



Save The Forester Community Update 9th September 2026

Sign our new petition to keep The Forester as a pub

--- [SIGN NOW](#) ---

After discussions with the estate agent, we increased our offer to buy The Forester, to bring it closer to the vendor's asking price, whilst keeping it within the range of the independent Red Book Value . The vendors have further reduced the asking price for the pub to £445,000. We now feel optimistic that over the coming weeks we will be able to agree a price.

However, we have also been advised that the vendors are considering appealing against Wiltshire Council's rejection of their application to convert the pub to residential status. This appeal would go to arbitration, where the Council would have to defend their decision. For this reason, we have launched a petition to demonstrate the strength of community support for the pub. Many of you will have seen our stand at the Donhead St Andrew village fete last weekend and will have already signed the petition. We had 256 signatures and much encouragement from everyone we spoke to, with many anecdotes of the role that the pub has played in their lives over the years and universal regret that it is no longer open. With the exception of one gentleman who is opposed to alcohol and to pubs in principle, everyone we spoke to signed.

For those of you, who we didn't get to talk to at the fete, please, [please follow this link](#) and sign the online version. It also helps the cause if you can leave a quick comment in support of the campaign.

Fundraising Momentum

Pledges now stand at £601,300 from 166 supporters — we are getting close to our target and are optimistic that with continued support, we will raise the full amount necessary to purchase, renovate and reopen the pub.

Once a sales agreement is in place, we'll launch a coordinated social media and crowdfunding campaign to widen our reach. Early responses to grant applications are encouraging, with one grant agreed in principle (provided we can agree a purchase within the time frame) and work is continuing on further applications.

Management Committee

Our team has been further strengthened by the addition of Michael Culligan, who has agreed to join the committee. Michael has extensive experience in finance including arranging financing for commercial properties, including pubs. He will not only be helpful in negotiating the final deal, but will also provide sound advice for the refurbishment and running of the pub.

Social Media

After the sterling work that Jane McCarthy has put into setting up and running our Facebook and Instagram accounts, she no longer has the time available to commit to the next stage of the social media campaign. We are hugely grateful for the many hours that she has put into supporting The Forester in this way over the last ten months, whilst also working full time. This means that we now urgently need to find a replacement to take on this role. We are hoping to find somebody via word of mouth, so please do come up with any suggestions and ask your own local contacts. This activity will be a priority for sharing information and completing the fund raising within a timely fashion when we get a sale agreed.

David Curless has very kindly agreed to continue to manage the website during this period, which is a great help to all of us.

Business Planning & Finance

A specialist in community business accounting has rebuilt our model for the Donheads' CBS. This includes the P and L, Balance Sheet and Cash Flow including the management of Corporation Tax, VAT, shares and grant income.

Local hospitality professionals have reviewed our tenancy forecast and offered invaluable advice. Their input strengthens our belief that future tenants can run a thriving, sustainable business.

We've engaged local solicitors and are considering applying for the Community Shares Standard Mark.

We have also found a Salisbury accountancy firm with good experience of preparing CBS and CIC accounts. We plan to meet them soon and potentially engage soon after.

Tenants & Future Operations

We're speaking with search agencies and learning from other successful community pubs. Further expressions of interest have come in. We'll follow these up once a sales agreement is secured — and if you know someone who might be a great fit, please encourage them to send a CV.

Refurbishment & Renovation

The Historic Building Advisory Service (Tisbury) has completed a full schedule of refurbishment works. Local tradespeople have provided advice on outline costs. This means we'll be ready to move quickly once the pub is secured.

How You Can Help Right Now

1. Petition

- If you weren't able to sign the petition at the DSA Fete, [please follow this link](#) and sign the online version, ideally leaving a quick comment as well

2. Funding

- If you haven't pledged yet, please do — every pledge counts.
- Spread the word to friends, colleagues, and businesses.

3. Publicity & Social Media

Please help us to find a candidate to take on the social media role

Help us show strong community backing:

- Follow us on Facebook and Instagram
- Visit and share www.supporttheforester.org

Engagement on these channels strengthens our case with investors and grant bodies.

4. Pub History & Stories

- Do you have memories or anecdotes about The Forester? We'd love to share them — they help bring the pub's legacy to life and we can add them to our new history section on the website, thanks to Chris Hart for researching and writing it and David Curless for his excellent work in building and managing the website.