

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The report covers the year from March 2024 to February 2025. We are pleased to be able to report another successful year with our tenant renewing their lease for a further 5 years.

We continued to plan and execute the improvement and redevelopment of the premises of the Yew Tree Pub, and to consider restructuring the finances of the Society to allow greater stability. We are happy with the progress that we have made in delivering against our social impact objectives and are confident that we have made arrangements to continue to achieve them.

Avon Dassett remains a very small village located in rural south Warwickshire, with less than 100 houses, a population of approximately 210, of whom 166 are of voting age. The activities of the Community Benefit Society remain central to bringing the community together to socialise and the overall impact is immeasurable. Without the pub the village could slowly die and rural and social isolation and deprivation would become a reality.

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

With a stable tenant in place running the Yew Tree, we were optimistic as we entered our seventh full year of owning the pub. We believe that we have continued to make good progress in achieving our social impact objectives.

Our finances are in a strong position, our social groups and activities have flourished, and we began to invest in improving the premises. Our commitment to serving the community, supporting local businesses and services continues and our tenant has benefitted from being served by locally provided goods and services.

Major events such as the Soapbox Derby, Open Gardens, The Dassett Country Show and Pop-up Markets continue to be well supported and have generated funds for charities while attracting hundreds of visitors into the village.

We believe that we have established The Yew Tree as the hub at the centre of our village and have arrangements in place that will keep it that way. We are keen to make even more progress as and when funds allow but we are confident that in the long run we will achieve our objectives.

DETAILED REPORT

This section of our report details the specific progress that we made to our year-end, February 2025.

Village groups are key to social cohesion and The Yew Tree continues to act as the hub for such groups. All of our established clubs continued their activities, and we were pleased to support the creation of some new ones.

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The walking group continues to have a good turnout of regular attendees for its monthly outings. Each walk ends with lunch at the pub and others who were unable to join the walks are encouraged to attend. The joint footpaths group continues its excellent work mending stiles, repairing bridges and the installation of gates to replace broken stiles and improve access. This group has brought volunteers together to form new relationships creating closer ties with other villages.

The Bridge Club meets fortnightly with around twelve people meeting for cards followed by Dinner. The Book Club holds monthly meetings followed by lunch. The pub welcomed visitors to the village during the annual Open Gardens scheme, and a donation was then made to the National Open Gardens day and the organisers received many complimentary comments about both the Yew Tree and their staff.

Local employment and knowledge about the village and nearby services is a key aspect of how The Yew Tree can impact the social life of the village.

During the year, we are pleased to report that local employment was directly and indirectly supported by us. Most of the staff employed at The Yew Tree come from the village or neighbouring villages (most of which do not themselves have local employment opportunities) and all of the works carried out on the property were undertaken by local tradespeople. The Community Notice Board remains prominent in the entrance lobby at the pub, in view of all entering and leaving the pub by the front door. It publicises notices of events, advertises local clubs, societies and businesses and allows traders to display their business cards. Several local B&B businesses refer their clients to the pub for meals and refreshments.

A local artisan bakery supplies bread and pastries to The Yew Tree and the pre-order service, where these items are made available every Saturday for collection, continues to grow in popularity. Increasingly this gives The Yew Tree more of a “cafe feeling” on a Saturday morning for both locals and visitors.

The Yew Tree is the **focal point for the many visitors to the area**. As the only major meeting place in the village it's the point to which visitors are naturally drawn.

The Shack continues to draw in customers from far and wide, including regular visits from the many cycling groups that enjoy the hills and countryside around Avon Dassett. The Soapbox Derby and The Dassett Country Show both brought hundreds of visitors to the village and the pub. The Yew Tree is mentioned in the National Garden Scheme entry for the Avon Dassett Open Gardens event and this attracts visitors to the pub during the event.

The village comes together for charity events such the Dogs for Good breakfast and local events such as the Christmas Carol singalong and after the Memorial Service on Remembrance Sunday.

Accessibility into the building has been significantly improved during the year. Work was completed that added a new disabled-access toilet and baby-change facility to the building. This has step-free access from both the outdoor garden area and the restaurant.

CONCLUSION

We believe that we continue to make excellent progress towards the achievement of our Social Impact objectives and are proud to have a number of established community groups, activities and events being based from The Yew Tree. The reality is that the strong community spirit and sense of cohesion would wane without the pub, and the social impact would include a loss the community groups, less one to one contact, lower levels of interaction and communication which would result in isolation and/or deprivation for many of our residents.

Our principal source of income continues to be from rent from our tenant and, after our costs, any surplus allows us to make progress against objectives that require financing, particularly the development of the premises.

We understand that we need to have plans and arrangements to ensure that we remain “more than a pub”, and believe that we have achieved this in a manner that can be sustained. The Management Committee is not complacent about this, and will continue to monitor progress.

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