NOTES

The Great Gransden Community Benefit Society

7:30pm – 25th August 2026, Cambridge Country Club

1. Attendees

Tim Higginbotham	Alan Wynn
Will Howat	Pelham Olive
Simon Elkington	Nick Ginn (as Parish Council representative)

Apologies

Ainsley Cox

2. Planning Appeal & Evidence Strategy

- Timeline & Status: The appeal is currently with the independent Planning Inspectorate. Representations focusing strictly on planning merits must be submitted by the 7th October deadline. A hearing is expected within 3–6 months, with the total appeal process lasting 6–12 months.
- Outline records of the appeal are visible here HDC's website: 26/00042/ENFNOT and Planning Inspectorate website: 6014583
- Document Access: The group needs to confirm the definitive process for accessing the appellant's submissions and case evidence via HDC public portals or directly from HDC case officers.
- Legal Stance: The group will leave the complex legal interpretations to HDC. The group's role will be strictly limited to providing objective, factual evidence.
- Evidence Gathering: Members will collate factual materials to support HDC's determinations. This includes prior officer reports, inspection notes, social media posts, offers made and communication. Re-raise inspecting the COVID-19 grant records which may add weight to proving the premises operated as a closed pub business post-July 2020.

3. Property Condition & Asset Valuation

- Building Condition: The property is experiencing worsening dilapidation, including failing plasterwork, damp, and structural cracks.
- Cost Categorisation: Repairs will be split into two distinct categories: immediate costs to restore basic pub operability versus long-term timber-frame and windows conservation commitments phased over 3–5 years.
- Financial Metrics: The owner is seeking to recover £305k in sunk costs. However, the RICS valuation sits around £295k (Market Value Trading), £255k (Market Value - Trading - in Default) or £215k (Market Value - Closed - in Default). A builder's quote estimates repairs at £130k (including a 10% contingency). There

are likely other significant costs associated with re-opening that will require investigation and estimation.

4. Negotiation Strategy & Post-Appeal Outreach
   - Approach: If the appeal is upheld, residential use becomes default. If the appeal is dismissed, enforcement proceeds, with potential for the owner to vacate tracking toward 2028, we should only plan for this eventuality.
   - Framework: The group will draft a structured "market value subject to survey" offer. To be issued immediately the appeal is dismissed. The terms of this offer will require agreement from the membership.
   - Owner Engagement: Post-appeal dismissal, the group will send an unemotional, factual brief to the owner detailing the community's financial viability, available funding, and the strict planning limitations on residential conversion to prevent the owner from leveraging "no money" claims to cause further delays.
   - CPO Framework: The potential for CPO will be maintained strictly as a fallback option should voluntary purchase negotiations fail after the appeal dismissal. In which case group will build a robust business case, prove committed cash reserves, and demonstrate strong public interest to HDC Cabinet for a back-to-back CPO.

5. Fundraising, Governance & Tax Relief
   - Pledge Campaign: Launch an immediate, non-binding pledge campaign to quickly secure a baseline of in the range of £200k–£250k. The Parish Council and local charities will also be approached.
   - Business Plan: A comprehensive 5-year financial model (forecasting P&L, balance sheets, and cash flow) and prospectus will be compiled to raise the remaining capital over a 6-week window post-sale price agreement.
   - Share Governance: The share prospectus will define clear SEIS (50% tax relief on the first £250k) and EIS (30% relief thereafter) allocation rules. To comply with Community Share Standards, individual caps will be enforced (e.g., maximum 10% per person, or a £10k limit). Shares must be issued within 6 months of corporate setup to qualify for tax relief.

6. Member & Community Communications
   - Immediate Comms: Formally announce the critical 7th October appeal deadline and the 3–6 month hearing timeline with details of the actions we plan to take.
   - Governance Sessions: Organise a members-only session in November to formalise volunteer drives, gather community vision input, and vote on the final negotiation/offer strategy.

- Public Meetings: A broader community momentum-building and fundraising meeting will be scheduled once property acquisition progress becomes more certain.

Actions

- Contact HDC to offer support and confirm what information is needed.
- Confirm whether appeal submissions and evidence are publicly accessible; establish the definitive access process via HDC portal or direct request to case officers.
- Gather materials in support of our appeal response (officer reports, inspection notes, social media posts, COVID grant records) with sources, dates etc.
- Prepare a concise rebuttal to the appeal and provide support to HDC
- Continue developing the business plan and prospectus; validate the financial model; integrate conservation plan and phased repairs.
- Launch pledge campaign, draft pledge letter, approach Parish Council and a local charity;
- Hold a members' meeting to approve the acquisition roadmap, offer strategy, funding ceiling, and SEIS/EIS allocation rules; finalize the negotiation position.
- Plan member and community engagement sessions; finalize timing for the broader community meeting relative to acquisition certainty; update website and Google Group with appeal and fundraising progress.
- On Hold- Assemble proof of funds and a business case for HDC cabinet; develop public interest documentation and evidence of deterioration; outline CPO fallback, owner proceeds scenarios, and HDC cost coverage