Board has approved **Option 3: a 35m² heated garden room extension with a 75m² roof terrace**, supported by a new external fire escape stair and platform lift. This investment unlocks upstairs capacity to **50–60 people**, creates a fully temperate year-round space, improves accessibility, and enhances long-term asset resilience. Total project cost is **£192,000 including VAT**, comprising construction (£130,000), professional fees (£14,000), and contingency (£16,000).

The development strengthens commercial sustainability through increased footfall, expanded event programming, and improved trading capacity. It also deepens community value by providing step-free access, additional flexible space, and improved environmental performance. Marketing activity will focus on customer growth, repeat engagement, and increased visit value, supported by strong branding, partnerships, and targeted communications.

Governance remains robust through the elected Board of Directors, operating under Plunkett Foundation Rules (Version 7), with day-to-day management delivered by a dedicated staff team. Financial controls are well established, and risks relating to funding or project overruns are mitigated by healthy cash reserves and the ability to phase investment if required.

Overall, the project represents a strategic, future-proof investment that enhances commercial performance, strengthens community impact, and secures the long-term sustainability of one of Sheffield's most valued community assets.

2.0 Structure of the document

The plan is divided into the following sections:

Section 1 – Executive Summary	Provides a one-page summary of the Business Plan along with our intended direction of travel.
Section 2 – Introduction	Sets out the purpose and structure of the Business Plan.
Section 3 – Background to the Project	Describes the history and context behind the project to renovate and expand the premises and increase its capacity for community engagement.
Section 4 – Proposals	Our vision of the community space we wish to create, the initial plan to fund the renovation and a description of how the share offer will be structured.
Section 5 – Building and Renovation	Outlines the main costs associated with renovation, and conversion of the existing premises.
Section 6 – Marketing	Describes the key activities employed to promote and increase the usage of our community space.
Section 7 – Management and operation	Confirms the governance of the business, along with strategy and day to day management of the Gardeners Rest.
Section 8 – Financial Forecasts and Risk Management	Describes the financial history of the pub, forecasts of future activity along with assumptions and plans to mitigate risk(s).

2.1 Business Plan Purpose

The Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd, established in April 2017, presents this Business Plan to demonstrate its clear and achievable proposals for developing and expanding the Gardeners Rest premises. The core purpose is to raise sufficient revenue to replace the existing glass conservatory and create a **solid-roof garden room** (not a glass conservatory) with **proper insulation**, **foundations**, and a **flat or low-pitch roof** engineered to support a **usable terrace**. This transforms the existing space from seasonal to fully habitable use.

As a community-owned pub and hub in Neepsend, Sheffield, the Gardeners Rest has built a decade of commercial success and strong community engagement. Our expansion plans are grounded in a sustainable, independent business model and respond directly to the growing demand for our facilities from community groups across Sheffield and South Yorkshire.

3. Background to the Project

3.1 The Gardeners Rest Public House

The Gardeners Rest has been a recognised centre of recreation and social connection in the historic district of Neepsend, Sheffield, since 1898. Over its long history, it has provided an essential and inclusive space for a wide range of users from across the city. Today, it continues to serve a diverse community, hosting groups such as the **Kelham Island Arts Collective**, theatre and writing groups, arts and crafts classes, and **Sheffield City Morris**, who have established the venue as their home. This breadth of engagement demonstrates the pub’s ongoing cultural and social value to Sheffield.

In 2016, growing uncertainty about the future of the Gardeners Rest led regular customers and community groups to engage with the owners to explore how best to protect the pub’s independence, strengthen its financial resilience, and expand its role as a community facility. It became clear that the Gardeners Rest was a significant community asset, and that its loss would negatively impact the area—particularly considering the substantial changes anticipated in Neepsend over the forthcoming decade. With guidance from **The Plunkett Foundation**, a steering group was established to develop a viable route to securing the long-term sustainability of the Gardeners Rest through community ownership.

The Gardeners Rest is owned by approximately four hundred community shareholders, each holding voting and membership rights. These shareholders came together when the previous owners retired from the hospitality trade, forming the Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd to secure the premises and protect its role as a community asset. The Society successfully purchased the pub in April 2017 and has since operated it as a commercially sustainable business with a clear and deliberate emphasis on community benefit and engagement.

The ongoing regeneration of the neighbouring **Kelham Island district**, the recently approved demolition of the former **Neepsend Cannon Brewery** opposite the pub, and the arrival of new enterprises such as a local bakery and **Peddler’s Market** signalled the beginning of meaningful change in the area. These developments indicated that Neepsend—long characterised by industrial decline—was entering a period of renewed investment and visibility, placing the Gardeners Rest in a strategically prominent position within a rapidly transforming neighbourhood.

The first open meeting, held on 27 July 2016 and attended by twenty-five participants, marked the beginning of a coordinated effort to secure the long-term future of the

Gardeners Rest. Attendees agreed on the need for urgent action and committed to exploring viable ownership and governance options. This led to the creation of a steering group tasked with developing a sustainable strategy for the pub's future. Working in partnership with **The Plunkett Foundation** through its *More Than a Pub* programme, the group progressed formal registration with the **Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)** as a Community Benefit Society—establishing the legal and organisational foundation required to pursue community ownership as a strategic route to long-term stability, resilience, and community value.

The Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd was formally registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) on 2 September 2016 as a Community Benefit Society, establishing robust financial infrastructure and governance arrangements from the outset. Following registration, the Society produced a Community Share Offer Prospectus, enabling the successful issue of community shares after November 2016.

The Plunkett Foundation endorsed the Society's development plan with a £2,500 bursary, which funded an architectural survey, costed improvement proposals, the commissioning of a promotional video, and other essential pre-development activities. This early investment strengthened the Society's capacity to plan improvements, engage stakeholders, and demonstrate readiness for further funding.

After a managed transition of ownership, the Gardeners Rest opened as a fully community-owned pub, providing a sustainable social asset and a platform for continued community-led development.

3.2 The Current Position

The original 2016–17 community share offer was launched to prevent the pub's redevelopment and to safeguard a valued local asset where residents could enjoy a welcoming, low-key social environment and participate in a broad range of community-led activities. While this objective was successfully achieved, the motivation for further investment has since evolved, reflecting changing community needs, increased demand for inclusive social spaces, and the strategic ambition to enhance the venue's role as a sustainable, community-owned resource.

The pub has operated successfully since 2017 both as a commercial enterprise and as a community hub. In the 10 years since the conception of a community owned pub, we have raised £278,000 as share capital, paid back £94,000, declared dividends of £27,000, and paid back £6,000 of that. It is commercially successful and maintains a balance between commercial success and community engagement. The Board now feels ready to develop the pub and build upon its success.

The formerly industrialised Neepsend area is undergoing significant transformation and is now set to become a major residential neighbourhood. Planning permission has already been granted for 500 new homes on the former Cannon Brewery site directly opposite the pub, and a further large-scale development of more than 600 residences across the

River Don is awaiting approval. Together, these schemes signal substantial population growth and a marked shift in the character and future needs of the area.

Community engagement has grown significantly, and demand for our meeting and function rooms now regularly exceeds capacity. The existing glass conservatory has reached the end of its functional life: it is too cold to use in winter and too hot in summer, resulting in the loss of around four months each year when it is no longer a viable or welcoming space for community groups. Consequently, we face an urgent need for additional, fit-for-purpose space to support our current programme of activities and to enable us to welcome new groups and partnerships.

Community engagement is being independently evidenced through our participation in a Yorkshire-wide Social Impact Study, which is assessing the breadth and depth of our contribution to local wellbeing. Our programmes already deliver measurable social value: we provide platforms for emerging and established artists through our partnership with the **Kelham and Neepsend Community Arts Project**; support independent living for neurodiverse students by offering structured training pathways into hospitality; deliver targeted wellbeing initiatives for groups such as women under-represented in sport; and host a wide range of creative arts workshops, adult education sessions, and peer-support activities. Early findings show strong and diverse participation across all these areas. To meet rising demand and extend our reach, we now need additional, fit-for-purpose space that will allow existing groups to grow and enable new organisations to access our free, inclusive facilities—strengthening community cohesion, widening participation, and increasing the long-term social impact of the venue.

3.3 Current Constraints

The existing timber-frame conservatory has reached the end of its functional life. Structural deterioration, including rot, non-opening windows, and persistent leaks, now undermines both safety and operational reliability. As an uninsulated structure, it is unusably hot in summer and very cold in winter, resulting in seasonal closure, customer discomfort, and avoidable energy loss. In its current form, the conservatory no longer supports year-round trading or sustainable commercial performance.

Above the ground floor, the upper level provides approximately **45.5m²** of usable event and meeting space, split between a large meeting room (27.7m²) and a smaller meeting room (17.8m²). Additional rooms — a kitchen, office, and storeroom — remain closed to the public, limiting their contribution to revenue generation.

However, the commercial potential of the upper floor is significantly constrained by regulatory limits. With only a single staircase serving as the means of escape, fire regulations cap occupancy at **25 people**. This restriction directly affects the business by:

- **Limiting event viability** during peak periods
- **Restricting private hire** and community-use opportunities.
- **Reducing operational flexibility** when the ground floor is at capacity.

- **Suppressing revenue uplift** at busy trading times
- **Constraining long-term commercial growth** and diversification

Accessibility further limits utilisation. With no step-free access, the space is unavailable to many potential users, reducing inclusivity and narrowing the customer base.

Collectively, these factors mean that the building's current configuration is preventing the business from realizing its full commercial potential. Addressing the conservatory's condition, improving thermal performance, and resolving the regulatory and accessibility barriers upstairs would unlock year-round trading, expand capacity, and create new revenue streams through events, private hire, and increased customer throughput.

4. Proposal

The Board undertook a structured appraisal of development options before commissioning a professional architectural team to complete a feasibility study for a purpose-built garden room designed to meet clearly defined operational and community requirements. The Board considered three options.

Option	Title	Disadvantages	Advantages
One	Do Nothing	• Retaining capacity for 25-person upstairs • Seasonal Usage	• Continued Revenue Suppression • Ongoing accessibility Issues • Reduced Strategic Flexibility
Two	Extension without Terrace	• Reduced Structural Costs	• No Terrace • Reduced Long-Term Revenue Potential • Weak Community and Grant Case
Three	Flat Roof Extension with Terrace	• Increased Costs	• Accessibility Upgrade • Regulatory Unlock • Seasonal Revenue

			• Asset Enhancement

Shareholders were engaged throughout the process via the AGM, the Society's publication *SWAY*, and the Gardeners Rest website (www.thegardenersrest.com). Detailed architectural plans were displayed within the pub, enabling open discussion with shareholders and prospective investors. Consultation feedback has been consistently favourable, evidencing strong stakeholder endorsement and confirming the strategic viability of the proposed development.

The Board agreed to the following proposal at its meeting in February 2026.

- A 35m² ground-floor extension suitable for year-round use.
- A flat roof engineered to support public loading and form a roof terrace.
- Conversion of the existing flat roof into usable terrace space.
- Installation of a compliant external fire escape stair.
- Installation of a platform lift to the upper floor.

The key commercial drivers are the creation of a fully temperate, year-round space and the removal of the current regulatory cap that limits upstairs occupancy to twenty-five people. By introducing a compliant second means of escape and improving accessibility, the safe operating capacity could be increased to approximately 50–60 people.

The strategic rationale for the project is centred on unlocking constrained commercial capacity, improving accessibility, and future-proofing the building as a long-term community and trading asset. The current configuration imposes structural, regulatory, and operational limits that suppress revenue, restrict community use, and constrain strategic growth. The proposed intervention directly addresses these barriers and aligns with the organisation's long-term development objectives.

4.1 Strategic Context

(a) The building's upper floor is currently capped at **25 people** due to a single means of escape. This restriction limits event viability, reduces private-hire potential, and constrains operational flexibility during peak trading periods. At the same time, the existing conservatory has reached the end of its usable life, offers no thermal performance and contributing to energy inefficiency. Accessibility is also limited, with no step-free access to the upper floor.

Collectively, these factors prevent the organisation from realising the full commercial and community value of its estate.

(b) **Case for Change**

The project addresses three strategic deficits:

- **Capacity constraint:** Removing the twenty-five-person limit through a **second compliant means of escape** unlocks a safe occupancy of **50–60 persons**, doubling the revenue-generating potential of the upper floor.
- **Asset condition:** Replacing the deteriorating conservatory with a **heated, insulated extension** creates a year-round trading space and reduces energy loss.
- **Accessibility:** Installing a lift provides **step-free access**, widening community use and strengthening the social value case.

These changes directly support strategic goals around financial sustainability, inclusivity, and long-term asset stewardship.

(c) **Strategic Fit**

The preferred option aligns with organisational priorities in the following ways:

- **Commercial growth:** Increased capacity enables higher footfall, expanded event programming, and improved drinks uplift at busy times.
- **Community value:** Step-free access and additional outdoor space support broader participation and more diverse activities.
- **Environmental performance:** A modern insulated extension reduces energy consumption and improves thermal comfort.
- **Asset resilience:** A load-bearing roof terrace and upgraded structure enhance long-term value and reduce future maintenance risk.

The project strengthens the organisation's ability to operate sustainably, diversify income, and meet community expectations.

(d) **Preferred Option**

Option 3 – Flat Roof Extension with Terrace A 35m² heated extension with a **75m² roof terrace** delivers the strongest strategic alignment:

- **Regulatory unlock** enabling 50–60-person occupancy.
- **Accessibility upgrade** through lift installation
- **Seasonal trading capacity** via the terrace
- **Long-term asset enhancement** supporting resilience and growth.

This option provides the highest commercial return, the strongest community case, and the most future-proofed asset configuration.

(e) Strategic Conclusion

The project represents a high-value strategic investment that resolves long-standing regulatory, accessibility and structural constraints. By unlocking upstairs capacity, improving inclusivity, and creating new seasonal trading opportunities, the organisation positions itself for sustainable growth and enhanced community impact.

5. Building and Renovation

It is proposed that the demolition of the existing conservatory and building of the Garden Room will take place in early 2027 or late 2027 (subject to successful planning permission. This would facilitate the garden area remaining open in the high demand periods of Spring, Summer and late Autumn. The main bar of the pub and the lounge will remain open during the renovation and the pub will continue to operate for as long as possible subject to any limitations placed upon its operation through planning or building regulations.

5.1 Detailed Construction Costs

Element	Qty/Area	Rate	Cost (£)
Site establishment, preliminaries and temporary works	Item	-	7,000
Groundworks, excavation and mini-pile foundations	35m²	£455/m²	16,000
Reinforced concrete ground floor slab	35m²	£115/m²	4,000
Masonry cavity wall construction including terrace parapets	80m²	£150/m²	12,000
Structural steelwork and installation	Item	-	8,500
Terrace floor structure and lightweight decking finish	75m²	£130/m²	10,000
Strengthening of existing roof structure beneath terrace	35m²	£170/m²	6,000
5m glazed sliding/folding door system	Item	-	10,000
French doors to roof terrace	Item	-	2,500
External galvanised fire escape stair	Item	-	8,000
Platform lift and associated installation works	Item	-	24,000
Internal finishes, floor tiling and decorations	35m²	£86/m²	3,000
Electrical installation, lighting and emergency lighting	35m²	£100/m²	3,500
Heating and ventilation installation	35m²	£71/m²	2,500
Drainage and service connections	Item	-	4,000
Allowance for alterations and strengthening works to existing first floor areas	Item	-	9,000

Construction Subtotal | **130,000**

5.2 Professional Fees

Element	Cost (£)

Architectural services (planning and technical stages)	7,500
Structural engineering services	1,500
Quantity surveying and cost management	1,000
Building Control fees	2,000
Flood Risk Assessment	1,500
Principal Designer / CDM duties	500

Professional Fees Subtotal | **14,000**

5.3 Risk and Contingency Allowance

Element	Cost (£)
Construction contingency and risk allowance	16,000

Contingency Subtotal | **16,000**

5.4 Project Cost Summary

Item	**Cost (£)**
Construction Works	130,000
Professional Fees	14,000
Contingency Allowance	16,000
Total Project Cost (Excluding VAT)	**160,000**
VAT @ 20%	**32,000**
Total Project Cost (Including VAT)	**192,000**

5.5 Cost Plan Assumptions

This estimate is based upon the current proposed layout drawings and includes:

- Approximately 35m² ground floor garden room extension.
- Approximately 75m² roof terrace area.
- Structural strengthening to approximately 35m² of the existing flat roof area beneath the terrace.
- Masonry parapet construction in lieu of balustrades.
- Platform lift serving ground and first floor levels.
- External galvanised escape stairs.
- New glazed openings and terrace access doors.
- Internal finishes, lighting and heating installations.
- Professional services required to obtain statutory approvals and deliver

- Allowance for early first-floor adaptation works to enable the upstairs accommodation to be brought into use as soon as the lift is installed as part of Phases 1–4.

The estimate excludes abnormal ground contamination, major utility diversions, archaeology, inflation beyond the current budget period and any future phases.

The funding strategy for the project is based on a six-stream blended model which will include: existing capital contribution, additional shareholder investment, a new share offer, grant applications, modest loans (if required) and internal fundraising events and targeted campaigns. Details of the Society's past financial performance and future financial forecast for 2026-2029 are included in the accompanying Excel spreadsheets as an attachment to Section 8.

6. Marketing Strategy

6.1 Strategic Objectives

The Gardeners Rest's marketing strategy is designed to support sustainable growth and strengthen its position as the leading community-owned venue in Sheffield. Activity is organised around three core objectives:

- **Customer growth** — attracting new visitors from across the city and wider region.
- **Repeat engagement** — encouraging existing customers to visit more frequently.
- **Visit value** — increasing average spending and deepens participation in events and activities.

These objectives underpin both commercial resilience and the long-term viability of the community-ownership model.

6.2 Market Positioning

The Gardeners Rest will position itself as a distinctive, independent, community-owned pub and cultural venue. The marketing strategy will emphasise:

- The **unique ownership structure**, which differentiates the venue from commercial competitors.
- The **strong cultural identity**, including live music, arts activity, and heritage value.
- The **inclusive, community-focused ethos**, ensuring the venue appeals to a broad demographic.
- Membership and Participation of the **Sheffield Social Enterprise Network** to improve networking with like-minded groups
- Collaboration with other hospitality venues in Kelham Island and Neepsend through membership and participation in the **Kelham and Neepsend Alliance**
- Sponsorship of unrepresented community groups, such as Gals Soccer, Women's Basketball and Sheffield University Skateboarding Club.

This position supports the Gardeners Rest’s reputation as a trusted, socially valuable asset within a rapidly developing neighbourhood.

6.3 Target Audiences

Marketing activity will be tailored to the needs of key customer groups:

- **Local residents** — individuals living in Neepsend, Kelham Island, and surrounding areas.
- **Cultural audiences** engaged in Sheffield’s music, arts, and creative sectors.
- **Community groups** — organisations seeking accessible, welcoming spaces for meetings and activities.
- **Destination visitors** — people seeking independent venues with character and community identity.

Each audience will receive targeted messaging to maximise reach and engagement.

6.4 Marketing Channels and Activity

Print Media

Regular coverage will be sought in the *Sheffield Telegraph*, *Sheffield Star*, *Beer Matters*, and relevant special-interest publications. Articles will:

- Highlight the community-owned model.
- Promote events and activities.
- Showcase improvements and developments.
- Build awareness and credibility across Sheffield.

The aim is to convert general interest into first-time visits and sustained engagement.

6.5 (a) Social Media and Digital Communications

Digital channels will play a vital role in reaching younger and more geographically diverse audiences. Activity will include:

- Website articles promoting events, community activity, and project updates.
- Instagram and Facebook campaigns to build awareness and engagement.
- Targeted outreach to special-interest groups (music, arts, heritage, community organisations)
- Consistent messaging emphasising community ownership, creativity, and inclusivity

Digital communication will also support fundraising, volunteer recruitment, and stakeholder engagement.

6.5 (b) Email Marketing

A structured mailing list will be developed to:

- Promote events and seasonal campaigns.
- Share updates on community ownership and development projects.
- Encourage repeat visits and deepen customer loyalty.

Email marketing will provide a dependable, low-cost communication channel for supporters and regular customers.

6.5 (c) Events and Programming

Events are a key driver of footfall and community engagement. Marketing activity will support:

- Live music and cultural programming
- Community workshops and social events
- Social Inclusion Partnerships and work experience opportunities
- Partnerships with local artists, charities, and organisations
- Seasonal campaigns aligned with local festivals and neighbourhood activity.
- Promotion of Health and Well-being campaigns

Events will be promoted through print, digital, and partner networks to maximise attendance.

6.5 (d) Partnerships and Local Networks

The Gardeners Rest will strengthen its presence through collaboration with:

- Local cultural organisations
- Community groups and charities
- Sheffield breweries and independent producers
- Neighbourhood associations and local businesses

Partnerships will extend reach, reinforce credibility, and support shared promotional activity.

6.5 (e) Brand and Communications

A consistent brand identity will support professional, recognisable communication across all channels. This includes:

- Clear visual identity and tone of voice
- Consistent messaging emphasising community ownership and social value
- High-quality photography and storytelling

- Branded templates for print and digital communications

Strong branding will reinforce the Gardeners Rest's reputation as a trusted community asset.

6.5 (f) Monitoring and Evaluation

Marketing performance will be monitored through key metrics:

- Customer footfall and visit frequently.
- Average spends per visit.
- Event attendance
- Social media reach and engagement
- Website traffic and mailing-list growth
- Feedback from customers and community groups

These measures will inform ongoing improvements and ensure marketing activity remains effective and aligned with business objectives.

6.5 (f) Local Businesses, Groups and Clubs

We will work proactively with local businesses, community groups, and clubs to broaden awareness of the Gardeners Rest and strengthen our presence within the neighbourhood. This will include distributing leaflets and posters in partner venues and delivering talks or presentations to local organisations to explain the aims and benefits of the community-owned model. Targeted discounts and promotional offers will be used as incentives to encourage first-time visits and build ongoing relationships with these networks.

6.6 (a) Increasing the Frequency of Visits

Creating a Welcoming and Attractive Atmosphere

Our priority is to create a consistently positive customer experience that encourages repeat visits. Staff will be supported through training and education on the values underpinning our community enterprise, ensuring service is friendly, prompt and aligned with our ethos. Investment in the building's fabric will enhance comfort, accessibility, and overall ambience, helping to establish a reputation for warmth, reliability, and high-quality hospitality. This approach is designed to build loyalty and strengthen customer retention.

6.6 (b) Events and Activities

A varied programme of events will continue to play a significant role in driving repeat footfall. Regular activities—such as book clubs, Sunday quizzes, poetry, creative writing, educational events, and music nights—will be maintained and expanded where appropriate. Larger one-off events, including beer festivals, charity events and tap takeovers will complement this core offer. Programming will be coordinated to align with wider neighbourhood activity, such as the Peddler Market, and Kelham Pride creating mutual benefit and reinforcing the Gardeners Rest as a hub for local culture and community engagement.

6.6 (c) Increasing the Value of Each Visit

Increasing the Range of Facilities

The Gardeners Rest has expanded its community activities significantly over the past 10 years. This helps to broaden revenue opportunities and attract a wider audience. We will continue to promote additional uses of the building, positioning it as a flexible community venue, free of charge to users. This diversification will help increase footfall, extend dwell time, and strengthen the pub's role as a multi-purpose community asset. An increased capacity through our Garden Room proposal will enable us to meet the increasing demand for our facilities.

6.6 (d) Increasing Time Spent in the Community Pub

Encouraging longer dwell times is a key method for increasing the value of each visit. Customers stopping in for a drink may be encouraged to stay longer through:

- Prominent display of an appealing food menu
- Availability of a second-hand books and DVD library
- High-quality Wi-Fi to support visitors who lack access elsewhere.
- Prominent displays of future events in print and social media outlets
- These measures will help create a comfortable, convenient environment that supports extended visits and increased spending.

7. Management and Operation

The community asset is held in permanent community ownership through **Gardeners Rest Community Society Ltd (GRCS)**. This legal structure has been selected to maximise social impact while providing Directors with the protection of limited liability. Crucially, the model includes an **asset lock**, ensuring that all assets are irrevocably dedicated to community benefit and cannot be transferred for private profit. Any trading surplus generated is reinvested directly into The Gardeners Rest to sustain and expand its community-focused activities.

Strategic oversight and long-term stewardship of the venue will be provided by GRCS, established specifically to govern and manage the assets on behalf of the community. A broad and inclusive membership base has developed through the purchase of community shares, enabling members to participate directly in ownership. Following acquisition, Members (shareholders) elected a Board of Directors responsible for governance, compliance, and strategic leadership, ensuring that decision-making remains accountable and rooted in community priorities.

Governance is provided by the elected **Board of Directors**, who serve as custodians of the organisation's community-focused mission and offer strategic leadership for its continued development. The Society operates in full compliance with the **Plunkett Foundation Rules** (Version 7), ensuring a transparent and accountable governance model. Day-to-day operations are delivered by a resolute staff team (5.3 WTE), accountable to the Board and responsible for maintaining high-quality service, operational efficiency, and the welcoming environment that defines the venue's reputation and community value.

This established governance framework—combined with a proven record of community engagement and commercial viability—positions the Gardeners Rest as some aspects strong and credible candidate for **investment** to support its next phase of development and expansion. The Board is supported by a small operational team which includes a full-time Manager and Assistant Manager. They report formally to the Board monthly, but there is an on-going dialogue daily basis.

The pub is supported by its membership of the Sheffield Social Enterprise, its association with the local CAMRA branch and affiliation to the Kelham and Neepsend Alliance, a local co-operative of hospitality businesses which share publicity and plan events which are mutually beneficial to Alliance members. We have engaged on a regular basis with the Plunket Foundation and have recently updated our rules to comply with Version 7 of the Foundation.

Shareholders are kept updated with developments through the bi-monthly online magazine, SWAY. Regular information is posted on noticeboards in the pub and Board members are accessible to shareholders and customers through the pub website. Board members have a presence in the pub and are available to address issues directly or through the website or email.

8.0 Financial Forecast and Risk Management

Attached to this Business Plan are three appendices, showing namely: -

1. The historic Financial Performance of the GRCS from 2023 to 2025

2. A Financial Plan for the three years from 2026 to 2029. This includes a financial forecast for the outcome of 2025-26.

3. A Cash Flow Forecast for the three from 2026 to 2029. This includes investment in the new Garden Room and additional funding via a share issue and grant applications.

8.1 Financial Performance

Except for the 2023–24 financial year, the Gardeners Rest Community Society (GRCS) has delivered an operating profit every year since incorporation. The temporary downturn in 2023–24 was directly attributable to extensive roadworks in the immediate vicinity, which significantly disrupted access and footfall.

8.1 (a) Financial Management and Controls

GRCS's strong financial performance is underpinned by disciplined financial management and well-established policies and procedures. The Board undertakes a monthly review of financial performance, assessing progress against targets and evaluating risks to delivery. A detailed annual budgeting cycle feeds into a rolling three-year **Financial Plan**, ensuring that operational priorities, capital expenditure, and project costs are fully integrated. Performance measures are applied consistently throughout financial reporting to maintain transparency and support informed decision-making.

8.1 (b) Financial Outlook and Risk Management

The financial outlook for GRCS is positive, and completion of the planned investment is expected to generate strong returns. The principal risks relate to potential project overruns, a shortfall in the community share issue against the £60,000 target, or grant funding not materializing. These risks are mitigated by the Society's healthy cash position at the outset and the flexibility to defer later stages of the investment programme if required.

The analysis and proposals set out in this Business Plan demonstrate a clear, sustainable route for the continued development of the organisation. The strategy builds on our established strengths, responds to identified needs, and provides a realistic framework for operational and financial delivery. With appropriate support and approval, the organisation is well positioned to implement the next phase of its development and to deliver measurable benefits for its stakeholders and community.

Appendices 1,2 & 3 are attached as an Excel Document identifying past and current financial performance and future financial performance for 2026-2029.