

## The Anglers Rest



Location	Bamford, Derbyshire
Founded	2012 (when Bamford Community Society was formed to buy the pub)
Legal structure	Industrial and provident society
Description of services	A community-owned pub that also has a café and a post office
Employees	Six full-time, 19 part-time
Volunteers	52 (12 Directors, plus 40 ad hoc)
Most important skill set(s) to successfully running the business	Sector specific skills
Biggest obstacle to success	Finding the right skills to run the business
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– High street bank</li> <li>– Third sector funding provider</li> <li>– A sector body</li> </ul>
Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The Anglers Rest was purchased by raising over £250,000 in community shares. BCS refurbished the building with the help of a dedicated team of volunteers</li> <li>– Providing excellent customer service is seen as important to competing with commercial businesses that may offer better maintained facilities</li> <li>– Not everyone in the community supported the venture, but the effort was put in to keep local people informed of progress and to demonstrate the plans were viable</li> </ul>

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This case study report provides an overview of The Anglers Rest, a community pub that includes a café and post office, and describes the factors that are perceived to underpin its success. The findings are drawn from research commissioned by Power to Change and carried out by NatCen Social Research and WPI Economics. More information about the study and additional research reports can be found on the Power to Change website.

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## Overview of the Anglers Rest

The Anglers Rest is a community pub, with a post office and café, located in Bamford, Derbyshire. It is owned by the Bamford Community Society (BCS), an industrial and provident society formed in 2012 to enable local people to buy and operate The Anglers Rest for the benefit of the community. A group of residents developed and tested plans for establishing a community hub after the local pub was put up for sale and the future of village post office came under threat. The group remained resilient in the face of a series of set-backs and purchased The Anglers Rest in October 2013 by raising £263,500 through issuing community shares. The community pub opened its door to customers after four days of cleaning and essential upgrades that were carried out by a dedicated team of local volunteers.

BCS is governed by a board of up to 12 elected directors who oversee the running of The Anglers Rest, manage the building and develop the business for the benefit of the community. The pub, café and post office are run by a paid manager and around 25 staff working on either a full-time or part-time basis. Local volunteers help with the maintenance of the building and site on an *ad hoc* basis.

BCS aims to generate sufficient income through the pub, café and post office to be a sustainable business that delivers positive social and economic benefit for the community. The Anglers Rest has restored the vibrancy of the village and ensures it remains attractive to current and potential new residents through delivering important services at the local level and providing spaces for local people to meet. The Anglers Rest also contributes to the local economy through creating employment opportunities and buying produce from local suppliers.

## Success factors for The Anglers Rest

This section summarises the key factors that are perceived to influence the success of The Anglers Rest, based on interviews with those who are contributing to or using the community pub. Success factors are grouped according to whether they relate to the business, people involved or the external environment.

### Business

There are two key business related factors which are contributing to the success of The Anglers Rest. BCS has a business model that is responsive to the needs of local people, manages cost and secures income from diverse trading activities. Access to grant funding to cover high costs of refurbishment of and improvements to the building and facilities is also important to success.

### Business model

BCS makes a concerted effort to refresh and adapt its strategy, with regular reviews of its business plans and governance structures. This has enabled it to take several steps to try to strengthen its business model for The Anglers Rest:

- First, the business is building an understanding of the diverse needs of actual/potential customers. This has resulted in the provision of high quality food at a good price, host events such as music events and art shows and, capitalise on the pub's location in an area of high tourism through attracting visitors.
- Second, providing excellent customer service is seen as important to competing with commercial businesses that may offer better maintained facilities, and to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for customer.
- Third, BCS is increasing the financial sustainability of The Anglers Rest by reducing operational costs and focusing on profitable activities such as food sales.

- Fourth, BCS only holds around six weeks of liquid reserves and while it is trading sustainably it is not generating sufficient profit to be able to fund improvements such as building refurbishments. To achieve ongoing improvements access to grant funding has been essential.
- Fifth, BCS is attempting, with a large degree of success, to make staffing patterns sustainable, and the fact that it does not use, or rely on, any volunteers to fill full-time positions is a demonstration of success.
- Finally, creating a community pub that is a local hub with a number of different services is helping BCS to provide community benefit and generate a small surplus. The combined income from the pub, café and post office helps to cover the high operating costs of the business and attracts greater custom than would be achieved by any service individually. Each service contributes to BCS's objectives in a different way. For example, the pub is the most commercially successful aspect of the business, bringing in around three times as much as the café, while the post office delivers important local services and the café provides a space for local people to meet.

#### Access to grant funding

While the BCS aspires that The Anglers Rest will generate income through trading, access to grant funding is essential to cover the high cost of renovating and upgrading facilities that have experienced years of underinvestment. The availability of grants is therefore important to the ongoing success of The Anglers Rest. Access to volunteers with prior knowledge and experience of grant applications is also important. Grant income is managed carefully. BCS has implemented a substantial set of criteria for how and why different capital investments are made, to ensure that grant income supports business priorities.

#### People

Being able to draw on people with the requisite skills, knowledge and qualities is important to buying a community asset and running a successful business. BCS identified that some of their largest barriers to growing the business were finding people with the right skills, not having sufficient time, or lacking specialist knowledge to scale the business. In particular, sector specific and marketing skills were highlighted as gaps.

#### Role of local people in buying the pub

BCS has benefited from having committed, enthusiastic and hard-working volunteers who have driven the project from the start. Key tasks carried out by the group included building support for the venture among local community, developing a plan for purchasing the asset and running the businesses and raising finance. The following skills and qualities were highlighted as important:

- Diverse knowledge and skills across areas including project management, finance, marketing, engineering, law and commerce.
- High resilience in the face of set-backs such as the threat of the pub being sold to a developer. Group members were able to support one another to remain positive when challenges occurred.
- Strong connections in the local community.

#### Role of elected board, staff and volunteers

BCS has continued to benefit from being governed by a dedicated board with a strong sense of a common purpose to maintain a sustainable business which has grown in strength over time as members have become more experienced in their role and new people with additional skills have joined. The board is taking a proactive approach to business planning, paying particular attention to managing cost and developing activities that are financially viable and deliver wider community benefit.

The creation of sub-groups with responsibility for specific areas of the business, such as marketing and HR is also supporting good governance. The specific needs of The Anglers Rest as a business embedded in the community are also recognised, with positions related to community engagement and customer relations being created. However, the board maintains a degree of flexibility over roles and responsibilities to allow them to respond to issues as they arise.

The contribution of staff and volunteers to the successful running of The Anglers Rest is also important. Achieving greater continuity in staffing is helping the business to develop stronger relationships with its customers. Strong team work skills and a friendly and approachable demeanour are seen as important attributes for those working in a community-owned business.

### Community and external environment

The support of the local community and of the local MP was important to helping BCS to successfully purchase the asset.

#### Local community support

A group of local people formed a steering group to build local support for buying the asset. While not everyone in the community supported the venture, the group worked hard to keep local people informed of progress and demonstrate plans for community ownership were viable. Broad support for the venture was established through a carefully coordinated communication campaign including use of local TV and radio.

Having large numbers of local people with a vested interest in the success of The Anglers Rest supports ongoing success through creating a committed group of customers/potential volunteers and ensuring the business continues to consult with and reflect the aspirations of local people.

#### Political support

Support from the local MP combined with listing the pub as an asset of community value (thereby protecting it against sale for a short time period) was a key factor in saving the pub from redevelopment. The support of the local MP also helped BCS to overcome potentially significant technical barriers to running the local post office.

#### Wider economic environment

Some of the challenges BCS faces are common across the sector, including high prices, detrimental changes to business rates and the presence of alternative options (e.g. for food and drink) in the wider area. The weather also impacts on business. Whilst these factors are outside the direct control of The Anglers Rest, they demonstrate that scaling or continued success may be more challenging as the business grows.

### Financial information

The following table provides an overview of Bamford Community Society's income, expenditure and assets for the period 01/09/2015 to 31/08/2016.

<b>Income*</b>	<b>£484,364</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£478,351</b>
<b>Difference between income and expenditure</b>	<b>£6,013</b>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) on ordinary activities before taxation</b>	<b>£1,962</b>
<b>Annual income from grant or subsidy**</b>	<b>£122,596</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>£297,074</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Stocks	£8,635
Debtors	£4,987
Cash at bank and in hand	£64,304
<b>Total</b>	<b>£77,926</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>£333,370</b>

Source: Bamford Community Society Ltd. Accounts 2016, Mutuals Public Register

\*Income includes revenue and other operating income.

\*\*Includes donations and fundraising, revenue grants received, and capital grants