



[info@blackhorsecommunitygroup.com](mailto:info@blackhorsecommunitygroup.com)  
<https://blackhorsecommunitygroup.com/>

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Dear Village Life Reader

We have been blown away by the response from the community, volunteers and industry experts in reply to us buying The Black Horse. The offers of advice and help are truly inspiring – thank you to all who have already helped and are going to help in very many ways.

We completed the purchase of the pub on 9 May and spent the last few weeks making trips to the tip, hiring skips, having a community viewing afternoon, advertising for and showing prospective tenants round, obtaining quotes and meeting with some very kind local publicans, chefs, and brewery experts who have willingly given excellent advice and provided contacts.

From shareholder, prospective tenant, expert feedback and offers of help we are looking to complete some projects that we thought we would have to delay for the next couple of years. This means maximising the trading areas of the pub, patio and garden and addressing the garage (surveyor says dilapidated).

Other priorities are the decoration, front elevation issues, guttering, and the kitchen and kitchen equipment to ensure we can hand the pub to a tenant that is up to current regulations and with all the necessary certifications and commercial equipment.

To address some rumours already circulating:

- It is not intended that The Black Horse will become a “bistro” pub. It is our intention that The Black Horse will remain a traditional pub. We will ensure the tenancy agreement has some special clauses to remain community-focused. This is following Plunkett advice and the experience of other community-owned pubs.
- The remaining cricket pictures have been retained to decorate the potential upstairs function room that we hope to develop (a request for such being from the community survey). We have put aside other various treasures that will continue to be displayed in the future (e.g. hunting horn, original front door lock and key, Black Horse name in photographic images).
- We want to decorate the walls with images of the parish by local budding photographers (that is any of you). We invite submissions of digital photographs to our email address and chosen photographs will be displayed in black & white (we can get colour photos converted). They need to be of good resolution and contrast. Pictures can be historic or recent – be imaginative and creative.
- The darts cupboard will remain, although the actual darts board needs replacing.
- To meet our “more than a pub” criteria; the display cabinet and lower cupboard (as you come through the front door) will be repurposed to provide a Book Swap area and storage for pub games such as dominoes, scrabble, cribbage etc. An ideal wall in the lobby can display a local map of footpaths and bridleways.

Everyone will continue to be welcome. We intend to follow the example of a number of other community-owned pubs and include in the tenancy agreement minimum opening days/hours

and the requirement that part of the pub (e.g. the few tables in the bar area) cannot be pre-booked so they can accommodate walk-in trade.

We have lifted some carpet corners and have not found flagstones but tiles. The carpets will have reduced noise, been warmer than a tiled surface and caught any spills without causing slips and trips. It is not our intention to replace the carpet at this stage due to finances but it will be cleaned.

A clear message from the community survey is a wish for better disabled access and a disabled toilet. We are investigating the ability to provide a disabled toilet as well as separate ladies and gents toilets. We will replace the side fire exit door with one wide enough for disabled access. We will install wider steps and a ramp to give better accessibility to the garden.

Kind regards

Becky, Ben, Carol, Jane, Martin, Mike, Simon, Tony  
The Black Horse Community Group committee