



Community Meeting Summary – The Future of The Fox

Cllr Alex Rowley arranged a community meeting, held on Thursday 2nd July 2026, to bring residents together to discuss the future of The Fox following recent discussion online.

The welcome outlined that the purpose of the meeting was to present the known facts about The Fox Inn and discuss its future as a community, now that it had been put on the market.

The meeting was prompted by questions on social media relating to it being empty for some time, then concrete blocks appearing around the car park and ultimately it being listed for sale. It was made clear at the meeting that the purpose wasn't to campaign for any direction, just to respond to those questions by sharing information about the current position and the range of options available, one of which was to do nothing.

Alex advised that he had contacted Fuller's (the owners) in January to enquire about the future of the empty property but had not had a reply. When the concrete blocks were placed, he contacted Fuller's CEO to ask for an update. The next day Fuller's wrote back to advise it had been placed on the market, though they would continue to assess all options.

Alex informed Fuller's of some of the ideas shared on social media following the property being listed for sale, and of the meeting to discuss the future. After researching community ownership through Plunkett UK, he asked Fuller's about their position on a potential community purchase and, if the community were to decide to pursue that route, whether Fuller's would be willing to pause the sale process.

Fuller's advised that they were familiar with Plunkett and had sold pubs to community groups with Plunkett involvement in the past. They advised that Plunkett were usually involved where there is a risk of the pub permanently closing, and they didn't think that was the case here. At this stage they would not want to withdraw it from the market.

Alex explained the community ownership model based on guidance from Plunkett. The key principle was that it would be owned and run democratically. Becoming a member

would allow the purchase of community shares under the model of one member, one vote. An asset lock would help protect the building for community use. Alex reiterated that although the business would be run not for profit for community benefit, it would still need to operate as a successful commercial business.

The meeting was then opened for discussion, with the prompt “what does The Fox mean to our community?”

Participants expressed different views, including questioning the need to support The Fox given the presence of other pubs in the area and this pub’s history. This was challenged by others reflecting positively on earlier periods of the pub’s history. Some participants noted that the pubs had operated alongside one another successfully before and could again.

The conversation moved on to possible uses, which led on to the next prompt “if The Fox has a successful future, what would you hope it looked like?”

Participants discussed what would make the pub valuable to the community if it was to have a successful future. Ideas included retaining its usual use as a pub, alongside greater community use as a hub, space for community hire, daytime activities, live music, sports, group office space and a place for people to gather after events at Newfound. Possible future improvements to the site to support additional community businesses were also discussed.

Discussion moved on to funding, with loans, grants and community shares discussed as options, including borrowing through the Public Works Loan Board via the Parish Council. These funding options would be for a future steering group to investigate as part of the feasibility work. Alex reiterated the need for a community pub/hub to be a successful business to ensure it is sustainable in the long term.

Registering the pub as an asset of community value (ACV) was identified as an immediate next step. There was also a request to get more information out to the community to find out who would be interested in getting involved in a project based on the Plunkett guidance.

21 participants at the meeting gave their names to support the ACV nomination to be submitted to BDBC by Cllr Alex Rowley.

The next stage for the community would be to form a steering group and take the work forward following the guidance from Plunkett.

Disclosure: AI tools were used to assist with reviewing and refining the wording of this meeting summary.