



CASE STUDY

The Green Dragon, Exelby - Community pub and cottage

This community led housing project was based in Exelby in Hambleton, North Yorkshire.

The Exelby community believed that the village pub had the potential to be a vibrant public house and hive of community activity. They rallied around to make this belief a reality and in October 2018 completed on the purchase of The Green Dragon public house.

Having raised sufficient investment to purchase the pub as well as the adjacent cottage, the newly owned community pub opened for business. Work on the full refurbishment to make the cottage into a two-bedroomed home was completed and allocated to a member of the Exelby community at low cost rent.

The Green Dragon has been a focal point of the Exelby community for many years and thanks to their tremendous efforts and access to over £390,000 worth of funding, its potential can be realised once again.

Determination and community spirit were key to helping the Exelby community to achieve its ambition to buy the village pub, create a new public space and much needed community led housing for local residents.

Background

The story began back in 2016 when the newly formed community benefit society - 'Exelby Green Dragon Community Pub Ltd' - were successful in applying to Hambleton District Council for The Green Dragon public house to be listed as an 'asset of community value'. For the next year, negotiations were ongoing with the pub owners, Ei Group. An innovative partnership with a private sector developer was formed and together they made a successful joint bid to Ei Group.

Community Shares Scheme

Exelby Green Dragon Pub Ltd raised the money to purchase the pub, extensively renovate it and also renovate the adjoining cottage, by issuing shares at £500 each. This raised a total of £345,000 funding. The interest in the community share scheme was phenomenal, helped along by first investor, Rishi Sunak MP. Whilst the majority of the 123 shareholders were local to Exelby, investors came from far and wide, from as far as the New Forest and even Fairfax, Virginia.

Hambleton District Council provided £45,000 from their Community Housing Fund. £35,000 was used for legal setting up costs, a feasibility study and development (including materials and labour). £10,000 was needed to cover the unexpected cost of a new roof.



It is estimated that collaboratively circa 500 miles were walked, delivering 15,000 leaflets and newsletters to raise the profile of the project as well as maintaining a presence in both traditional media and social channels – an astounding feat for a small community of less than 150 people.

Initial investment targets were met within three months of the share offer opening, enabling the purchase to be completed quickly. The community then got to work, renovating the kitchen and improving other facilities. Tenants were recruited to help shape and build a successful business; bringing employment and new services to the local area.

The Green Dragon has brought the community closer together and got local people thinking about how to make the community a better place to live and work.

Community Led Housing

The whole community supported the project plans, from reopening and revitalising the pub as well as a shop and Deli/café as a much-needed resource, to the community led affordable housing element.

A housing needs survey and local questionnaire showed that there was a clear need for affordable housing in Exelby. The 18th century cottage along High Row had been left to deteriorate, having become part of The Green Dragons ladies facilities. With guidance from Hambleton District Council, funding was secured from the Department of Housing Communities as well as Local Government in support of Exelby's first community led housing project.

Community led housing will ensure that there is high quality housing available at low cost rent for people who live or work local to Exelby, not just now but for generations to come.

The Community Led Housing is a generously proportioned period two-bedroom cottage with a courtyard garden.

The Exelby Green Dragon Community Pub Ltd have been supported by Hambleton District Council, The Plunkett Foundation, The Key Fund and 'The Pub is the Hub', together with an energised village that really wants to make a difference.

www.exelbygreendragonpub.co.uk

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