



Debenham Angel Community Ltd

**The Angel Public House:
FAQS (Frequently Asked Questions)**

June 2025

We hope that over the next few pages we answer all your questions about the current situation, and the future if we launch a campaign to buy the property. If there are any other questions you have then do get in touch and we” do our best to answer quickly.

Questions about the current circumstances

If the property is put on the market, what will you do if there are other offers from other parties?

If the property gets offers quickly, then we may not have time to launch our campaign, publicise the business plan, consult with our supporters and then launch a fundraising campaign. We estimate that would take around two months at best and potential purchasers will be able to react much more quickly than we can. We may defer the campaign until we know whether or not any of the offers are being accepted and being progressed. [Note as of June 18th 2025 an offer from another party has been accepted].

If offers are made quickly and before you have time to launch your campaign, what do you do next?

It depends on who's buying the property. We want the property to remain as a pub or a commercial business. If the offers are being made on that basis and the property's going to be brought back into active use and add to the life of the village then part of the main purpose of the Save The Angel campaign has been served. However, until we're certain that will happen we remain on standby to launch a campaign to buy The Angel.

Are you willing to work with other buyers for the property?

Yes, we would be happy to have a confidential discussion with any buyers who think we may play a part. We may be able to work with them on community or business ideas, look at a joint enterprise or just to have our support for what they propose.

Have you made an offer for the property?

We haven't made an offer yet, as we understand there have been other offers. We have registered our interest with the owner's property agents so that if there is an opportunity to put an offer in we are ready to instigate our action plan.

What fundraising are you doing in the meantime?

We are working with local councillors and Plunkett to identify sources of funding now that the government has closed the Community Ownership Fund. We are in the process of preparing an expression of interest to register for the Heritage Revival Fund. This could provide revenue or capital funding in case we make an offer for the property in the future, where these sorts of grants would be a valuable source of funds.

Questions about community pubs and

our plans to try and buy The Angel

What is a community owned pub?

Community pubs is just as it sounds, a pub business or property controlled and owned by members of the community. It will be owned by Members (sometimes known as shareholders) and run democratically on the basis of one-member-one-vote. Membership is voluntary, affordable, and open to all in a community, and is the mechanism for ensuring the community has a genuine say in ensuring the future of the pub or property.

What are the benefits of community ownership?

Ownership through community shares provides the opportunity for people and businesses to buy into the community, and where the motivation and payback is more social than financial. It helps to create a truly local enterprise, accountable to the community while both serving and benefitting it.

Why form a community pub, why not allow it to be privately owned and run?

We want to protect our village's assets and facilities. We'd love a private operator to run a successful pub and perhaps that will happen. But we can make sure this does happen (and forever) if we own the pub as a community, make sure the use is protected and attract the best talent to run the pub that we can. Over the last two decades more than 13,000 pubs have closed in the UK, with many of the buildings often ending up as housing. As of April 2025 there are 217 community pubs in the UK (with 11 in Suffolk). 102 are owned by a Community Benefit Society and all of these are currently running successfully with no failures.

Why should I buy community shares?

We need your investment to help purchase the property. Without sufficient investment from the community we'll be unable to buy the property from the owners, refurbish it and offer it on the market to a tenant. With as many people as possible investing we'll be able to not only do this but ensure that the pub continues as a community asset as part of the heart of the village.

Are you just raising funds locally via a share offer? What about loans, grants, donations and legacies?

Subject to the success of the share offer, loans, donations and legacies from local community members may also be an important source of potential funding: individuals or organisations may wish to make a loan, donation or legacy to the Society. Such engagement would be welcome so please contact us if you wish to discuss the legacy option. We will also be applying for grants suitable for a community project such as this.

Who will benefit from this project?

The residents of Debenham will benefit from having an important social amenity secured for future generations, both through the direct provision of services but also because the pub will help to create a stronger, more vibrant and cohesive community in which to live. The pub will also provide employment opportunities for local people. It will also benefit other nearby hamlets and villages that have no local facilities, helping to bring the wider community together. With the other facilities in Debenham, including two other pubs, it will create variety and choice. It will also lead to more interest and investment in our community from further afield, including cyclists, ramblers and visitors and holidaymakers in Mid-Suffolk. Businesses in Debenham will always benefit from additional, complementary businesses opening in the village as new customers may be attracted to use the village facilities.

Do the owners have to sell the Angel to us?

They are free to sell to whoever offers them the price they want; they don't have to sell to the community group. The property has been on and off the market a number of times, but we have been told that we must make an offer at the right price and prove we have the funds available to purchase.

Will DACL pay a fair price for the Pub?

We will enter negotiations with the owners and try and negotiate a fair price for both buyer and seller in line with any valuation that we undertake in order to give assurance about the value of the property. However, of course we will gauge other interest in the property when it's on the market so that neither we nor other interested parties end up driving the price up with competitive bidding.

Who are the people behind this project? Do they have a personal interest?

The Save the Angel group was formed in 2013, when the pub was first closed by the owners and has had many local residents giving up their time to campaign. The group has now formed a Community Benefit Society, and this is run by a formal management committee, again made up of local residents. They care keenly about the future of the Angel and about Debenham. They will also be investing in this share issue and many already have, in advance. They will have no personal financial interest in the project, above and beyond their own investment in Shares. They have contributed a large amount of time so far at no cost to DACL. It is important that we have a regular number of local residents willing to step forward and volunteer their time to run DACL and provide their time, enthusiasm and expertise.

What happens if the purchase of the Angel falls through?

We intend to bid a fair and reasonable price, if the opportunity presents itself, and it may require time to negotiate the purchase and carry out the legal work. Given the long history of campaigning to Save the Angel, we are aware that this may take many months. If, after

three years, we have not purchased the property we will return all money invested and will not proceed any further, subject to verification of this at an AGM or EGM. There may be a small deduction for costs that may be incurred but the management committee will work to keep these costs to a minimum.

Will I get my investment back if the Angel fails?

If the business fails after the purchase is secured, the shareholder investments are secured on the value of the premises which are anticipated to have significant added value with refurbishment and renovation. If we needed to sell the property, investors would get a proportion of the sale price up to the value of their investment. If the sale price was higher than the shareholders total investments, any surplus is required to be invested in the community and not to investors.

How will DACL operate?

DACL is bound by its Model Rules for Community Ownership and the requirements of the Financial Conduct Authority. A copy is available on the DACL website and is one of the accompanying documents to the share prospectus.

Will my shares give me voting rights?

Yes, and the Management Committee encourages everyone to vote when needed in order to make decisions when needed. A Community Benefit Society is an open and democratic organisation. One Member receives one vote on issues to be determined by shareholders, irrespective of how many Shares that Member has purchased.

What are the consequences of purchasing shares and becoming a member of the Society?

While shareholders do become Society members there are no requirements for individual members to play a role in the activities of the organisation. You have the right to attend the Society AGM and vote on matters but that is entirely up to individual Society members. Society members can, if they wish, stand for the Management Committee and help take the Society, and the pub forward. Equally, it is open to anyone who invests to simply invest and let others organise the Society.

Who will run the pub and make the day-to-day decisions about the business?

The Management Committee will oversee the business of DACL. An experienced and enthusiastic tenant will be appointed to oversee the running of the Pub, through a marketing programme to attract operators to lease the property. The lease will set out the obligations and responsibilities of the tenant and DACL. There will also be arrangements in place with the tenant to monitor performance against agreed community focused objectives and targets. There will be an open and regular dialogue between the tenant and a member or members of the Management Committee, and the views of members and customers will be actively canvassed by the Committee. It is important DACL do not interfere with the running of the business by the tenant, after all that is what they will be

expert in. But we do need to ensure a genuine partnership in order to ensure that community provision of services or facilities is a key part of the business.

What are other possible uses for the pub, and will a different use alter the business plan?

There are other possible uses for the property and having carried out our survey, a healthy number of alternatives have been suggested. However, it is most likely that the best rent will be obtained by a tenant running a successful pub business at the property. If it is not possible to attract the right tenant then other uses may be considered, subject to any planning consent that may be needed. However, in line with the aims of DACL any other use will have to deliver benefits for the community, which includes maintaining the site for a business and employment use, to protect the services and amenities provided in the village.

Will my investment be eligible for tax relief?

No. This share issue does not qualify for any current tax relief. If this changes, investors will be informed but we are not aware of any change in the foreseeable future.

Can I make a profit on my capital investment?

DACL is a Community Benefit Society meaning that shareholders cannot make a capital gain from their investment. If the assets of the Society are sold for a profit in the future, any surplus after costs and expenses must be applied to other community causes in the local area. Shareholders can be repaid their initial investment and may receive interest annually on their investment, but this is not an investment for capital gain.

What is the difference between 'interest' and 'dividend'?

When a return is paid to members, it is calculated and paid like an interest payment. The Society aims to pay a modest rate of interest up to a maximum of 5% or 2% above the base rate, whichever is the higher. We expect that these amounts will be treated as interest for tax purposes - members should seek their own tax advice based on personal circumstances to establish whether this interest payment will affect their tax position.

Can I donate my interest to the Society?

If a member chose to waive any interest, DACL would retain the money and add it to their reserves in support of future activities. This would be an annual decision and members would not be able to reclaim any interest retrospectively.

What happens if DACL fails?

It is important to know that this will be an investment underpinned by freehold property. If the business fails, all assets, including the freehold of the land and building, would be sold and the net proceeds of the sale (after debts) divided between the shareholders up to the value of each of their shares. If we are successful in obtaining funding it is likely that the funding agency would require a guarantee of some sort for a

period of time after any grant was awarded, meaning that some or all of the grant may have to be repaid from any property sale proceeds (one of the possible debts mentioned referred to above). Any surplus above the value of shareholders' funds would have to be paid to a charitable or community body in line with the Rules of the Society. This share offer is first and foremost an investment in your community. The investment is unregulated and not covered by the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. There is no right of access to the Financial Services Compensation Scheme nor to the Financial Ombudsman.

Can I get my money back?

Shareholders will be unable to withdraw Shares for the first three years after purchase. Thereafter the Management Committee will manage any requests for withdrawals and at least three months' notice of a withdrawal will be needed. Shares cannot be sold nor transferred to anyone else. Withdrawals will be funded from surpluses generated by the business or from new Share capital raised from existing or new members. The Management Committee in its consideration for withdrawals will take into account the long-term interests of the Society, its need to maintain adequate reserves, and DACL's commitment to community benefit. It cannot therefore be guaranteed that funds will be available to approve withdrawals at any one time, but a waiting list on a first come first served basis will operate until such time as funds are available.

Can I invest on behalf of my children or grandchildren?

Yes, so long as you are a member in your own right and provided that the total amount invested (between you and all others) does not exceed the maximum investment amount. You will only have one vote, as is the case for all members. The share can be transferred to nominated children or grandchildren when they reach 18 years of age, at which point they will receive their voting rights.

What happens to my shares if I die?

Your shares will form part of your estate and can be transferred under the terms of your will. When buying your shares, you can name a beneficiary who you would like them transferred to upon your death or if you would like them to be surrendered to the Society as a donation.

What happens if the share offer is over-subscribed?

If the share offer target is reached, we will close the share offer and applications will close.

What happens if the share offer is under-subscribed?

If the minimum target is not reached, we will review whether to proceed. We reserve the right to continue to raise funds through further share offers or other means if the financial model remains viable. This may be a decision of the Management Committee or may involve an extraordinary general meeting of those investors who have invested.

Can I buy shares on behalf of a company I own?

Yes. You can own the shares in a company or other form of organisation. However many people are involved in the company, the company will only have one vote as per other shareholders.

Who will have access to my share investment information?

Your shareholder information will be confidential. Only those committee members who require access for the purposes of their committee role will have visibility of the names of investors and the amount invested. For example, those involved with finance, FCA regulation, governance.

When will I receive confirmation of my share purchase?

You will receive automatic confirmation of your application when you submit an online application. Otherwise we will endeavour to email you within 5 days of your application being received through other methods.

Does the constitution of the Community Benefit Society make provision for the remuneration of, or reimbursement of expenses incurred by the Management Committee?

Expenses (such as for items that have had to be paid on behalf of the Society) can be reimbursed to Management Committee members. For example, if stamps have to be purchased to post documents. However, management Committee members nor any other Members of the Society can receive other remuneration (for time spent, travel etc).

Will future meetings of the management committee be scheduled, open to members to attend and minutes published?

Shareholder meetings will have minutes and agendas published and be open to all Members. Management Committee meetings, however, are not open meetings and minutes will not normally be published. Members are not expected to attend management meetings unless there is a specific item on the agenda that requires attendance to advise the committee or provide other information.

Should a major structural issue become apparent once the purchase is complete, are the shareholders liable for the cost of repairs?

No. DACL is a limited liability entity so the total liability for shareholders is the value of their shares. If there was something major at a later date, we will have the choice to raise more money to solve any problem, or decide to sell the property and recover some, or all, of the capital.

Will the Angel work in competition or collaboration with the Red Lion and Woolpack?

There will, of course always be an element of competition between different businesses. However, we firmly believe that three different pub offerings in the village centre will improve the attraction of Debenham, particularly bearing in mind the economy and

spending power of the surrounding area. We have discussed this with the owners of the Debenham Lion, as two pubs being re-opened in the village needs a degree of co-operation to check that we do not directly compete. All three pubs will be relatively small scale (compared to some of the larger pubs that have closed historically in Debenham) and therefore we believe the local economy can easily support the level of business needed. In time, we expect Debenham to draw in business from further afield given the appeal of an attractive village with three different pub offerings.

What is the expected timeframe between buying the shares and the pub re-opening?

Fund raising is the first step, otherwise we will not be able to negotiate the purchase of the property with the owners. Once we are that stage, we will be able to complete the surveys, and draw up a full works specification for repairs and improvements. After completing the purchase, we will be able to carry out the works (subject to any planning permission that may be needed to renovate a listed building), then market the property to find a tenant. Being realistic, this is likely to take at least 18 months but may take longer if negotiations or conveyancing are protracted.

Will volunteers be needed for either the refurbishment or in operating the pub?

We will certainly be looking for volunteers who have skill in the building trade or anyone who can assist with any building or decoration works, this will enable us to stretch our financial resources as far as possible. The pub itself will be run as a business and therefore it is expected that the pub operator/tenant will employ staff to work in the pub. However, there may be certain events that the community puts on where volunteers to help run the event may be needed.

How many people are likely to be employed in the pub?

This will depend very much on the pub operator, but we would expect the pub to be able to provide between 4 and 10 full time or part time roles.

Will the tenant or manager be encouraged to use local suppliers?

Wherever possible we will encourage the pub operator to use local suppliers, if they provide the right product for the pub. This is of course subject to commercial considerations and the ability for the pub to be run profitably. Around Debenham, in the Mid Suffolk area, we are very fortunate to have some amazing food and drink produce almost on our doorstep. We would love the pub to be able to champion these local suppliers, which at the same time will keep our food and drink miles low, to contribute to positive environmental aims.

What happens if DACL is not viable in the future?

If the Community Benefit Society is not able to continue trading, then the directors may have to offer the property for sale. Market conditions at the time will determine what price is achieved. The sale price, after costs, will be distributed to shareholders and they will recover either part of their initial investment or recover it in full if the price achieved

supports that. Any amount over the total shareholding investment will be distributed to support appropriate community projects. The directors or management committee will not be liable financially for any shortfall in initial investment if shareholders don't recoup their full investment in the event of a business failure.

What if the costs of improving the building are higher than the allocated budget or more work is needed?

We have estimated a cost of repair, redecoration and fitting of the pub with some provisional budget figures. As we progress more and when we are able to obtain full surveys, detailed estimates will be obtained to be more accurate with the costs. We have had many offers of assistance so that we fully expect there to be lots of work at cost and through volunteers. Should costs be materially different than the figures used to build up the business plan then the project will be re-assessed, any significant changes reviewed, and further funds raised if necessary.

How do the directors and management committee ensure that the tenant is running the business successfully?

The successful tenant will be expected to have a business plan as part of the recruitment process. This plan will be monitored periodically to see that it is being delivered or needs changing as the business responds to customer and community needs. Members and the management committee will not, however, be involved in the day to day running of the pub. The tenant would be expected to positively respond to customer and community needs to support the growth of the business. Also, to attend shareholder meetings to give feedback and respond to points of view.

What if we do not attract sufficient interest from investors to complete the purchase of the Angel?

We do not know how much a share offer will raise until we try, although we've had a really positive indication of investment levels before. If we do not attract the anticipated interest, grants and loans we will not be able to prove to the owners that we are credible purchasers. If, at the deadline that we set, we do not have enough investment, fund raising will stop and the investments will be redistributed back to shareholders, less any costs that have been incurred.

End of FAQ.