

**Business plan for**

# **The Plough Inn**

**as a Community Inn**

**April 2024**



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# 1. Executive summary

The Plough Inn, once the social heart of Wigtown, is at risk of being lost for good as a community space after being closed for over two years. It has been a trading inn serving the community since the 18th century, but is now close to being irretrievably converted into expensive private apartment accommodation – a potential last resort option of the current owner, who has been unsuccessful so far in selling the building on the open market.

In its previous incarnation, The Plough Inn was named The Craft, and it was a vibrant inn meeting the needs of both local people and a wider visiting public. Locals used The Craft to celebrate important milestones, enjoy regular live music nights and quizzes, and use it as a large social hub for the annual Wigtown Book Festival. It offered good quality, reasonably priced home cooking, and had a great bar offering craft beers and regionally produced spirits. Local people loved it and it was well supported.

In 2021, the building became The Plough Inn, and offered more of a ‘fine dining’ experience. The reviews on TripAdvisor clearly demonstrate the food was of an excellent standard, but the new business only lasted for six months. A combination of factors contributed to it being so short-lived, including the ongoing effects of the pandemic, rising operational costs, and a lack of footfall due to minimal engagement with the community. In March 2022, the lease owner closed the business, and the building owner put the inn on the commercial market shortly afterwards.

Although there is an existing pub in Wigtown, the Galloway Bar, it is predominantly a sports bar. It is a popular venue and does an excellent job at meeting the needs of its customers, however, the local feedback we have received strongly indicates there is ample scope for a complementary offering: a larger space which can provide evening food service and expand service provision when the community requires it. There is also a strong desire in the community to save the Plough Inn as a historic listed building. It is with this in mind the Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative has committed to a community purchase.

The Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative is an existing Company Limited by Guarantee that aims to purchase community assets to support the community development of Wigtown and the surrounding area. It has already been successful in achieving this, and currently runs the Bunkhouse, Wigtown, which provides two affordable flats, two bunk rooms and a double bedroom for those visiting the area. It has also very recently secured the funding to purchase the Church Hall, and refurbish it to become a social centre for the community. This makes the Initiative the ideal organisation to lead the purchase of the freehold of The Plough Inn. Given the demands currently placed on the Board of Directors, it was decided that this project requires a dedicated organisation to successfully develop and manage the day-to-day operations.

This led to the incorporation of a new Community Benefit Society, the ‘Wigtown Community Inn Community Benefit Society Limited’. Presently this is being incorporated by the Financial Control Authority (FCA). Membership of the Community Benefit Society will be open to anyone based locally aged 16 and

over at a cost of £1. The Members will have full voting rights, and following the Rules of the Society will eventually elect the members of the Management Committee. The first members of the Management Committee will be the five members who are signatories to the application with the FCA. There are currently six listed signatories, but tragically George Willan had a significant heart attack, and died on May 4th. George Moore, a retired accountant, has recently joined the Management Committee as a replacement sixth member.

The Business Plan details the challenges the local community faces, with particular regard to employment, lower than average incomes (the region is officially indexed as the lowest wage economy in Scotland), and poor public transport. It also details the many amazing attractions of the Machars, its rich history, natural beauty, dark skies, and designation as Scotland's National Book Town, all of which should make it a sought after destination for tourists - a market we certainly look to serve.

## 2. The pub and the community

The Plough Inn, once the cornerstone of Wigtown, now sits empty. This section explores the history of The Plough Inn, what led to its closure and the context for the project. It details some of the local demographic statistics, which give a flavour of the composition of the area, alongside a description of the enormous untapped potential of the local area. It explains the various consultations and community involvement in the development of plans for a new facility.

### 2.1. The Plough's history

The Plough Inn is an 18th century inn. Although the exact date of construction is unknown, we know the first licence was granted in 1795 to Peter McGuffog, and at that time it was known as McDowall's Inn. It continued to operate as an inn until 2022, when it closed its doors and went on the market. The building has had several names including 'The Commercial Inn', 'The County Hotel', 'The Plough', 'The Wigtown Ploughman Hotel', 'Craft' and most recently 'The Plough Inn'. Up until 1941, the inn was just known by its address, 30 South Main Street, but with the demand for rooms resulting from the construction of the nearby Baldoon airfield, the innkeeper purchased the adjacent number 29, a three storey property. This photo dates from when it was two separate premises. The County Hotel is on the far right, and next door at number 29 is a greengrocers and ironmongers.



For some years, when the two buildings were separate properties, there must have been significant tension between the two neighbours as the occupant of number 29 was one Alexander Cowper, the founder of the Abstinence Movement in Wigtown, who has a remarkable headstone in the Churchyard. For many years it was the chief posting inn for the area, and at the rear of the inn there was extensive stabling and barns, the vast majority of which are now demolished. There is so much more fascinating history that could be shared in this Plan, but that is not its focus. However, having been a trading inn for over two centuries, the town is at risk of losing, as a local resident recently called it, "one of the jewels of Wigtown".

While the building composition remained the same, the last two incarnations of The Plough Inn couldn't have been more different. The first, known as 'Craft', was a truly community-focused venue. Locals came to mark occasions such as weddings, funerals and birthdays. Significant calendar events were celebrated, such as Burn's Night, Hogmanay, Hallowe'en and Christmas. There was live music every Saturday and local folk musicians played there regularly. It offered well-loved and reasonably priced home cooking, and had a great bar with a range of local beers. It was heavily used during the annual book festival and year-round it was vibrant and well supported.

After the leaseholders moved on in 2021, the building became The Plough Inn under a new leaseholder, who aimed to present a more upmarket offering, resembling more of a fine dining or bistro experience, focused on more organic and sustainable food<sup>[1]</sup> and fine wines. TripAdvisor reviews indicate the food, carrying a higher price point than in Craft, was of an excellent standard. However, because it was less consistent with the community's disposable income, it relied heavily on tourists to make money, during a period where travel and socialising were often restricted by COVID safety legislation. It couldn't develop sufficient footfall to be financially sustainable through wet and dry sales alone. The bedrooms were being redeveloped during this phase and that missing revenue opportunity proved costly. The inn unfortunately closed before the rooms could be occupied. This led to The Plough Inn going on the commercial market in the spring of 2022<sup>[2]</sup>, and ultimately to this effort towards community purchase.

This Business Plan evidences why, as a community owned and operated inn and social hub, it has all the potential to be a vibrant and financially successful business, as well as catalyst for community and economic development.

## 2.2. The pubs and inns of Wigtown

If you go back to the early 1990s there were five pubs or inns in Wigtown:

1. The Red Lion Inn closed in 1991 and is now two residential dwellings.
2. The Grapes Inn closed in 2012 and is now a bookshop with an owner's apartment.
3. Wigtown Bay Hotel closed in 2013, but the public bistro changed hands and operated until 2019. It has recently been sold and is being significantly refurbished to operate as an Airbnb; the new owners are very supportive of the community purchase of The Plough Inn.
4. The Galloway Hotel, which now operates as The Galloway Bar. The accommodation part of the hotel has been turned into flats, and the ground floor is a vibrant sports bar, and the only bar left in Wigtown. It provides a brilliant venue for a lively audience but is unable to offer a food service.
5. The fifth local inn is The Plough Inn, which has been closed for over two years.

The Plough Inn has been marketed commercially for two years. A recent email from the vendor stated:



*It would appear interest in small hotels is somewhat limited given the impacts of the current financial climate on the hospitality industry. This summer will be 2 years since the premises was originally marketed. Over that time there have been 3 different specialist estate agents marketing the premises and discounted leases offered but no viable candidate has yet been found. As such, I have started the process of drawing plans to convert the premises to residential apartments to provide a viable future for an 'at risk historic building'. I hope the premises are purchased or leased to the community or a viable private interest prior to a need to formally commence this process."*

- Jack Cooper, Current building owner

## 2.3. The Wigtown community

Wigtown has been Scotland's National Book Town since 1998, and hosts a selection of well attended festivals and events throughout the year with the main event being a ten-day long book festival at the end of September. Wigtownshire is very rural and dominated by small cattle and sheep farms. The nearby Bladnoch Distillery is one of the area's largest employers, but there is a need for well paid jobs, low cost housing, and training/qualification opportunities. The town relies heavily on income from tourism for hospitality, trades and retail.

The Mid Galloway and Wigtown West Ward profile<sup>[3]</sup> gives the population of Wigtown as 921. It states that the ward has a higher percentage of residents with no formal academic qualifications compared to the wider region: 17.4% compared to 15%. The profile also shows there is a higher percentage of the working age population who are employment deprived: 9.4% compared to 8.5% regionally and claiming unemployment benefit, all ages (450 compared to 402). In 2021 the median household income for Wigtown was £23,754 compared to £27,111 for Dumfries and Galloway.

The Machars is an area of rural deprivation. As stated in the Health & Social Care Strategic Needs Assessment 2020<sup>[4]</sup> "Dumfries and Galloway has the third highest proportion of the mainland population (21%) living in remote rural locations (after Argyll & Bute and the Highlands). Approximately 30,000 people live in our remote rural areas, where issues such as transport, access to services and rural deprivation can have a marked (but often hidden) impact." The last bus returning from the nearest town of Newton Stewart arrives in Wigtown at 19:20, making access to pubs, restaurants and hotels impossible in the evening without private transport. The population density of Wigtownshire at 17 per sq.km. (compared to a 69 per sq.km. average in Scotland) highlights the difficulty of rural life without good transport links.

The Labour Market Profile – Nomis – states "for Dumfries & Galloway the average gross weekly earning is £598.20 cp to a Scottish average of £702.40, some 15% lower; (and given the more rural nature of Wigtown and the Machars the average wage is likely to be lower still). There are fewer people in full time work 63.6% cp to a Scottish average of 67.3%".<sup>[5]</sup>

The people of Wigtown are honest, kind-hearted, and filled with community spirit. They will go out of their way to help one another. It is almost impossible to walk the small distance to the local Co-op without bumping into a friendly face and having an impromptu catchup. Life can be tough here, especially for small businesses who struggle with increasing costs and limited footfall to the region. The recent loss of the post office has been a big blow to the community and has made a small town feel even smaller and less equipped with viable amenities.

## 2.4. Wonderful Wigtown

Wigtown is an ancient town dating back over a thousand years, and was granted Royal Burgh status in 1341. Wigtown Castle was built in the 12th century and it forms part of the rich history of this area, being

captured by Sir William Wallace in 1297, and later by Robert the Bruce in 1313, and appears to then have been demolished. The local area, known as The Machars, is steeped in history, with several significant prehistoric remains in the form of standing stones, cup and ring marks and cairns. Saint Ninian first brought Christianity to Scotland via the Machars, and St Ninian's Cave and the church in Whithorn are just two of many local places of religious interest.

Wigtown is also famous for its martyrs, two women, Margaret Wilson aged just 18, and Margaret Maclachlan, aged 63, who were drowned at the stake in Wigtown Bay on May 11th 1685, on being found guilty of 'non-conformity to the Episcopal Church government'. There are monuments to them in both the churchyard and on the hill that overlooks the town.

Wigtown Bay is the largest local nature reserve in Britain and is a site of special scientific interest. The whole of the Machars is an outstanding area of natural beauty, with the pastures and rolling hills of the south, which is an area rich in sheep and cattle farming, to the wild hills and lochs of the Galloway Forest to the north, part of the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire UNESCO biosphere, and an area where Robert the Bruce famously defeated the English army in the Battle of Troil in 1307. There is a big effort from passionate and dedicated locals to bring Scotland's next National Park to Galloway, which also incorporates the UK's first official Dark Sky Park.

Wigtown benefits from being officially designated 'Scotland's National Book Town'. It has eleven independent bookshops and there are major events during the year to promote the Book Town, with the major one being the Wigtown Book Festival which runs for ten days each year in late September and early October, and brings in an estimated 12,000 visitors and often generates over £4 million annually to the regional economy, with Wigtown itself the principal beneficiary.

Bladnoch Distillery is Scotland's most southern whisky distillery, and has been producing whisky for over 200 years. The site is being developed as a 'world class visitor attraction' and the distillery was recently awarded a Double Gold Medal in the 2018 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, considered the most influential spirits competition in the world.

This is just a small sample of what makes Wigtown and the surrounding area so wonderful, and it's with all that in mind that we believe The Plough Inn will be a force for good in generating extra visitors to the area, benefitting every type of business. This can be done by working in partnership with local businesses to create packages and experiences that focus on a target audience further afield that might not yet know about the area. More about this can be found in Section 7, on Marketing.

## **2.5. Consultation with residents and local businesses**

The involvement of and consultation with local people and residents has been at the very heart of the development of this proposed community purchase from the outset. Wigtown has been actively developing a Local Place Plan. As a part of that process a 'Dragons Den' style event was held where local residents



could promote particular ideas and the audience could comment and ask questions and state how supportive they would be of that proposed development. Ada Montgomery, a Community Councillor, championed the idea of The Plough Inn coming under community ownership at the Dragons Den event, and it received positive support. Due to the commercial nature of The Plough Inn it unfortunately didn't directly fit the Borderlands Funding criteria. This led to the idea being presented to the W&BCI (Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative) and the project for the community purchase officially began its exploratory phase thereafter.

The W&BCI held a public meeting, prior to its Annual General Meeting in December 2023, and again there was a positive response. Hard copy and online surveys were conducted in February 2024, with separate surveys for residents and businesses. In total we received 357 responses from local residents and 26 from businesses, which is quite remarkable for a relatively small community. We deliberately kept the surveys simple so we could get the maximum number of returns. The questions we asked were:

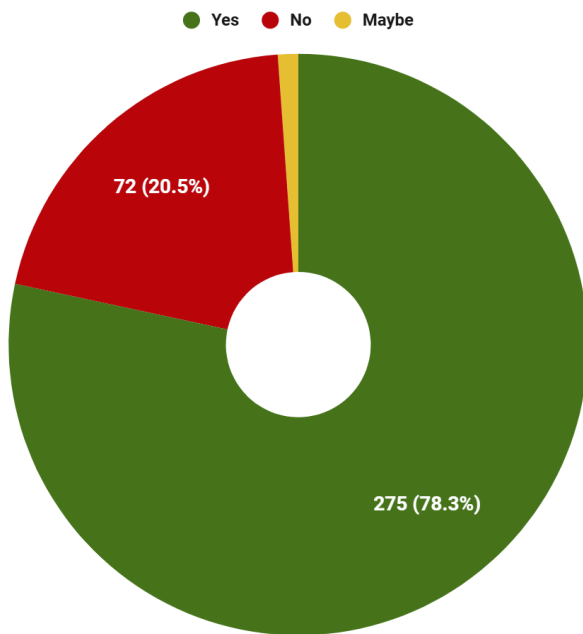
### **Resident survey**

1. Please select your age group (16–24, 25–34, 35–44, 45-59, over 60)
2. Where do you live?
3. Are you, in principle, in favour of the community purchase of The Plough Inn? (Yes, No, Maybe)
4. As a community run asset, what services would you like to see provided?
5. Would you be interested in joining the discussion and planning group? (Yes or No, and if they selected 'Yes' were asked to provide their email address)
6. Any further comments?

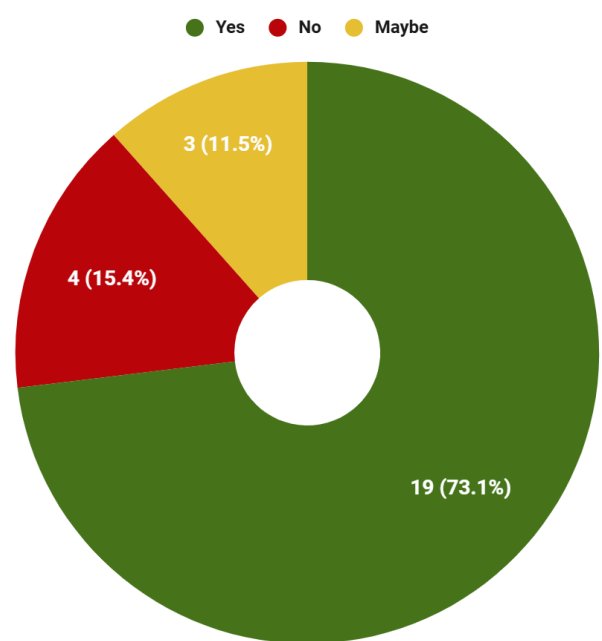
### **Business survey**

1. Please select your age group (same as above)
2. Where is your business located?
3. Are you in principle in favour of the community purchase of The Plough Inn? (Yes, No, Maybe)
4. Which type of business do you run?
5. Any further comments?

### Residents - In favour of community purchase?



### Businesses - In favour of community purchase?



To ensure we could fully address any concerns, comments, questions and suggestions that businesses had, two sets of two-hour-long drop-in sessions were held in late April 2024. Understandable concerns such as ‘why are you going to succeed when so many pubs are closing?’ were raised, and the majority of discussions were extremely positive. Many businesses, including other accommodation providers, recognised that the community purchase of The Plough Inn was targeted towards growing footfall in the town. Some commented that ‘without the pub, repeat visitors to the area have not been returning, particularly due to the lack of choice for evening meals within walking distance’. There was a positive recognition that this project is about ‘growing the size of the pie, and growing the size of the slice of opportunity for everyone’!

A very positive outcome of this project has been the reignition of a local business association. At the time of writing this, it is still being formalised, but it allows structured conversations to happen much more efficiently across stakeholders. One of the objectives in the business association is to carry out a local business survey each year which will give great insight into the business health of the town and the availability and breadth of service provision. The timing of this application and the project’s formalisation prevents us being able to incorporate the first association survey, but it is this kind of open and transparent data that will allow us to adapt our community offering in the future. Working together in collaboration with businesses and associations is key to delivering services for the community.

We believe we have been open, transparent and listened as intently as we possibly could, and have amended aspects of the business plan as a consequence of the feedback received from the consultation.

## **3. Management and operations**

### **3.1. W&BCI - Wigtown and Bladnoch Community Initiative**

The Wigtown & Bladnoch Community Initiative is a company registered in Scotland (SC557595), established in 2016 to further the achievement of sustainable development in Wigtown. The company's purposes are:

- To provide or advance the accessibility of recreational facilities, and/or organising recreational activities, which will be available to members of the Community and public at large with the object of improving the conditions of life of the Community.
- Advancement of citizenship or Community development, including rural or urban regeneration.
- To advance the provisions for educational opportunities in the Community relating to environment, culture, heritage and/or history
- To advance environmental protection or improvement including preservation, sustainable development and conservation of the natural environment, the maintenance, improvement or provision of environmental amenities for the Community and/or the preservation of buildings or sites of architectural, historic or other importance to the Community.

The W&BCI has already purchased a former bank premises and converted it into 'The Bunkhouse', 21 North Main Street, Wigtown. This provides two affordable flats and three low-cost rooms for those visiting in the area, and has become financially viable and successful in its first two years of operating.

The W&BCI has recently received the funding necessary to purchase the Church Hall from the Church of Scotland. They are working in partnership with other organisations in order to ensure the specific 'offer' within the Church Hall aligns with plans for other significant social and recreational meeting places. The first phase of the project is to insulate the building to ensure it complies with modern, environmentally sustainable standards. This provides time to identify the specific uses the building can be made available for in the community, and to plan for further adaptations for accessibility and inclusion.

As an existing Company with experience of purchasing community assets at risk of being lost forever, the W&BCI is the ideal organisation to purchase the freehold of The Plough Inn. The ongoing development of the Church Hall has placed a lot of demands on the W&BCI and they would be under resourced to run the Plough Inn effectively themselves. To mitigate this risk, the decision has been taken to set up a new Community Benefit Society – the Wigtown Community Inn Community Benefit Society Limited, which will be responsible for the development and day-to-day running and management of The Plough Inn.

The W&BCI currently has seven Board Members – Kevin Witt; Matt Kitson; Peter Dobson; Frank Irvine, Dawn Barclay, Gillian Hamnett and Sandra McDowall. Their backgrounds and reasons for getting involved with the Initiative are very interesting and are detailed below:

**Kevin Witt – Chair:** Kevin has lived in the Wigtownshire area for 22 years. He is currently Convener for Wigtown and Bladnoch Community Initiative and was previously a Councillor for six years on Wigtown and District Community Council. He has a BA Honours in Fine Art and Graphic Design from Camberwell College of Art and Design. Kevin is currently a self-employed bookseller and gardener, and works two days a week at Wigtown Festival bookshop. “I am involved in the W&BCI because I want to see community assets, such as the Church Hall, remain in community ownership. I believe that this will strengthen the community and lead to a prosperous future.”

**Matt Kitson – Company Secretary:** Matt has worked both in the public and private sectors. He worked on Training and Personal Development in the public sector, and continuing-on Training and Development, ICT solutions Project Management (Qualified PRINCE2 Project Manager) and ICT solutions Programme Management in the private sector. More recently he has become an entrepreneur, creating and running Driftwood Cinema since 2015 (entertainment and the arts), Wigtown Brewery since 2019, and Xtrastep Ltd from 2012 to 2016, offering website development and hosting services. Matt has also carried out various volunteering roles outside the W&BCI including: Wigtown Community Council – as an elected member, Secretary and subsequently Convenor for 3 years, Creator and Editor of the *Machars Observer* free local newspaper (distribution of 1,500). He works for the W&BCI to “Support the development of community opportunities across Wigtown, to save community assets from falling into disrepair or otherwise being lost to the community, to support great community involvement in the management of the assets and to support the creation of new jobs and opportunities within the community.”

**Peter Dobson – Treasurer:** Peter was a Civil Engineer for local authorities for fourteen years working on major infrastructure projects before moving to the private sector as a Construction Project Manager running new build and historical refurbishment projects. During Covid, Pete started working for South of Scotland Enterprise as an Infrastructure Development Specialist and now works supporting community organisations to develop and manage construction projects across the South of Scotland. Peter says: “I wanted to work for the W&BCI as I had seen the positive impact that community organisations can have in delivering real change. Through my work I have seen so many great projects and I wanted to try and bring some of that positive experience to the place I live.”

**Frank Irvine – Director:** After attending further education, Frank was employed as a surveyor with an open cast mining contractor. Three years later, he moved to Lothian Regional Council and latterly West Lothian Council as an engineering technician working with the highway authority for around nine years. Frank moved on to being employed as a quantity surveyor with FLAC and Amey for around five years and latterly with Bear Scotland as Senior Surveyor (seven years) working on the trunk road network across Scotland. After a two-year spell with AEL Civil Engineering as Senior Surveyor managing large engineering projects, Frank moved to the private surveying practice of Wilkinson & Low where he managed the accounts of large housing developments for the Wimpey Group. In 2010 Frank became self-employed and started up his own building business conducting extensions and alterations for a number of private clients. In 2021 Frank relocated to Wigtown and is still self-employed carrying out minor building and maintenance work. Why Frank is involved with W&BCI: “After moving to the area, I recognised the benefit to the community and the achievements that the group have had so far. With my

knowledge of the construction industry, I applied to join the initiative with the intention to add my experience to the projects.”

**Dawn Barclay – Director:** Born and raised in Wigtownshire, Dawn completed an HND in Hospitality and Catering at the John Niven College, Stranraer in 1996, and has worked within the industry ever since. She was employed within local hospitality businesses including The Ploughman (Wigtown), The Bladnoch Inn, The Crown Hotel (Newton Stewart) and Nether Barr Steading (Newton Stewart), among others, for almost twenty years. Dawn leased Bayview Bistro (Wigtown) from 2012 to 2016 and purchased 31 South Main Street with her husband to open Cobwebs bar and restaurant in March 2017. Dawn feels strongly about offering local employment, delivering excellent service and serving high quality, affordable meals.

Dawn is committed to supporting Wigtown and the wider community and is renowned for fundraising and hosting events ranging from coffee mornings and tombollas to bingo and psychic nights. These events have raised thousands of pounds for local causes including Wigtown Primary School, community defibrillators, Cancer Research UK Relay For Life and the Neonatal Unit in Dumfries. In addition she hosts affordable events for children and families to ensure that no child misses out on the opportunity to meet Santa and the Easter Bunny and receive a small gift. She annually visits the elderly within our community with a treat – a meal, a tippie, or afternoon tea – with the support of other local businesses. Activities like this place her at the heart of Wigtown’s community and traders with more than half of the town’s local businesses backing these activities across the year.

**Gillian Hamnett – Director:** Gillian is a book trade professional with almost twenty-five years’ experience in the industry. She worked as a bookseller, branch administrator and store manager for fifteen years in the UK and Ireland, overseeing the operational and financial management of bookshops. She has extensive experience of building and staff management and ran her stores as dedicated training hubs by acting as a local retail skills assessor and mentor, offering student work experience and back-to-work training opportunities. Running events and working with venues has been a big part of Gillian’s career, and she has experience of working with volunteers, authors and performers, event ticketing and marketing, social media, access and inclusion, and health and safety. Gillian has also worked as an education coordinator and a literacy advisor. She moved to Wigtown in 2018, and now works as a freelance editor, proofreader and publishing consultant, as well as volunteering with the Wigtown Shindy.

Why Gillian decided to join the W&BCI as a Director: “I love living in Scotland’s National Book Town. I’ve seen first-hand how a town’s identity and annual events can inject momentum, partnership and goodwill into small communities. I’m also aware of the fragility of rural towns and the potential loss of amenities which help them thrive. I’m keen to help with projects that build long-term community relationships and opportunities.”

**Sandra McDowall – Director:** Sandra has lived and been active in the community of Wigtown for over fifty years as a Community Councillor and an elected member of Dumfries and Galloway Council. She believes that communities have the right to make the decisions that most affect their lives and has been involved in the regeneration of the rural economy and the development of the Wigtown Book Town Project

since its inception. She is currently Convenor of the Community Council and the Town Team, tasked with preparing the Place Plan for Wigtown and Bladnoch.

### **3.2. Wigtown Community Inn Community Benefit Society Ltd**

The incorporation of the new Community Benefit Society (CBS) is currently being processed by the Financial Control Authority. It has six founding members of the Management Committee: Richard Draper, Kevin Witt (appointed by W&BCI), Penelope Cummings, Catherine Brown, Craig Hamnett, and George Willan. Tragically George passed away on the 4th May, 2024, aged just 61. He was an inspirational man who helped every corner of the community and made time for everyone. His enormous impact will be felt for a long time, and we are utterly shocked and saddened by his departure.

An accountant, George Moore has recently joined the committee to provide financial planning and accounting assistance. The backgrounds and reasons for being part of the CBS of each member is below:

**Richard Draper:** Richard is a qualified teacher and youth worker. He lives in Wigtown for six months of the year helping his daughter, Esther, who is the local Health Visitor for The Machars, to renovate her house, which is the former Manse. He lives in rural North Norfolk for the remaining six months. Richard, together with his wife, Vanessa, founded The Benjamin Foundation in Norfolk following the death of their son, Benjamin, in 1992. The Foundation gained charitable status in October 1994. Although initially founded to address the rural needs of North Norfolk, due to its success in developing and delivering services to meet the needs of children, young people and their parents, the charity expanded to cover the whole of Norfolk, and since his retirement in October 2015 (the Charity then celebrating its 21st birthday), it has gone on to expand into Suffolk. By the time of Richard's retirement as the CEO it had grown into a charity with £6 million + pounds a year turnover and employing over 200 members of staff. As a result of the work of the Foundation, Richard was installed as a Lay Canon in Norwich Cathedral in 2002, and awarded the MBE for services to young people in 2005. His full title is therefore Canon Richard Draper MBE. Richard says he became involved in the CBS because "I've witnessed the negative impact on communities and community cohesion that result from the closure of important community facilities. The Plough Inn has the potential to play a key role in being the glue in the community, and driving up economic benefit for the whole Town and area."

**Kevin Witt:** See Section 3.1 – W&BCI – Wigtown and Bladnoch Community Initiative.

**Penelope Cummings:** Penelope first started coming to Wigtown in 2008 to visit friends and bought a property here in 2011, and finally resided here permanently in 2014. She was a regular at The Plough Inn, then known as 'Craft' when it was taken over by Sharon Rennie. She soon became involved in promoting the pub on Social Media. Professionally, Penelope was Manager for British Telecom for seventeen years, responsible for bad debt recovery in Central and South Birmingham. She was Project Leader for the HIV and AIDS charity, Huddersfield and area, West Yorkshire for five years. Penelope was also Freelance consultant for the Israeli AIDS charity for one year and had various roles in Arthritis Care UK, for 12 years;

culminating in being Director of Helplines and Information for five years until her retirement in 2024. She has served on many charitable committees and represented Arthritis Care and spoken at major European Conferences. Penelope has also published papers, appeared on TV and given press and radio interviews. The reason she is championing the community purchase of The Plough Inn is because “when it was ‘Craft’ the Town’s people came to mark their weddings, funerals and birthdays. Significant calendar events were celebrated, like Burn’s Night, Hogmanay and Hallowe’en. There was live music every Saturday, and local musicians played regularly. There was good, reasonably priced home cooking, and a great bar. It was vibrant and well supported. We all LOVED it. Is it any wonder I want to see this venue open and back at the centre of the community where it rightfully belongs!?”

**Catherine Brown:** Catherine is a retired civil servant who has chosen to make her home in Wigtown for the community atmosphere in the Machars and access to outdoor activities. She has experience in policy development, project management and liaison. She’s chosen to champion the community purchase because she knows “the possibilities are endless to make this project the catalyst for a revival of an inclusive community in the Old County Town”.

**Craig Hamnett:** Craig’s fascination for pubs started as soon as he could walk. His grandparents were publicans and he would regularly stay with them to ‘help out’ behind the scenes. Once he properly found his feet he went to study Business at the University of Central Lancashire and spent his second year in Würzburg, Germany, focused on International Business. After University he found his feet under a desk and has been a Web Developer and User Experience designer in New Zealand and Australia for companies such as Xero and Movember. He moved to Wigtown in 2018 with his wife, Gillian, and has been grateful for having the ability to work from home in Web Development and Marketing. Craig enjoyed first the Craft and then The Plough Inn, sometimes until he could no longer find his feet. On a serious note, he said, “I am saddened at the prospect of losing such a historic landmark in town and this might be the last chance to prevent the building from going through a permanent change of use.”

**George Moore:** Graduated from Oxford University in 1966 after reading Modern History and joined Arthur Young McClelland Moores in London to train as a Chartered Accountant. He qualified in 1970 and left to work for a firm of investment managers in the city called Touché Remnant who managed quoted investment trusts, initially as an investment analyst and later as an assistant manager. George decided to return to Scotland in 1972 and joined E A Bell & Co in Newton Stewart as assistant, then partner and finally as sole practitioner working as accountants for local businesses. He built up the business to employ eighteen staff looking after about 750 local businesses as clients. George retired in 2017.

#### **The objects of the Community Benefit Society are:**

1. To develop, manage, and take the day-to-day responsibility for the inn currently known as The Plough Inn, Wigtown, for the benefit of the local community, promoting social gathering; employment, work experience and training; tourism; event facilities and any additional services that meet community needs.
2. To ensure the activities of the Society are fully informed by the local community and Members.

3. To work in partnership with local businesses and other organisations to increase the economic prosperity of the area.
4. To develop and maintain a strong and financially sustainable business that will enable the Objects of the Society to be fully achieved and maintained.
5. Create an environmentally conscious business model that takes action to tackle climate change.

### **3.3. Membership**

Membership of the Community Benefit Society is open to anyone based locally over the age of 16, with membership set at £1. Members will have full voting rights at meetings of the CBS, thus ensuring the society is fully informed and accountable to the local community and its Members. As soon as the paperwork is confirmed and the incorporation is finalised, the CBS will launch a membership recruitment campaign.

### **3.4. Management committee**

The Management Committee has been supported in the development of its business case and feasibility analysis by Irene Tilley, experienced consultant for the MacDonald Hotel chain and other hospitality businesses. The Management Committee has also carried out extensive online research into other community owned pubs and had direct conversations with the Kenmuir Arms in New Luce, and the Thorold, Marston and Tafarn Yr Heliwr in North Wales. The Plunkett Foundation, of which we are members, has proved amazingly supportive and provided invaluable advice throughout this journey.

The Management Committee has already committed to being directly involved in the development, management and running of the Inn. It will therefore employ the Inn Manager and other staff. The Management Committee is committed to working with a strong ethos and culture, and will ensure each of the Objects of the CBS are taken fully into account when making decisions. The Management Committee is committed to ensuring local residents and Members of the CBS have a strong voice in the development of The Plough Inn, holding regular face-to-face meetings and online discussions; taking ideas, concerns and complaints and criticisms seriously and doing all they can to address them.

The Rules of the CBS detail how the founding members of the Management Committee operate and how long they stay in role for and how Members and Community Shareholders will elect the members of the Management Committee. These rules and the FCA application form are in the appendix.

### **3.5. Lease terms**

Demonstrating that the business can run while paying wages, costs and a lease is essential to show the existing business community in Wigtown that there is no unfair advantage. Research into industry standard forms of lease has shown it is typical for 9% of turnover to be used for a full repair and maintenance lease. The issue with this arrangement is that it discourages growth through employment, where employment is a



core aim of the W&BCI. As such, options have been considered to use this methodology while trying to incentivise employment.

The following table explores five options based on profit, with and without a minimum monthly rent, turnover and turnover with staff costs removed. The preferred option is to base the lease on the turnover excluding staff costs with a minimum of £500 pcm. This demonstrates reasonable competitive costs while acknowledging the benefit to the town of offering greater employment.

	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Year 1 total
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
Lease: Profit with min	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	765	594	972	957	500	7,289
Lease: Profit no min	0	0	0	0	66	170	306	765	594	972	957	0	3,831
Lease: Turnover	1,760	865	1,534	1,254	2,018	2,142	2,328	3,052	2,793	3,313	3,299	984	25,343
Lease: Turnover - Staff	689	0	462	182	946	1,070	1,256	1,980	1,721	2,242	2,227	0	12,776
<b>Lease: Turnover - Staff w/min</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>2,227</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>14,131</b>

### Lease: profit with min

This approach takes into consideration all of the income and all of the expenses for the business and still pays a minimum lease amount to ensure a reasonable income for the W&BCI. The issue with this method is that it has the capacity to be misused in the future by rescheduling large expenses to be made during high season, thus reducing the lease liability. That would be against the spirit of the agreement but with the minimum payment there would still be a token amount paid.

*Monthly example: (£35,000 sales - £27,000 expenses) x 9% lease = £720 lease payment*

### Lease: profit with no min

This has the same pitfalls as the previous approach, but with no minimum lease payment guarantee for the W&BCI. This would mean in the low season a lease payment would rarely be made.

*Monthly example: (£35,000 sales - £27,000 expenses) x 9% lease = £720 lease payment*

### Lease: Turnover

Basing the lease amount off the turnover alone is a straightforward calculation. It can however result in a prohibitively expensive lease cost for the business if profit margins are slim which is notorious in the food and drink industry. The largest expense by far at the inn would be staff costs, and this approach does not incentivise recruitment or employing staff all year round.

*Monthly example: £35,000 sales x 9% lease = £3,150 lease payment*

### Lease: Turnover - Staff

This approach looks at the total income of the business, minus the staff costs, and applies the lease percentage to the outcome. This incentivises employment and as other expenses aren't taken into account, it isn't subject to being manipulated by arbitrarily moving large expenses to higher turnover months to reduce lease payments. The downside to this approach is that in the low season staff costs will be greater than turnover. In those and similar months, either no or a very low lease payment would be made.

*Monthly example: (£35,000 sales - £12,000 staff costs) x 9% lease = £2,070 lease payment*

**Lease: Turnover - Staff w/min (Favoured)**

This favoured approach incentivises the inn to employ staff whilst at the same time guaranteeing a lease payment is due to the W&BCI each month. The inn would always pay a minimum amount in the low season but is incentivised to keep a base level of staff throughout the year to ensure service provision to the town.

*Monthly example: (£35,000 sales - £12,000 staff costs) x 9% lease = £2,070 lease payment*

**3.6. Other Partnering Opportunities**

As part of the former community asset buyout and now ongoing commercial project, The Bunk House, the W&BCI has previously highlighted the need for a manager. Currently this role is being carried out on a voluntary basis by Directors, however, the complementary nature of the Plough Inn would be an ideal opportunity to centralise the management of both accommodation offerings, making overall efficiency savings. A previously outsourced agreement for this service cost the W&BCI £835 pcm. Current cost estimates for an additional member of staff would be £849 pcm, and as such this would be a reasonable rate to use for taking on this role.

## 4. Project vision, aims, and objectives

The vision for the project is:

*To develop a community inn for Wigtown that will be a focal point for town life, to reinforce the sense of community and act as a catalyst for the local economy of Wigtown and surrounding area.*

The Plough Inn will act as a social hub for the residents of Wigtown and the surrounding area. It will be fully informed by the Members of the Society and local residents and businesses. It will provide a range of services and facilities to meet the needs of both residents and local businesses. It will provide employment, work experience and training opportunities across a range of skills in the hospitality sector. It will strive to be a successful and financially viable business to ensure its social objects can be fully developed and delivered. All our aims and objectives for The Plough Inn will have measurable outcomes that ensure accountability and transparency of what we're intending to achieve.

### 4.1. Aims, objectives, and outcomes

**Aim:** To provide a flexible, multi-purpose community facility that enables participation in social, cultural and leisure activities for the whole community.

**Objective:**

- A. To provide a community facility in the town offering somewhere to go and something to do, including providing a 'warm space' for those experiencing fuel poverty.
- B. To facilitate access to essential services, especially for older people and those with mobility issues.
- C. To provide economies of scale by locating several services under one roof.

**Outcome:** To keep the building open to the public seven days a week for community use.

**Aim:** To protect essential services for the town.

**Objective:**

- A. To protect the last inn in Wigtown as a historic building, thereby protecting a valuable part of Scottish Heritage.
- B. To explore opportunities to provide a location for the development of other services recently lost to the town, including health services (e.g. the defibrillator), a Post Office and banking hub.
- C. To explore the opportunities to provide new services of benefit to the local community, such as an affordable community laundry.
- D. To support local producers in the area.
- E. To help maintain a vibrant local economy and generate jobs.

**Outcome:** To maintain the listed building and ensure it is in excellent working condition for expanding the provision of additional services that are voted on by the members of the society.

**Aim:** To provide a flexible, multi-purpose community facility that is sustainable for the future.

**Objective:**

- A. To provide a flexible venue that can be used for various activities, and by more than one user group at a time, which will provide a diverse range of income generating activities.
- B. To provide an attractive space that local residents, groups and businesses are keen to access, increasing the earned income potential of the building.
- C. To share overhead costs between service types to further improve financial viability.

**Outcome:** To hold events in the social hub which is outside the usual remit of the pub.

**Aim:** To be an environmentally conscious business.

**Objective:**

- A. To reduce miles travelled for goods and services by sourcing locally wherever possible.
- B. To ensure the property is, wherever practically and financially possible, run in an environmentally sustainable way to make it efficient and carbon-sensitive.

**Outcome:** To capture environmental data such as food miles and carbon emissions and reduce them year-on-year.

**Aim:** To ensure the development and delivery of the Inn is fully informed by local residents, businesses and Members of the CBS.

**Objective:**

- A. To launch a proactive recruiting campaign of Members of the CBS.
- B. To hold regular meetings of the Members, local businesses and residents of the area, both face-to-face and online.
- C. To directly run the Inn and therefore influence its ethos and culture, and service development and delivery.
- D. To grow the footfall of Wigtown by collaboration with local service providers.

**Outcome:** To hold CBS meetings twice a year (or more frequently if needed) where agendas are discussed and voting is carried out on topics that influence the running of the inn and its service provision.

**Aim:** To be an employer of first choice.

**Objective:**

- A. To become a registered Fair Work First business.
- B. To ensure all staff and volunteers, receive the support and training they require for successful career advancement.
- C. To fully celebrate staff success, including through financial incentives.
- D. To ensure all staff and volunteers, have a voice in the development and delivery of the Inn.

**Outcome:** To ensure the Living Wage is paid to all staff that are on the payroll. To provide clear feedback mechanisms for workers to make suggestions or complaints. To ensure all staff and volunteers have a voice in how the development and delivery should be carried out.

## **5. Business proposal**

For centuries The Plough Inn has been a focal point in Wigtown. It was a hive of activity during any festival, bustling with authors from around the world, and it was a cosy, traditional, dog-friendly pub with an open fire connecting neighbours in the winter and warming up chilly hill walkers and cyclists. The building is an ideal adaptable space for a multi-use social hub whilst still retaining a core set of profitable hospitality services. The Plough Inn will have opportunities and challenges in becoming financially sustainable. It is important to factor in seasonality, increasing cost of sales, and changing consumer behaviour and community needs when creating a resilient set of income streams that will ensure a healthy balance sheet throughout the whole financial year.

### **5.1. A traditional pub with a restaurant and rooms**

At its core, the building is a small pub with four double en-suite bedrooms, and a three-bedroom self-contained flat. It provides a cosy, peaceful atmosphere that emulates its rural setting. It is a warm space for families and a fantastic base for visitors wanting to explore the Machars.

The Plough Inn has shown in the past that it can be a core asset to the town that compliments other commercial spaces. Discussions with other accommodation providers in Wigtown have shown that they don't expect the extra availability of rooms in the town to negatively affect their income.

### **5.2. Service provisions for the community**

Providing provisions for the community will be in conjunction with other local businesses. Where there is an obvious overlap in services it will be an opportunity to collaborate and fill a need when required. This might be by offering the availability of the kitchen, or if a number of cafes in town are closed then to provide a lunch service when required.

Opening the building all year round for use as a social hub, and to be used by the locals without the requirement to eat or drink is key to providing a consistent warm and safe space. This comes with the additional expense of heating the building and providing staff cover. These extra costs are factored into the forecast, but can also be mitigated with the use of a well managed team of volunteers to be on hand to provide extra support, without impacting the existence or development of core, paid roles. The condition report and talks with the current building owner have shown the previous renovation work on the building to increase the amount of insulation has been very beneficial. It requires minimal heating, but can also be heated via multiple sources.

### 5.3. The business model

Running the inn as a profitable business and a social hub presents challenges and opportunities. It is vital to ensure that footfall in the town is increased so that there isn't a constant reliance on locals to 'use it or lose it'. This model relies on communication with stakeholders across Wigtown and the Machars to build customer profiles and to innovate when it comes to the promotion of services to those potential customers.

		Meals			Drinks
		Breakfast	Lunch	Evening	Bar / Hot drinks
<b>Low Season</b>					
Monday	10am - 8pm				
Tuesday	10am - 10pm	As required	As required	Simple	
Wednesday	10am - 8pm				
Thursday	10am - 10pm	As required	As required	Simple	
Friday	10am - 11pm	As required	As required	Simple	
Saturday	10am - 11pm	As required	As required	Simple	
Sunday	10am - 11pm	As required	As required	Simple	

<b>High Season</b>					
Monday	10am - 10pm				
Tuesday	10am - 11pm	As required	As required	Regular	
Wednesday	10am - 10pm				
Thursday	10am - 11pm	As required	As required	Regular	
Friday	10am - 11pm	As required	As required	Regular	
Saturday	10am - 11pm	Regular		Regular	
Sunday	10am - 11pm	Regular		Regular	

It is important to note that this is just an indication of opening hours and is not set in stone. These details can be flexible and adapted quickly as needed. The ultimate goal of The Plough Inn being open is to meet the outcomes of the aims and objectives detailed in section 4. Those outcomes can be met in a number of ways, and ensuring that the inn can run flexibly and in consultation with other local businesses is key for the town to present the most full range of service provision.

### 5.4. Staffing structure

A core, dedicated team of trained staff is vital to the success of The Plough Inn. Providing fixed term contracts with regular hours is key, and means that certain roles will be varied on a day-to-day basis depending on service demand. There will be a provision of both full and part-time flexible employment.

Job Title	Weekly Hours	Pay Grade	Hourly Rate	Weekly Cost	Yearly Cost	Employer NI	Pension
Chef	40	Grade A	£19	£760	£39,520	£4,197	£1,976
Inn Manager	40	Grade B	£15	£600	£31,200	£3,049	£1,560
General staff	18	Real Living Wage	£12	£216	£11,232	£294	£562
General staff	16	Real Living Wage	£12	£192	£9,984	£122	£499
General staff	16	Real Living Wage	£12	£192	£9,984	£122	£499
General staff	16	Real Living Wage	£12	£192	£9,984	£122	£499
General staff	12	Real Living Wage	£12	£144	£7,488	£122	£374
Cook	18	Grade C	£14	£252	£13,104	£552	£655
	<b>Weekly Hours</b>			<b>Weekly Total</b>	<b>Yearly Wage</b>	<b>NI Total</b>	<b>Pension Total</b>
	176			£2,548	£132,496	£8,580	£6,625
						<b>Wage + NI + Pension</b>	<b>£147,701</b>
					<b>Forecast Monthly Total</b>		<b>£12,308</b>

## 5.5. Fair staffing, Training, Apprenticeships and Volunteering

We are determined to be an employer of first choice from the outset and will seek to register as a Fair Work First employer at the earliest opportunity. All employed staff will be paid the real living wage which is currently set at £12 per hour. We will establish a strong ethos and culture that all our staff will be expected to buy into and reflect. We will ensure the voice of all staff and volunteers informs the development and delivery of our offer. We will celebrate staff success – both individual success and team success.



Staff retention is very important, and together with creating a happy workplace, we will operate a three-year 'loyalty bonus scheme' for all employed staff, where a fixed percentage related to their wages will be paid every three years they remain in employment. We will operate a 'shared tips' scheme so all staff benefit as a result of the excellent service we aspire to provide. 25% of tips and gratuities will go to good causes in the area, encouraging our customers to be even more generous.

Given the Inn will provide several aspects of the hospitality industry (a pub, a restaurant and accommodation), in addition a vibrant Social Hub, we will work hard to ensure all staff and volunteers have access to the training required to carry out their role, but also for their personal and career development. We will ensure all experienced staff we employ are keen to act as mentors to newly employed staff, apprentices, those on work experience and volunteers. We want to ensure all our staff and volunteers see the hospitality sector as a great career opportunity, and feel a sense of pride and achievement in all they do at the inn.

We will offer a full range of opportunities, including apprenticeships, work experience and volunteering. We will build strong links and partnerships with Dumfries & Galloway College, Skills Development Scotland, Springboard, Back2Work UK, Workforce Training, Galloway Action Team, Lowland Training, Pathways to Employment and D & G Local Employability & Skills Partnership.

Our ambition, as customer/community demand and secure financial income allows, is to offer a full range of services, from accommodation, breakfast, a bar open from midday to late evening, lunch and evening meals, as well as the vibrant Social Hub. From the outset volunteers will play an important role in both supporting the existing offer and growing new ones. At every opportunity we will ensure we deliver a core service through paid employees. But we are determined to be a successful and sustainable business so staff will only be employed when we are confident we have the necessary income in that area of operation to employ them, volunteers will therefore provide a really important role in growing those new areas of opportunity.

We will start the inn with the core staff team, whose wages we are confident we can fund, and then grow that offer. The concept of a Social Hub is a perfect example. It is an area where there isn't really an existing model we can copy and be confident of income generation, so volunteers will be at the heart of the Social

Hub from day one. We imagine the Plough Inn's Social Hub will involve and bring together specific community groups, older members of the community and third sector organisations and will attempt to create a bridge between the needs of these stakeholders and the opportunities, events and services the Plough Inn will provide. As the offer of the Social Hub becomes defined, through community engagement, and The Plough Inn's level of income generation enables further progress, we will seek to employ staff to develop and deliver the offer, with the support of volunteers. We will ensure we have a robust Volunteer Policy to clarify rights and responsibilities, provide a framework of support and outline pathways for development and training, where desired and possible. The CBS and W&BCI are committed to ensuring the role of volunteers at The Plough Inn will carry its own status and will seek only to support paid, trained roles, rather than to replace them.

## **5.6. Options for the future**

As the building will be purchased as a freehold, the community will have the option to develop a range of services to meet their needs. Given the proposed business is viable within its current form, additional services could be added later at low risk. Suggestions for additional services include:

- Further development of group meeting rooms, exhibition spaces and resident groups
- Establishment of a First responder point
- Development of a micro-brewery
- Luncheon club for the town's senior citizens
- A small post office and/or parcel drop off point
- Coordination with existing meals on wheels providers to expand service capability
- Provision of a community laundry space

These opportunities are only some of the possibilities, limited only by the space available and demand for the service, and these will continue to be explored by the Management Committee.

## **5.7. Comparable local existing businesses**

**The Galloway Bar** – This vibrant pub is on the same road as the Plough Inn building and is a warm, dog friendly pub that shows a wide range of sports on TV all day. It is also the home of many local pub sports teams such as darts, dominoes and outdoor bowling. The owner cares deeply about his responsibility in the community and often sponsors local events and the local bowling club.

**The Bladnoch Inn** – This lovely inn is a similar size and has a similar offering to the Plough Inn although it is privately owned and has recently been put on the market. It is a mile away from Wigtown and has a dedicated group of Bladnoch locals that use the space for socialising. The pub quiz that used to occur in the Plough Inn has recently restarted in this pub and has proved to be a big hit. Food service is currently seasonally limited and served on specific days

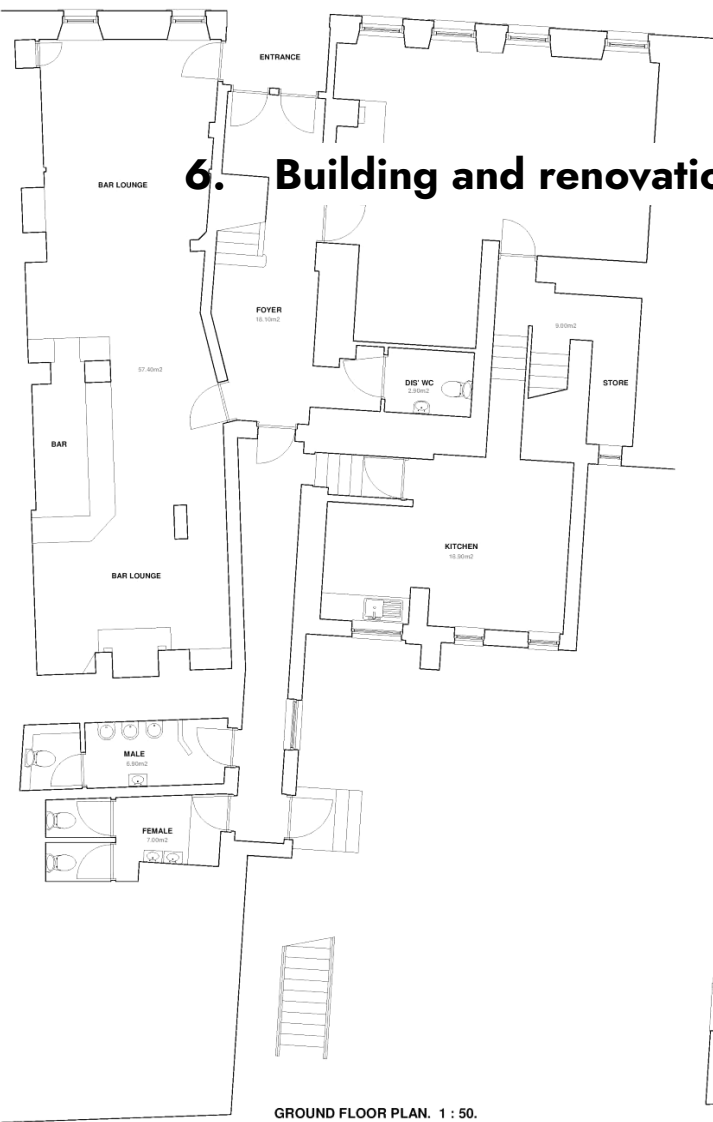


**Craigmount B&B** – Is an attractive and beautifully presented former Manse which has four rooms in the B&B. The owners are very active in the local community and are keen to see the growth of footfall whilst ensuring other businesses aren't detrimentally affected. They attempted to rekindle a business association before the pandemic, and play a large part in the recently formed association.

## **5.8. Supply chain**

Supporting local businesses is a strong ethos of the CBS and W&BCI, and it allows the fabric of the building to be a showcase of the very best of what Wigtown has to offer. Finding local suppliers of food, beverage, and decor will not only help with ecological sustainability by reducing the number of miles that products travel, but will reward the hard work and dedication of local producers and makers who are so vital to the area.

## 6. Building and renovation



SECOND FLOOR PL

I A I N B M A	
KALBARRIE ARDWELL STR	
TEL/FAX 01776 860642	
PROJECT	
CRAFT HOTEL, BA	
30 MAIN STREET	
WIGTOWN	
NEWTON STEWAR	
DRAWING	
FLOOR PLANS	
SCALE	AS NOTED
DATE	

The Plough Inn underwent significant renovation and refurbishment in 2021/22. It is therefore in excellent condition. As a result of successful funding applications to the Plunkett Foundation and the Scottish Land Fund Stage 1 we have been able to commission the following professional surveys:

- A Conditions Survey by Asher Associates - 27th February 2024 (see Appendix)
- Asbestos Survey by Clyde Environmental Consultants Ltd - 22nd February 2024 (see Appendix)
- Valuation Survey by Shepard Commercial - 5th January 2024 (see Appendix)

We believe all of these surveys evidence the 'walk-in' state of the property. We would carry out the minor works and required fittings and furnishings prior to opening. With the necessary fittings and furnishings the inn can be fully operational within a few weeks of completing the purchase.

### 6.1. The bar and restaurant

This is currently fully and acceptably furnished. It requires stocking with glasses, crockery, and new pipes for the keg beers. It requires a coffee/tea/hot chocolate machine.

The restaurant is currently furnished with an eclectic mix of older tables and chairs. We will consult local residents and Members if they wish to keep it that way or if we should purchase new furniture.

## **6.2. The kitchen**

The kitchen requires the purchase of a new cooker, and we will consult with local chefs and hospitality owners before making a purchase. It is already reasonably well fitted out, but requires new cooking equipment and a full stock of crockery and cutlery. Depending on the chef's requirements for deep fat frying it may require the existing extractor fan to be upgraded.

## **6.3. The accommodation**

These four rooms are all in excellent condition and just require general furnishing. Each will have a wardrobe(s), a chest of drawers and chair(s). There is already some linen available, we will need to purchase additional stock as necessary.

## **6.4. The self-contained flat**

The manager's three-bedroom flat is in excellent condition and once again just requires the necessary furnishings and fittings. Our ideal scenario is that the employed manager also lives in the building so that there is always a nearby point of contact should any issues arise with guests staying in the accommodation.

## **6.5. The pub garden**

There is a very pleasant, relatively small pub garden at the rear of the property. It already has some outdoor bench tables. These will be renovated where possible, or replaced if necessary. The pub garden requires some minor TLC but could be brought into use very speedily and again we would look to employ people from the community to do so. We will explore the viability of creating a covered area so it can be used in both inclement weather or when the sun is too hot.

## **6.6. The outbuilding**

There is a substantial stone built outbuilding and contains the new hot water system for the Inn. This is an extremely efficient system and ensures all demands for hot water can be met. It has also been installed in a manner that means sustainable energy sources can be used to power it. The outbuilding is also where the beer kegs are housed. With some redesign it would be capable of housing the community laundry referred to later in this Business Plan. The boiler, currently an efficient oil-fired boiler, is housed in a small adjacent brick outbuilding. We will be exploring the best means possible to replace the boiler with something more environmentally friendly.

## **7. Marketing**

### **7.1. Local**

It is important for local residents and businesses to know what is happening with the Plough Inn at all times. That communication allows for event collaboration, and service provision to be cohesive. It would also be carried out within the newly formed business association to ensure transparency and fairness.

An example of this might include a local business taking a holiday and an agreement that might mean apprentices of the Plough Inn are utilised within that local business to ensure they can continue to operate.

We already keep the local population well informed through the use of Social Media in particular. The Town has two well used Facebook Groups: 'I Love Wigtown' and 'Wigtown & District – Information Sharing'. We also use the local bi-monthly newspaper the *Machars Observer*. We attend local groups, including the Community Council, 'Community Conversations' and the Business Association to keep people abreast of developments and able to continue to input into our development. Given the relatively small population of the area we believe few will not know about our plans, and fewer still will not be aware of our planned purchase and opening. The further development of the CBS through Members, and regular Members' meetings, will further enhance local awareness.

### **7.2. Regional**

We define this as those who are sufficiently close to make a visit to the town and the Inn a day trip. For the vast majority these trips will be through personal transport, as, sadly, public transport would not make that possible. However, we will be looking to build partnerships with local coach firms to endeavour to encourage them to make this a destination of choice and to offer services to those who already do. We will look to work with other businesses in the area to make sure those visitors are not disappointed and would become return visitors. We will research local social media links, and other means to promote the town and area within the region, including local radio and newspaper providers. Glasgow will be a particular target. Although it is a two, to two-and-a-half-hour car journey, we believe the natural beauty and the fascinating history of this area can make it a very strong attraction to those from urban Glasgow.

### **7.3. Wider reach**

Increasing footfall into Wigtown is at the forefront of this project. It is an area of concern mentioned in local research and we are keen to explore all avenues of this. As mentioned in Section 2.4, Wonderful Wigtown, this area has an abundance of reasons for people to come and visit. The problem is that people don't know we're here. Working with local businesses and organisations, we can help to create packages of experiences that can be marketed far and wide. This can be done through the help of volunteers of the

building, the members of the Community Benefit Society, and if not otherwise utilised, the staff at the inn.

**Examples of these packages might include:**

- Bespoke packages for those with photographer and astronomer interest in the Dark Sky Park, in partnership with Dark Sky organisations across the region.
- Dedicated natural history breaks for enthusiasts of natural wildlife, bird migrating populations and saltmarsh and wetland AONB landscapes, designed in partnership with regional wildlife and biosphere stakeholders.
- Guided landmark and property visits for historians, archaeologists and geologists, with the support of local history experts and key Wigtownshire historical tourism providers.
- Partnerships with Scotland Starts Here/The South Of Scotland Destination Alliance on their South West Coastal 300 route, which goes through Wigtown. Cycling tours and events could be organised and sponsored through The Plough Inn. A similar one-off event happened last year in Gatehouse of Fleet with The Gralloch, a gravel bike race.

These are just a few examples, but hopefully gives a taste of what can be turned into reality in the economic development of Wigtownshire. These visitors would all need food and accommodation, and one small pub couldn't offer that. It would need the help of other, larger providers in town, like The Plough Inn

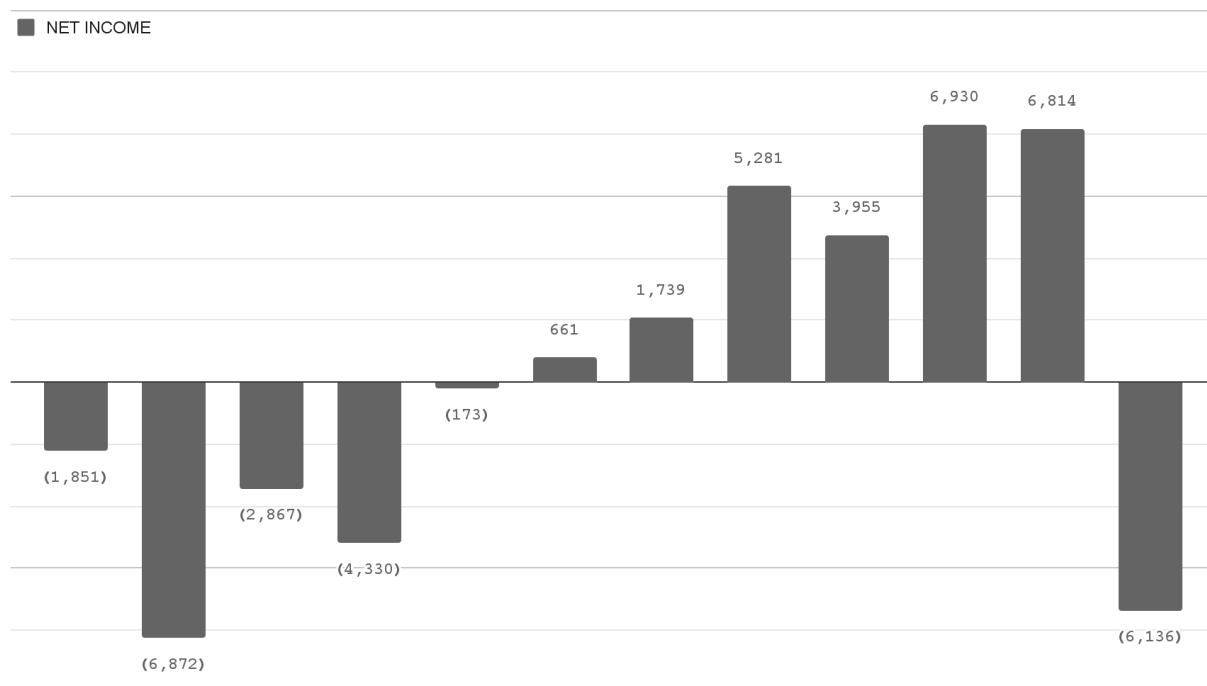
As previously mentioned, we believe we have a great opportunity through regional and national media to get people to understand the challenges rural communities face, and how a local community, working together, can help address those challenges. We will therefore produce Press Releases for all the major newspaper and television and radio outlets. Of course we cannot guarantee success in this, but if we are successful then this will also be an opportunity to encourage visitors from across the UK to come and explore this amazing area, and as a consequence some will, we believe, visit our Inn and its offering.

## 8. Financial forecasts

Forecasts are notoriously difficult to write, and after discussions with local businesses it's apparent there is often no rhyme or reason to daily fluctuations. Some days can be very profitable, with other days leaving you feeling like there was no point in opening up. When it comes to local business owners taking a well-earned break it is often more financially responsible to close for a brief period than operate at a greater loss by taking on extra staff or heating the building. This is apparent when looking at the forecast chart for income across the year. It shows why it makes financial sense to close or operate on reduced hours in the low season for the majority of businesses.

Our aim with The Plough Inn is to be a constant, a building that will be open all year round and be in constant touch with local businesses in order to increase or decrease service provision. We can achieve this through responsible fiscal planning and ensuring that profits from the high season are saved for the low season.

The forecasts have been prepared with the grateful assistance of Irene Tilley, consultant for the MacDonald Hotel chain and other hospitality businesses. The wet and dry sales have also been influenced by the takings of a similar sized establishment in the region and data from the British Beer & Pub Association. Local businesses such as Cobwebs restaurant and Craigmount B&B have been very generous in providing some aspects of their historical data so that the forecast can be based around the reality of running a business in Wigtown. Discussions with other community led pubs such as The Thorold Arms in Lincolnshire have been very helpful as they have shared not only their history, but breakdown of yearly income and expenditure.



## 8.1. Month by month forecast

The Plough Inn													
Sensitivity %	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Year 1 total
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
<b>Revenue</b>													
Rooms	3,486	2,822	5,456	3,872	6,864	7,760	9,894	9,894	9,506	11,550	11,550	2,822	85,476
Food	7,473	2,839	5,139	3,013	5,707	5,887	6,125	10,765	9,825	10,614	10,614	2,767	80,768
Beverage	7,750	3,100	5,600	6,200	9,000	9,300	9,000	12,400	10,850	13,800	13,640	4,500	105,140
Other	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	10,200
<b>TOTAL SALES</b>	<b>19,559</b>	<b>9,611</b>	<b>17,045</b>	<b>13,935</b>	<b>22,421</b>	<b>23,797</b>	<b>25,869</b>	<b>33,909</b>	<b>31,031</b>	<b>36,814</b>	<b>36,654</b>	<b>10,939</b>	<b>281,584</b>
<b>Cost of Goods</b>													
Food	2,989	1,136	2,056	1,205	2,283	2,355	2,450	4,306	3,930	4,246	4,246	1,107	32,307
Beverage	2,480	992	1,792	1,984	2,880	2,976	2,880	3,968	3,472	4,416	4,365	1,440	33,645
Staff	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	142,901
Room Commission	630	510	930	660	1,170	1,200	1,530	1,530	1,470	1,650	1,650	510	13,440
<b>TOTAL COGS</b>	<b>18,008</b>	<b>14,546</b>	<b>16,686</b>	<b>15,758</b>	<b>18,241</b>	<b>18,439</b>	<b>18,768</b>	<b>21,712</b>	<b>20,780</b>	<b>22,220</b>	<b>22,169</b>	<b>14,965</b>	<b>222,293</b>
<b>Sales General &amp; Admin</b>													
Business Insurance	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	12,000
Utilities	834	818	874	838	906	910	954	954	946	970	970	818	10,792
Fees & Memberships	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	1,380
Comms & Systems	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	1,620
Laundry	336	272	496	352	624	640	816	816	784	880	880	272	7,168
Cleaning supplies	28	23	41	29	52	53	68	68	65	73	73	23	597
Consumables	42	34	62	44	78	80	102	102	98	110	110	34	896
Marketing	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	1,800
Training	200	200	200	50	50	50	0	0	0	0	50	200	1,000
Repairs	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Replacements	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Waste	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	300
Testing	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	600
Miscellaneous	34	27	50	35	62	64	82	82	78	88	88	27	717
<b>TOTAL SG&amp;A</b>	<b>3,149</b>	<b>3,049</b>	<b>3,398</b>	<b>3,024</b>	<b>3,447</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>3,697</b>	<b>3,697</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>3,796</b>	<b>3,846</b>	<b>3,049</b>	<b>41,270</b>
Lease: Profit with min	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	765	594	972	957	500	7,289
Lease: Profit no min	0	0	0	0	66	170	306	765	594	972	957	0	3,831
Lease: Turnover	1,760	865	1,534	1,254	2,018	2,142	2,328	3,052	2,793	3,313	3,299	984	25,343
Lease: Turnover - Staff	689	0	462	182	946	1,070	1,256	1,980	1,721	2,242	2,227	0	12,776
<b>Lease: Turnover - Staff w/min</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>2,227</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>14,131</b>
<b>EXPENSES INC. LEASE</b>	<b>3,837</b>	<b>3,549</b>	<b>3,898</b>	<b>3,524</b>	<b>4,394</b>	<b>4,542</b>	<b>4,953</b>	<b>5,677</b>	<b>5,368</b>	<b>6,038</b>	<b>6,073</b>	<b>3,549</b>	<b>55,401</b>
<b>NET INCOME BEFORE TAX</b>	<b>(2,286)</b>	<b>(8,484)</b>	<b>(3,539)</b>	<b>(5,346)</b>	<b>(214)</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>6,520</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>8,412</b>	<b>(7,575)</b>	<b>3,890</b>
Corporation Tax	(434)	(1,612)	(672)	(1,016)	(41)	155	408	1,239	928	1,626	1,598	(1,439)	739
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>(1,851)</b>	<b>(6,872)</b>	<b>(2,867)</b>	<b>(4,330)</b>	<b>(173)</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>1,739</b>	<b>5,281</b>	<b>3,955</b>	<b>6,930</b>	<b>6,814</b>	<b>(6,136)</b>	<b>3,151</b>

### Assumptions

Days in month	31	31	28	31	30	31	30	31	31	30	31	30	
Number of rooms	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	
Rooms Available	124	124	112	124	120	124	120	124	124	124	120	124	
Rooms Sold	42	34	62	44	78	80	102	102	98	110	110	34	
Estimated Occupancy Rate	34%	27%	55%	35%	65%	65%	85%	82%	79%	92%	89%	28%	
Average Room Rate (Net of VAT)	83	83	88	88	88	97	97	97	97	105	105	83	
Room Rate (inc. VAT)	100	100	105	105	105	115	115	115	115	125	125	100	
Room commission	15	Mixture of booking.com and booking through own website											
Average meal spend (Net of VAT)	14.5												
Sleepers dining	60%												
Monthly walk-in diners	465	155	280	155	300	310	300	620	560	600	600	150	
Corporation tax	19%												
Beverage per day (Net of VAT)	250	100	200	200	300	300	300	400	350	460	440	150	
Food margin	40%												
Beverage margin	32%												
Lease rate	9%												
Minimum lease	500												
Yearly staff salary + NI	147701												
Laundry rate per room	8												
Base monthly utilities	750												
Annual Manager Flat from salary	4800												
Management fee for Bunkhouse	850												

## 8.2. Sensitivity analysis

Below provides a forecast with the first 3 months of opening being affected by 30% of the forecast.

<b>The Plough Inn</b>													
Sensitivity %	30	30	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Dec-24	Jan-25	Feb-25	Mar-25	Apr-25	May-25	Jun-25	Jul-25	Aug-25	Sep-25	Oct-25	Nov-25	Year 1 total
	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s	£'s
<b>Revenue</b>													
Rooms	2,440	1,975	3,819	3,872	6,864	7,760	9,894	9,894	9,506	11,550	11,550	2,822	81,947
Food	5,231	1,987	3,597	3,013	5,707	5,887	6,125	10,765	9,825	10,614	10,614	2,767	76,133
Beverage	5,425	2,170	3,920	6,200	9,000	9,300	9,000	12,400	10,850	13,800	13,640	4,500	100,205
Other	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	850	10,200
<b>TOTAL SALES</b>	<b>13,947</b>	<b>6,983</b>	<b>12,186</b>	<b>13,935</b>	<b>22,421</b>	<b>23,797</b>	<b>25,869</b>	<b>33,909</b>	<b>31,031</b>	<b>36,814</b>	<b>36,654</b>	<b>10,939</b>	<b>268,484</b>
<b>Cost of Goods</b>													
Food	1,465	556	1,007	1,205	2,283	2,355	2,450	4,306	3,930	4,246	4,246	1,107	29,155
Beverage	1,215	486	878	1,984	2,880	2,976	2,880	3,968	3,472	4,416	4,365	1,440	30,960
Staff	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	11,908	142,901
Room Commission	441	357	651	660	1,170	1,200	1,530	1,530	1,470	1,650	1,650	510	12,819
<b>TOTAL COGS</b>	<b>15,029</b>	<b>13,308</b>	<b>14,445</b>	<b>15,758</b>	<b>18,241</b>	<b>18,439</b>	<b>18,768</b>	<b>21,712</b>	<b>20,780</b>	<b>22,220</b>	<b>22,169</b>	<b>14,965</b>	<b>215,835</b>
<b>Sales General &amp; Admin</b>													
Business Insurance	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	12,000
Utilities	809	798	837	838	906	910	954	954	946	970	970	818	10,709
Fees & Memberships	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	115	1,380
Comms & Systems	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	135	1,620
Laundry	235	190	347	352	624	640	816	816	784	880	880	272	6,837
Cleaning supplies	20	16	29	29	52	53	68	68	65	73	73	23	570
Consumables	29	24	43	44	78	80	102	102	98	110	110	34	855
Marketing	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	1,800
Training	200	200	200	50	50	50	0	0	0	0	50	200	1,000
Repairs	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Replacements	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	1,200
Waste	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	25	300
Testing	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	600
Miscellaneous	24	19	35	35	62	64	82	82	78	88	88	27	684
<b>TOTAL SG&amp;A</b>	<b>2,992</b>	<b>2,922</b>	<b>3,166</b>	<b>3,024</b>	<b>3,447</b>	<b>3,472</b>	<b>3,697</b>	<b>3,697</b>	<b>3,647</b>	<b>3,796</b>	<b>3,846</b>	<b>3,049</b>	<b>40,754</b>
Lease: Profit with min	500	500	500	500	500	500	500	765	594	972	957	500	7,289
Lease: Profit no min	0	0	0	0	66	170	306	765	594	972	957	0	3,831
Lease: Turnover	1,255	628	1,097	1,254	2,018	2,142	2,328	3,052	2,793	3,313	3,299	984	24,164
Lease: Turnover - Staff	183	0	25	182	946	1,070	1,256	1,980	1,721	2,242	2,227	0	11,833
<b>Lease: Turnover - Staff w/min</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>1,070</b>	<b>1,256</b>	<b>1,980</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>2,227</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>13,942</b>
<b>EXPENSES INC. LEASE</b>	<b>3,492</b>	<b>3,422</b>	<b>3,666</b>	<b>3,524</b>	<b>4,394</b>	<b>4,542</b>	<b>4,953</b>	<b>5,677</b>	<b>5,368</b>	<b>6,038</b>	<b>6,073</b>	<b>3,549</b>	<b>54,696</b>
<b>NET INCOME BEFORE TAX</b>	<b>(4,574)</b>	<b>(9,747)</b>	<b>(5,924)</b>	<b>(5,346)</b>	<b>(214)</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>2,147</b>	<b>6,520</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>8,556</b>	<b>8,412</b>	<b>(7,575)</b>	<b>(2,047)</b>
Corporation Tax	(869)	(1,852)	(1,126)	(1,016)	(41)	155	408	1,239	928	1,626	1,598	(1,439)	(389)
<b>NET INCOME</b>	<b>(3,705)</b>	<b>(7,895)</b>	<b>(4,799)</b>	<b>(4,330)</b>	<b>(173)</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>1,739</b>	<b>5,281</b>	<b>3,955</b>	<b>6,930</b>	<b>6,814</b>	<b>(6,136)</b>	<b>(1,658)</b>



## 9. Appendix

### 9.1. Business research

1. 27th August 2021 - Previous owners start up experience:  
<https://foodanddrink.scotsman.com/food/the-chef-behind-the-plough-tells-us-about-her-new-restaurant/>
2. June 2023 - For sale brochure by DM HALL:  
<https://www.dmhall.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/ESA3089-The-Plough-Inn-Wigtown-v2.pdf>
3. 7th March 2023 - Ward 2 - Mid Galloway and Wigtown West:  
<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/19880/Ward-2-Profile-Mid-Galloway-and-Wigtown-West/pdf/0037-22-Ward-2-Mid-Galloway-profile.pdf?m=1653494177823>
4. August 2020 - Health and Social Care Strategic Needs Assessment:  
<https://dghscp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/SNA-Summary-v3.pdf>
5. 2023 - ONS annual survey of hours and earnings:  
<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157410/report.aspx?town=dumfries#tabearn>
6. 3rd December 2020 - Report on the current position of Poverty and Deprivation in Dumfries and Galloway:  
<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/23800/Report-Poverty-and-Deprivation-in-Dumfries-and-Galloway-2020/pdf/Poverty-and-Deprivation-Position-Report.pdf>

#### Documents included after this appendix are:

- FCA application form for “Wigtown Community Inn Community Benefit Society Ltd”
- Model Rules for “Wigtown Community Inn Community Benefit Society Ltd”
- A Conditions Survey by Asher Associates – 27th February 2024
- Asbestos Survey by Clyde Environmental Consultants Ltd - 22nd February 2024
- Valuation Survey by Shepard Commercial – 5th January 2024