

'Save The Pheasant'

Public Meeting
25th March 2024



Image courtesy of Joan Martin



Image courtesy of Joan Martin

Agenda

- 'Save The Pheasant' informal group
- The story so far
- Survey results
- Our understanding of how a Community Pub works
- Plunkett UK explained – resources & support
- Potential outcomes/routes forward
- Next steps to move forward
- Summary and Q&A Session



'Save The Pheasant' Informal Group

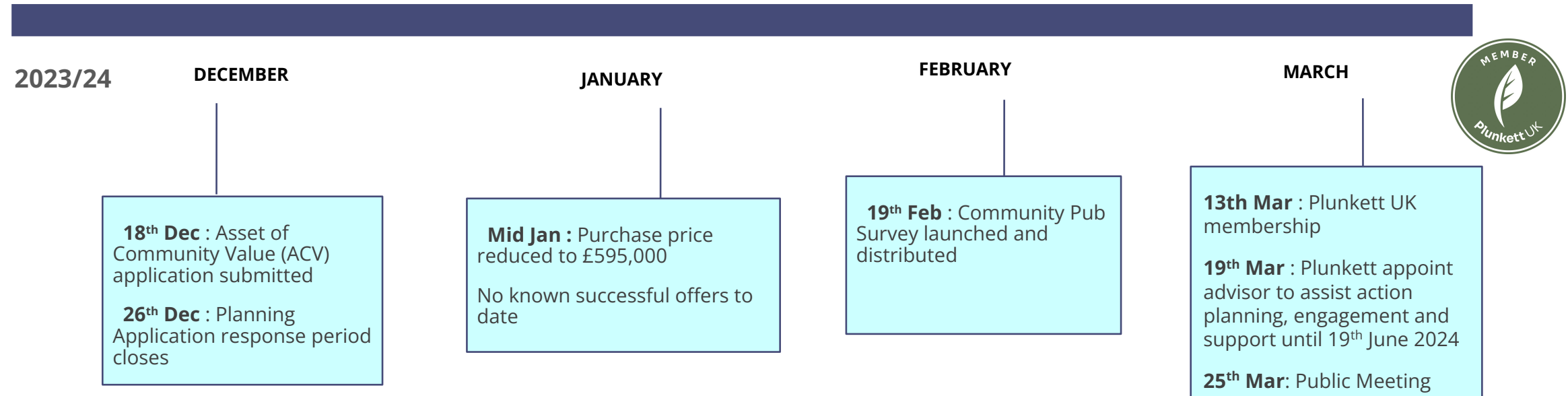
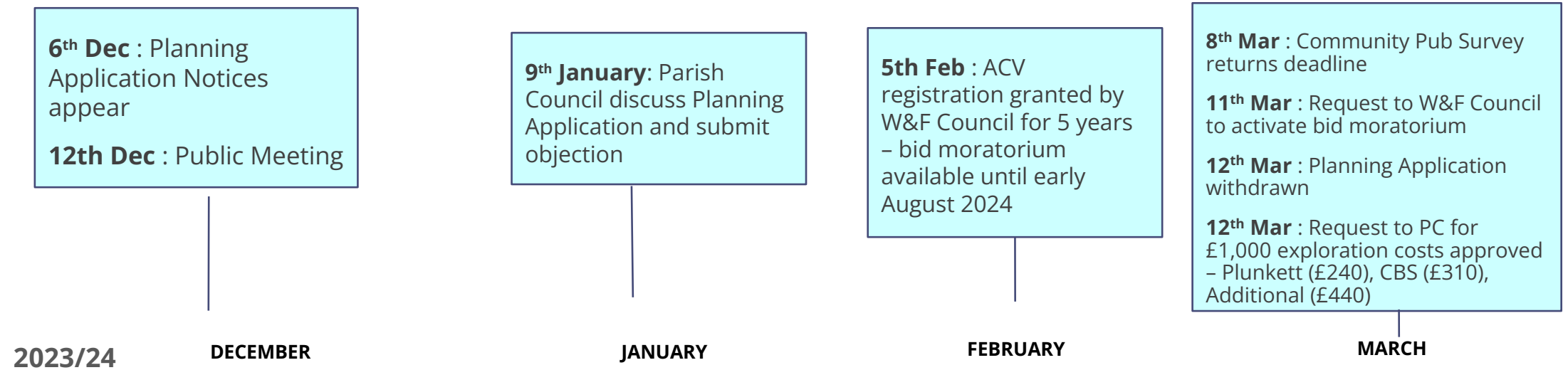
- An informal and committed group of village residents who are passionate about The Pheasant Inn, its importance for the village and hence its long term future:

Ian Hodge	Andrea Sharp
Simon Drakeford	Ken Humphris
Nick Blake	Ian Radford

- Like-minded participants are welcome
- As an informal group, there are no designated roles, though a variety of skills combining to amicably and positively progress
- Going forward, the establishment of a formalised committee will become increasingly necessary



The story so far.....



Survey Results

Survey Structure

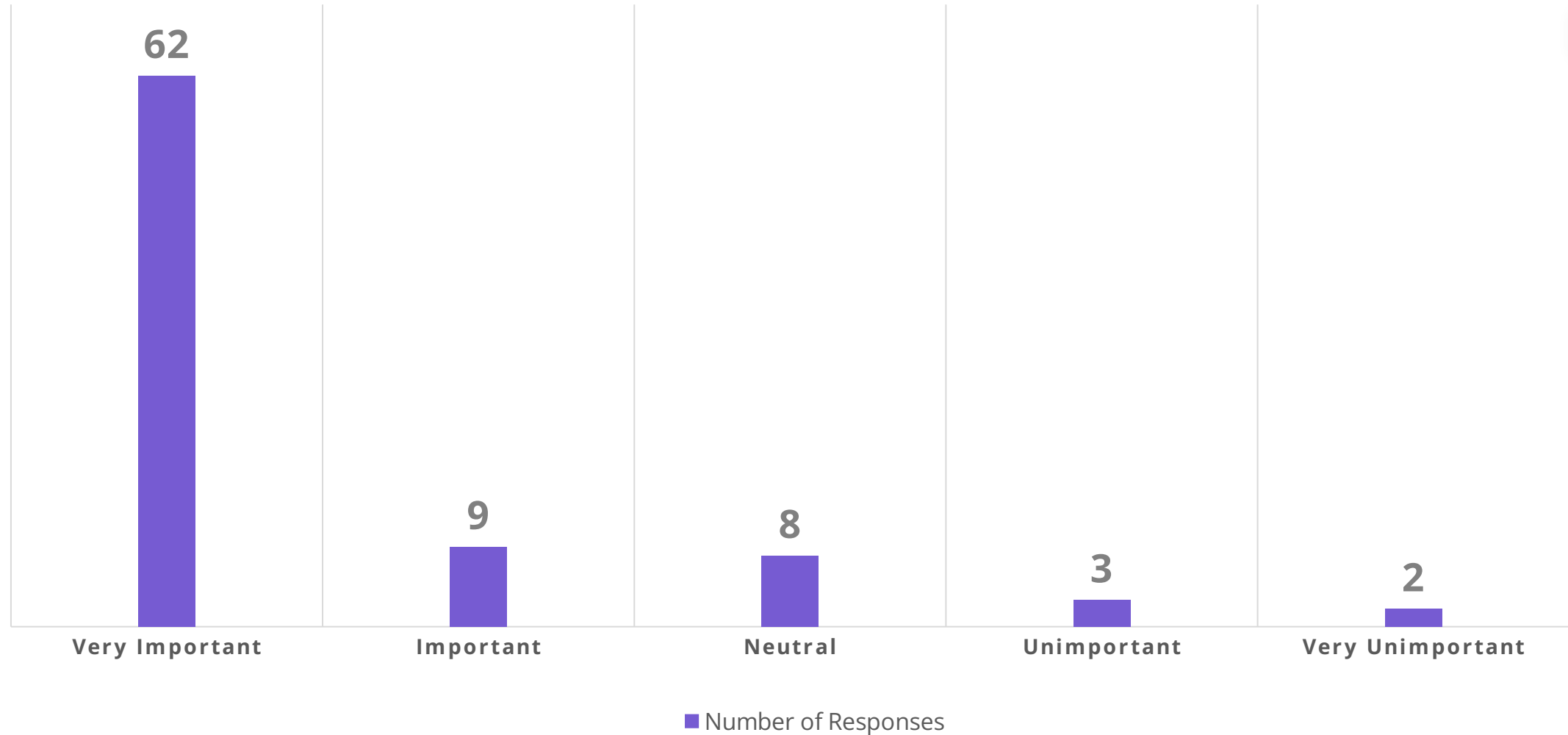
- This Initial survey was specific to Casterton village only
- Conducted 19th February to 8th March
- Circa 200 questionnaires distributed
- Individual, not household responses for better understanding of preferences
- Results also shared with Plunkett

Results

- 85 responses in total (Plunkett comment that response rate is good)
- 71 of 85 respondents said having a pub in Casterton was important/very important
- 56 respondents were willing to consider supporting financially in one form or another
- 64 respondents (75%) would prefer to see The Pheasant “sold and trading improved”
- A broad range of community services were suggested by respondents, in addition to the traditional pub offer
- A wide range of help, support and professional skills offered

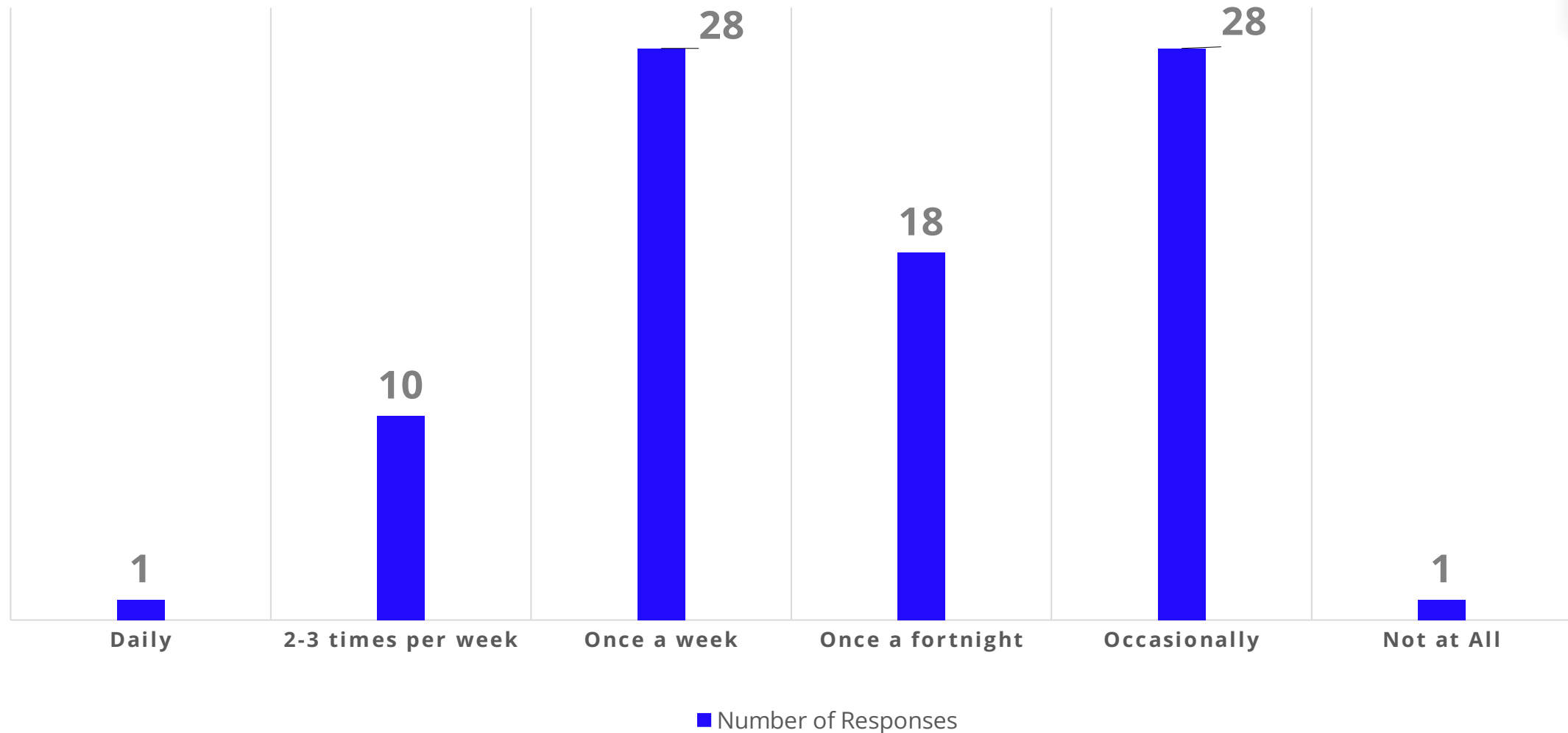
1. How important is it to have a local pub in Casterton?

85% of respondents (71) said Very Important or Important



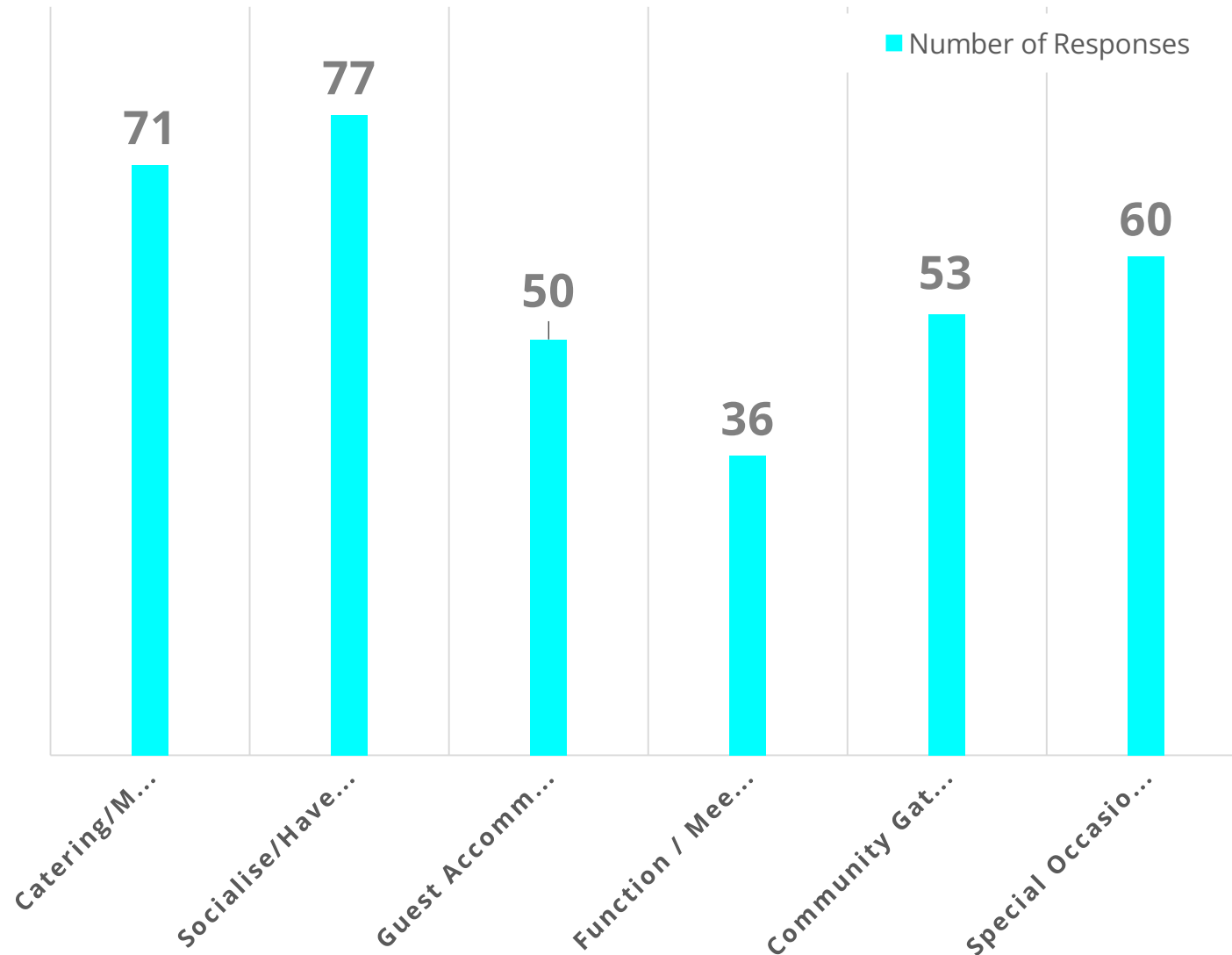
2. If community owned how often would you use the pub?

46% of respondents (39) would use the pub at least once a week.



3. What services would you like to see a Community Pub offer?

A broad service offer with catering/meals and a place to socialise/have a drink highest



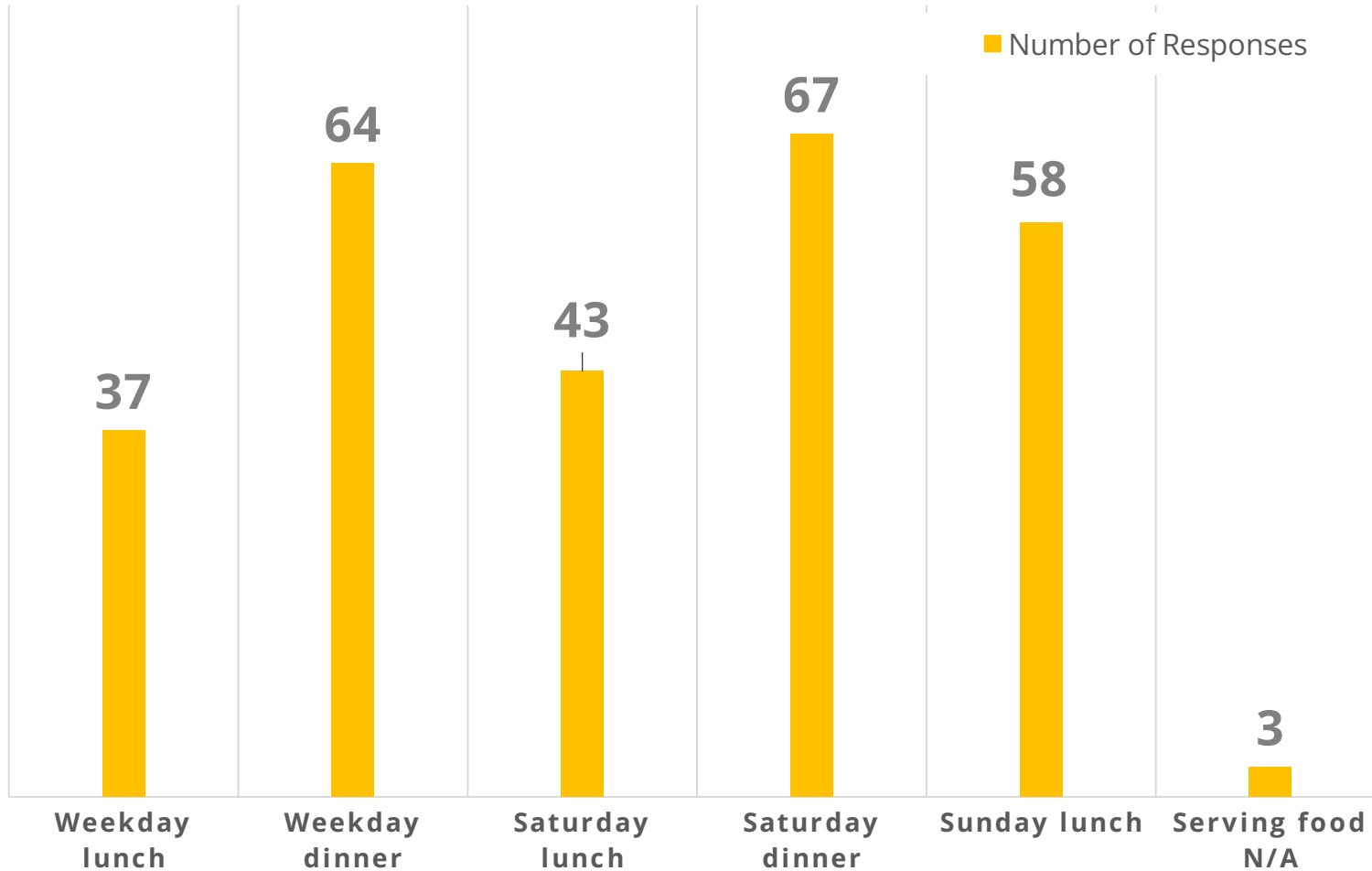
4. Other community services you would like to see *

- Quiz nights
- Coffee & cake
- Elderly meet ups
- Keep fit/yoga
- Guest speakers
- Craft events/art/workshops
- Themed dining nights
- Social group meet ups
- Beer/wine tasting
- Tourist info hub
- Pool/darts/sports
- Post Office

** Several respondents to Q.4 flagged potential conflict with Village Hall activities*

5. What catering offer would you like to see?

Other than Sunday lunch, evening meals of stronger appeal.

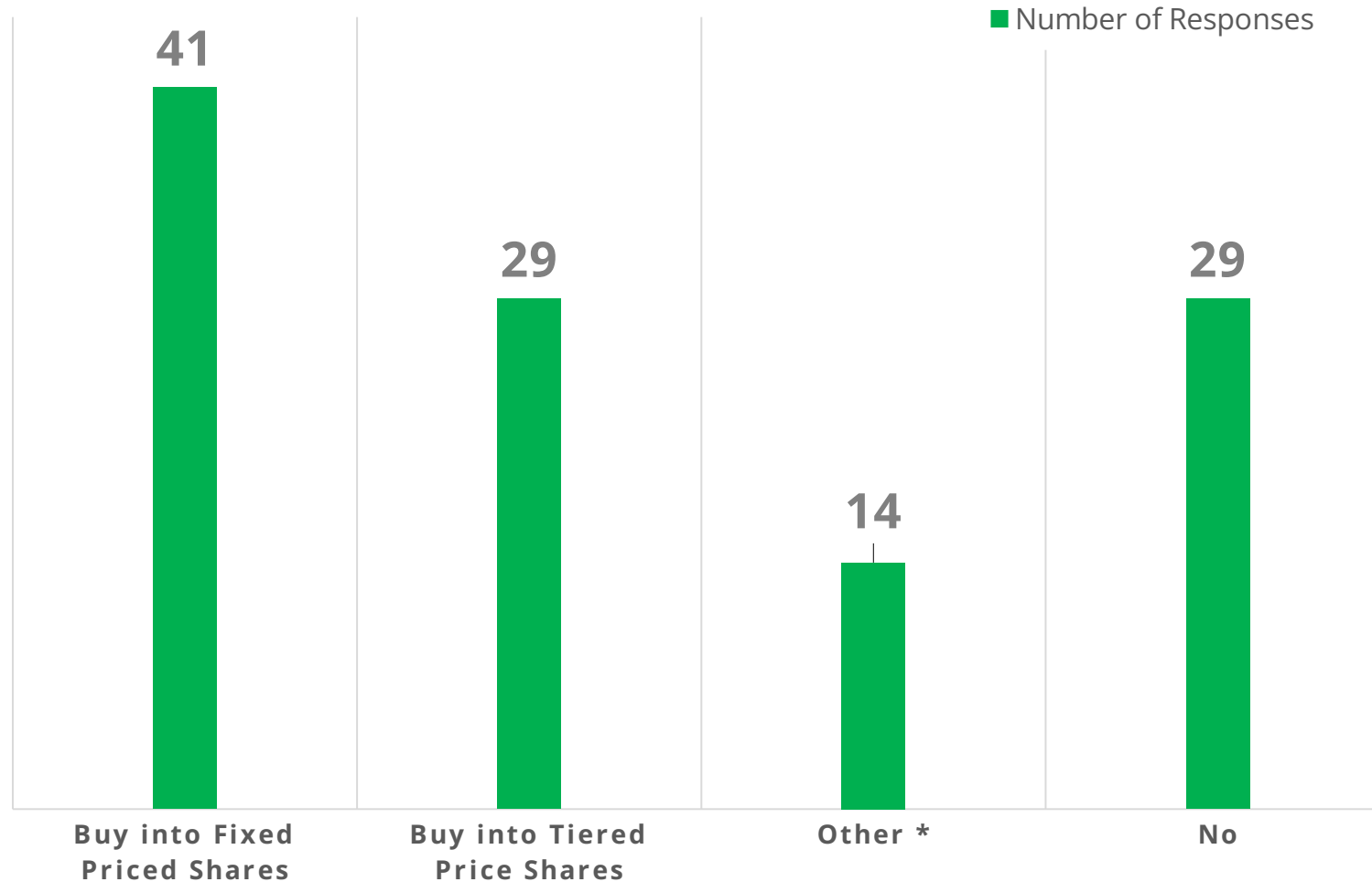


Other comments

- Bar snacks
- Simple/basic pub food
- Cakes/snacks/tea
- Quality dining
- Afternoon tea
- Weekend breakfast offer
- BBQs/themed food
- More gastro pub e.g. Black Bull
- Extended Sunday opening

6. Would you be willing to contribute, however large or small, to a Community Pub purchase?

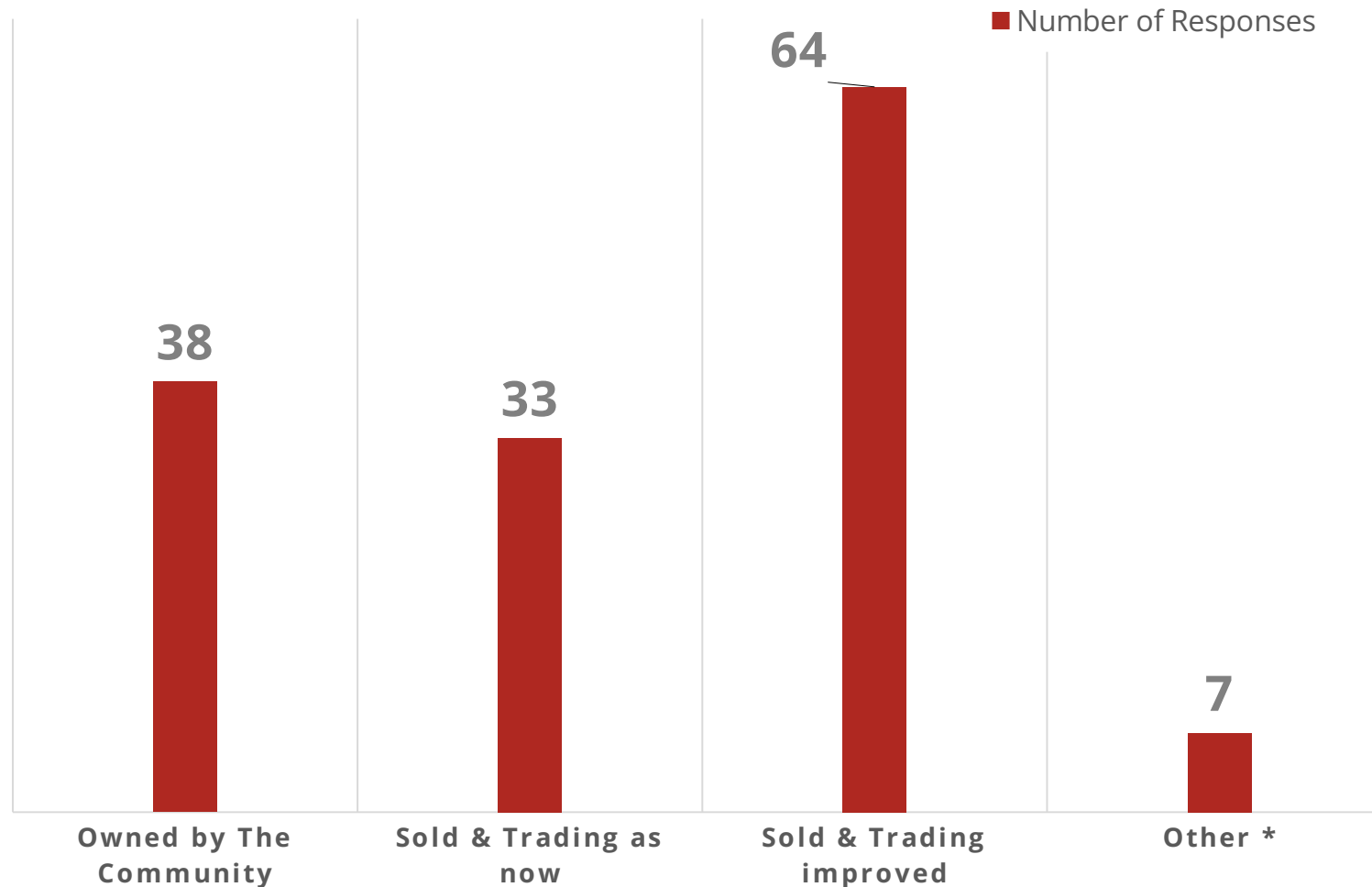
65% of respondents (56) would consider supporting financially in one form or another.



*** Additional comments**

- Loan (3)
- Loan as per B4RN (3)
- Donation (2)
- TBA / cost dependent (6)

7. How would you like to see the future of The Pheasant Inn?
*75% of respondents said **"Sold & Trading Improved"** - the ideal outcome although to date no successful purchase offers have been forthcoming.*

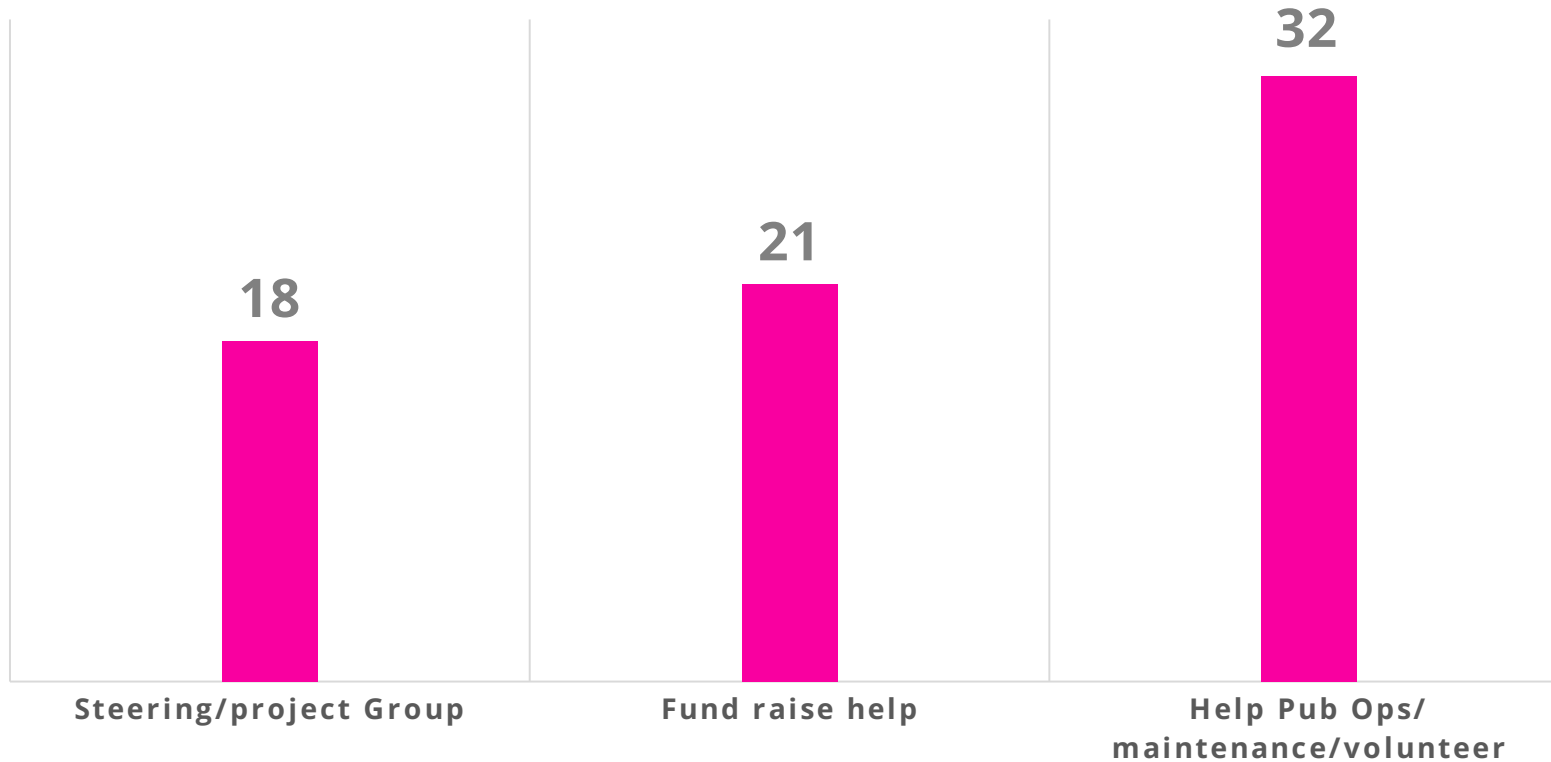


*** Additional comments**

- Ideally sold to a Pub Group (2)
- With a Loyalty Scheme (1)
- And improved ambience (1)
- Affordable housing (2)
- Don't care (1)

8. Would you be interested in helping a Community Pub project?

A wide range of skill sets and support available within the village



■ Number of Responses

Professional capacity / help

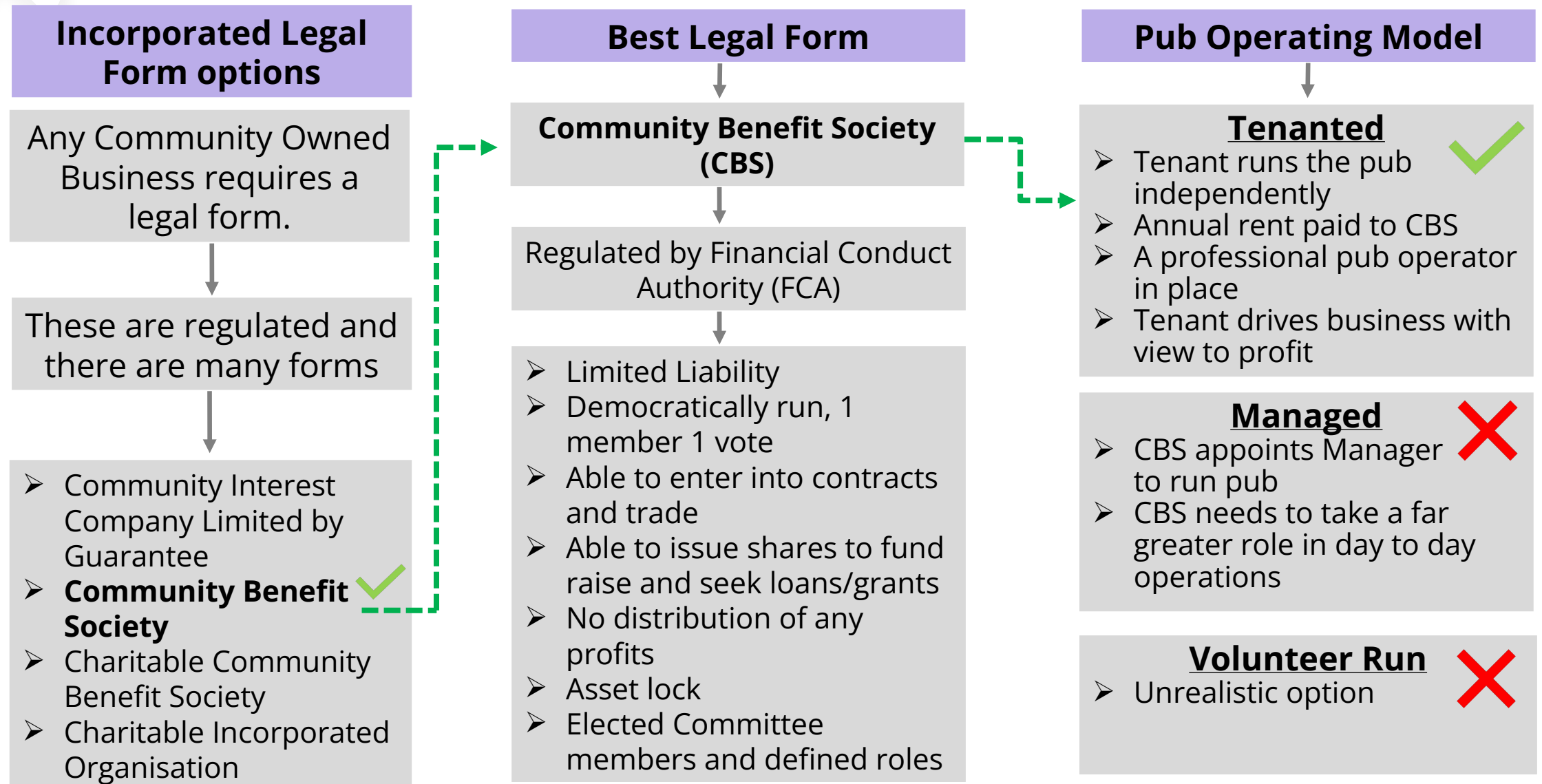
- IT
- Project Management
- Accountancy
- Hospitality
- Travel, Tourism, Customer experience
- Marketing
- Media & Communications
- Graphic Design
- Interior Design



Understanding how Community Pubs typically work

Our understanding of how Community Pubs typically work

A Community Benefit Society and Tenanted pub operation seems the most appropriate option





Plunkett UK & its role explained



Plunkett UK explained

Dedicated to helping create sustainable initiatives that will make a community a better place to live i.e. Community Businesses

What is it?



The support we have

- A registered charity empowering rural communities to overcome their challenges since 1919
- Maintained by memberships, donations and fund raising
- A recognised expert in everything related to Community Owned Businesses such as pubs
- A comprehensive resource of expertise, specialist support, training, case studies and advice

- Plunkett Membership now in place via Casterton PC CIL fund (£240)
- Full access to advice, guidance, case studies & on line resources/training e.g. webinars
- Our funding support application for a Plunkett Specialist Advisor/Expert now approved & appointed to us (Kendal based)
- Initial meeting with Specialist Advisor completed & funded support in place through to June 2024



Possible outcomes/routes forward

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(Plunkett Specialist Advisor input on Community Ownership solutions)

Pub Sold & Trading Improved

- **Ideal and best case scenario**
- Community ownership not necessary
- Reduction in purchase price may improve saleability
- **But no successful offers so far at reduced price**

Pub Failure/Closure

- **The worst case scenario**
- Pub declines into bankruptcy and/or.....
- Renewed Planning Application for Housing
- **Either way, village pub is ultimately lost**

Two community ownership solutions possible

Community Ownership Fund (COF) Application

- A Govt. fund to help save local community assets at risk
- Also requires local share/fund raise of minimum £250k
- Clear community benefits must be demonstrated e.g. Community hub/pub
- 'Community Hub' must avoid any conflict with Village Hall use

Public Works Loan

- This requires Parish Council to buy pub using a Public Works Loan
- Parish Council lease pub to the Community Benefit Society (CBS)
- CBS leases to pub tenant
- Local fundraising requirement lower than COF approach



Next steps to move forward

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There are many 'unknowns' and 'uncertainties' requiring exploration & understanding

1. Actions & work streams

Begin to scope out a Business Plan and gather/seek available information e.g. latest pub financials

Develop full costings schedule inc. likely building refurbishment costs

Seek to fund raise for a property valuation and other exploratory costs (over and above PC £1k funding support)

Develop Funding Plan

- Share capital scheme (how much – quantify with potential investors?)
- Grant options available to apply for and scale
- Other fund raisers e.g. Crowd Funding

Consider the specific community benefit aspects (using questionnaire feedback)

Our Plunkett Specialist Advisor has also provided input to suggested next steps

Next steps to move forward

We are reaching the point where a more formalised Working Group is needed

2. Transition from informal Working Group to Formalised Community Interest Group (Community Benefit Society)



Summary



- A great deal of progress has been achieved since December's Public Meeting.
- Questionnaire responses highlight the importance of The Pheasant Inn to the village and hence our goal to secure its future.
- The ideal scenario is The Pheasant sold to a pub operator and trading improved – but there is no sign of that so far. A Community Ownership solution seems the only alternative if no buyer is found.
- The ACV registration, Plunkett expert support and PC initial funding support are hugely helpful.
- ACV registration also gives us a bid moratorium until early August 2024 – a limited, but protective window of time to develop plans as far as we can.
- There is a great deal of work and further exploration and understanding required.
- The Working Group, which welcomes wider, like minded membership, aims to do everything it can to try and save our village pub.
- It will be very challenging to achieve ultimate success, but we are prepared to try.



Question & Answer Session



Image courtesy of Joan Martin

Thank You