

## ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE NOMINATION FORM

Please read the Guidance Notes before completing this nomination form.

When you have completed this nomination form you can submit:

- **By post** to Assets of Community Value, Strategy & Performance, The Guildhall, High Street, Bath BA1 5AW
- **By e-mail** to [assets@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:assets@bathnes.gov.uk)

**Name by which the Nominating body wishes to identify the Asset under consideration**

The Inn at Freshford

### Contact Details:

Name of organisation:	Freshford Parish Council		
Contact name:	Selina Jobson (Clerk to Freshford PC)		
Address of organisation:	51, Tynning Road, Winsley		
Phone number:	01225 865529	Post code:	BA15 2JN
E-mail address:	<a href="mailto:parish.council@freshfordvillage.com">parish.council@freshfordvillage.com</a>		

### A1) Please indicate which type of eligible organisation you are?

*Please see the Guidance Notes for a list of the supporting evidence to include where appropriate.*

A Neighbourhood Forum	
A Parish Council	x
An Unincorporated Body (whose members include at least 21 individuals, and which does not distribute any surplus it makes to its members)	
A Charity	
A Company Limited by Guarantee	
An Industrial & Provident Society	
A Community Interest Company	

## **A2) What is your local connection to the nominated asset?**

*Please see the Guidance Notes for detail on what to include in this response.*

The activities of the Parish Council are wholly concerned with the village of Freshford within the area of Bath and North East Somerset.

## **A3) Please provide details of the land and/or building you wish to nominate.**

*Within this section please include the following information:*

- *A description of the nominated land including its proposed boundaries*
  - *The names of the current occupants of the land*
  - *The names and current or last-known addresses of all those holding a freehold or leasehold estate in the land*
- The property known as the Inn, Freshford, including its garden, outbuildings and car park.
  - Mr K. Roberts and Mrs J.A. Roberts
  - Address: Willows, Horton Hill, Glos, BS37 6QN
  - Tel: 01225 722250

## **B1) What is the current or recent non-ancillary use of the land and/or building?**

*Please see the Guidance Notes for examples of the supporting evidence you can provide.*

The Inn at Freshford is a public house and has been so for over 300 years. It has been ascribed a construction date of 1713 on the basis of a date stone attributed to Anthony Methuen in its main elevation. It is thought that from that time the Inn provided accommodation for travellers and stabling for horses though later records suggest that it became an alehouse with no accommodation offered.

The Inn is a Grade II Listed Building and is situated within the Freshford & Sharpstone Conservation Area (B&NES, 2007). As an historic building it is also a 'Heritage Asset' as understood by Section 12 of the *National Planning Policy Framework*. On the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 development was permitted following a submitted proposal to form 8 rooms with ensuite for use as bed and breakfast accommodation.

At the time of submitting the original Asset of Community Value application, the Inn was continuing to serve alcohol but no meals were being provided. In answer to enquiries, the owners said that the kitchen had been closed to allow for the building work to take place to provide the permitted 8 rooms for B&B accommodation. Members of staff had been made redundant and there was local concern that that latest development pointed to underlying difficulties as to whether the Inn would continue to function as a public house providing food.

**Since that time the Inn has been reinvigorated with new tenants taking on the Tenancy and firmly establishing the Inn as a well-regarded, popular and successful village Inn providing food and refreshment.**

**So far as the PC aware some works, but not all, have been undertaken in pursuance of the development permitted in March 2014.**

For many years the Inn has been recognised as a key village facility and its beautiful location has made it an ever popular destination for local people and for the many visitors and tourists to the area.

In addition to the large bar room and restaurant area on the ground floor, the Inn has as a room on the first floor which has been used extensively over the years for meetings. For example:

- Until the closure of the kitchen, local residents of the age of 60 or over ('The Inn Crowd') had been meeting and lunching monthly. These lunches were well attended with an average of 20 or so people turning up on a regular basis.
- Jazz and folk evenings were for many years an integral part of the monthly attractions offered by the pub and were well attended.
- Meetings of the Heart of Wessex Rail Partnership (community volunteers from the villages on the Bristol to Weymouth line). <http://www.heartofwessex.org.uk/>
- Meetings of Avon Local Council's Association. (ALCA)
- Half yearly meetings between Highways England and the Highways Group of the Valley Parishes Alliance: <http://www.valleyparishesalliance.org.uk/>
- Throughout the course of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan the upstairs room of the Inn was used frequently by the various groups charged with the responsibility of developing the Plan.

**In preparing this submission the current tenants confirmed that the pub is still well used by over 20 community groups, including:**

- **Walking Clubs**
- **Woodland Trust**
- **Angling Club**
- **Foragers Club**
- **Parish Council**
- **Boaters Association**
- **Local Business Association**
- **Mums of Freshford**
- **Dads of Freshford**
- **Freshford United FC**

### **C) Why do you believe the asset is of community value?**

*Please see below a list of questions that you should answer in this section and refer to the Guidance Notes for detail on the types of supporting evidence that should be included.*

- **C1)** How does the nominated land and/or building meet the social interests of the local community as a whole? (25%)
- **C2)** Is any aspect of the nominated land and/or building's usage actively discouraged by the Council's [Policy and Budget Framework](#)? (25%)  
*A request will be made of the council officers to comment for their individual themes on whether the nomination conflicts with their plans, strategies and policies.*
- **C3)** Why is the nominated land and/or building usage seen as having social value for the local community? (25%)
- **C4)** How strongly does the local community feel the land and/or building usage furthers their social interests? (25%)

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## Introduction

Freshford Parish Council submitted the original application inviting Bath and North East Somerset Council ('the Council') to have full regard to the Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan ('the Plan') approved and made by the Council in November 2015 following the Referendum of resident voters in September 2015. It was the first of its kind in the country to straddle a county border (B&NES and Wiltshire) and should be read in the context of applying to the community of Freshford and Limpley Stoke and not just to the village of Freshford. The Plan and all associated documents in support can be accessed via this link to the B&NES Council website:

<https://beta.bathnes.gov.uk/policy-and-documents-library/freshford-and-limpley-stoke>

The Neighbourhood Plan (2014 - 2039) was undertaken by the community over a period of four years. It was the most comprehensive and detailed document ever prepared by the two villages and has been the subject of extensive internal and external scrutiny and consultation. The Plan is in full compliance with the Localism Act 2011.

Community Development Policy 2 identifies The Inn at Freshford (also the Hop Pole, Limpley Stoke and the Rose and Crown, Limpley Stoke) as key community facilities and assets. 'There will be a presumption in favour of safeguarding them from any adverse proposal which would result in their loss.'

By Resolution of the Parish Council dated the 9th November 2015 it was resolved to nominate the Inn at Freshford as an Asset of Community Value in accordance with Community Development Policy 2 (above) to give effect to the expressed wishes of the local community. Further, since the Plan was made, application for Change of Use of the Rose and Crown, Limpley Stoke, was submitted to Wiltshire Council – from licensed premises to a children's nursery and office accommodation (now Permitted) and there were equal concerns as to whether the Hop Pole, Limpley Stoke, would continue to operate as a village pub. Both licensed premises in Limpley Stoke are or were registered as assets of community value.

**By Resolution dated the 9th November 2020 Freshford Parish Council (attached) now seek the approval of the Council for the renewal of The Inn at Freshford as an Asset of Community Value.**

**It does so against a backcloth of the permanent loss of the Rose and Crown PH in Limpley Stoke and the closure also of the Hop Pole PH in Limpley Stoke. The Inn at Freshford is now the one remaining pub open and serving the community and the public at large. And it does so at a time when the restraints caused by the Covid pandemic have increased concerns over social isolation while simultaneously increasing community awareness and action to help support all members of the community, particularly the vulnerable.**

Paragraph 28 of the National Planning Policy Framework seeks to stimulate a strong rural economy by promoting 'the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.' The Ministerial Foreword in the Government's own guidance for local authorities on assets of community value begins: "from local pubs and shops to village halls and community centres, the past decade has seen many communities lose local amenities and buildings that are of great importance to them."

Community pubs represent the very essence of a community asset, providing a meeting place where social networks are strengthened and extended and where people can mix with others from different backgrounds to their own. Pubs host a wide variety of community-oriented events and activities that add considerably to local civic life.

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As well as injecting an average of £80,000 into their local economy each year, pubs play a key role in raising money for local charities – it is estimated that the average pub raises around £3000 a year for charity. Over the years the Inn has consistently supported local fund raising events which in turn have provided much needed monies to preserve or enhance the local environment.

The Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) has used 'Social Return on Investment methodology to quantify the wider social value which pubs generate for their communities, which cannot be captured in financial terms. These wider community benefits range from the amount of money the pub raises for charity to the reduced risk of social isolation through opportunities for pub-goers to make new friends and strengthen community ties. The IPPR's research found that each pub generates between £20,000 and £120,000 of wider social value to their communities.

**C1. How does the nominated land and/or building meet the social interests of the local community as a whole? (25%).**

The Inn at Freshford is an important part of the social fabric of the local community of Freshford and Limpley Stoke allowing a wide range of people to meet and socialise, both as customers and as a community. It is the one pub now existing in the village and for many living in the community it can be readily accessed by foot.

For years The Inn has provided both temporary and permanent work opportunities for local people, particularly the young.

Its location will take on added value when the proximate current development of Freshford Mill (24 units of new housing) is completed. Taking account also of the Pipehouse development (10 units of housing) the population of Freshford is expected to increase by some 10% in the coming years.

The location of the Inn provides local people, visitors and tourists alike with a welcome point from which to explore on foot or by bicycle, this area of outstanding natural beauty.

Since the introduction of The Freshford Bulletin published by the Parish Council three times a year, successive managers of the Inn have contributed articles to The Bulletin in which they have drawn attention to specific events being hosted at the Inn and, with equal emphasis, have made clear that they see the Inn as being at the heart of the community and making a full contribution to it. **Wrote the tenants in 2018 in The Bulletin “we have loved being part of the village community and getting to know so many of the residents. Thank you for all the support and lovely feedback.”**

The negative consequences of losing this community asset would be:

- An irreplaceable loss of social health and wellbeing, particularly among the older sections of the community.
- Other than the Galleries Shop, the loss of the one remaining freely accessible public meeting place.
- The need to travel by car or bus to locations further afield.

**Since the last submission there has been an increase in employment at the Inn, with up to 20 local people now working there on a full-time or part-time basis. This number reflects the growing popularity of the pub over the last few years. The Inn also has an important role in supporting local trade and retail suppliers.**

**C.2. Is any aspect of the nominated land and/or building's usage actively discouraged by the Council's [Policy and Budget Framework](#)? (25%)**

No. The Freshford and Limpley Stoke Neighbourhood Plan is in conformity with the B&NES Council's Policy and Budget Framework.

### **C.3. Why is the nominated land and/or building usage seen as having social value for the local community? (25%).**

The Inn at Freshford is the one remaining public house in the community of Freshford and Limpley Stoke. The social value of a village pub is one recognised by Government, by B&NES Council and by both local people and visitors from far and wide.

**The Tenants are intent on:**

- **Raising the profile of the Inn - Bath In Bloom Gold Award (2017), Gold Award South West in Bloom (2019), Britain's 25 Finest Summer Pubs (2018) Sunday Telegraph, Crumbs Award - Best Foodie Pub in Bristol and Bath.**
- **Stimulating local demand and involvement – With events such as The Supper Club, Wine Tasting evenings, Folk by Candlelight, and through projects such as the Hedgehog House and Bugs Hotel.**
- **Making best use of and promoting local produce on their menus.**
- **Helping to maintain and improve the local environment by cutting back vegetation on the local footpath between The Inn and the Cross Guns at Avoncliffe and removing invasive balsam.**

**Whilst these initiatives reflect the ambitions of the current tenants, the range of activities undertaken demonstrates the important role that a central institution, such as The Inn, can have on adding activities of social value to the community.**

### **C.4. How strongly does the local community feel the land and/or building usage furthers their social interests? (25%)**

As part of the Neighbourhood Plan process residents of the community made clear their view of the need to protect, sustain and enhance community assets. This included the Inn at Freshford. Evidence in support of this can be found in Appendix D1 attached to the Neighbourhood Plan - Freshford and Limpley Stoke Community Planning Workshop - Jan/February 2012.

A questionnaire (Appendix D3 of the NP) was hand delivered to every household in the two villages asking everyone whether or not they agreed to the proposition to 'protect, sustain and enhance' community assets.'

Replies were received from 513 residents. 92% were in favour, 2% against and a further 6% 'did not know'.

**The Covid Pandemic has brought into even sharper relief the need to sustain and to support The Inn. Given the present circumstances it has not proved possible to collect and collate up to date information on the strength of local feeling but it is the informed view of the Parish Council that residents continue to believe that the Inn furthers their social interests.**

**We invite the Council to support the view of the Parish Council that the Inn at Freshford remains an important Asset of Community Value. Evidence is provided here to support the renewal of The Inn's current designation as an Asset of Community Value. Further, that the loss of the two pubs in Limpley Stoke heightens the need to sustain The Inn as an Asset of Community Value and to recognise its place in securing the social interests of the local community.**

**D1) Has the land and/or building requirement for this usage changed significantly since its initial use so that the asset is not fit for purpose?**

No

**D2) If yes to D1 above, how could it be made fit for purpose practically within reasonable resource requirements and timescales?**

*Please see the Guidance Notes for examples of the supporting evidence you can provide.*

N/A

#### Checklist

<b>E1) Please confirm that you have read the related guidelines</b>	Yes
<b>E2) Please confirm that you have answered all of the questions</b>	Yes
<b>E3) Please confirm that the contents of this form supplied by your organisation are correct, to the best of your knowledge</b>	Yes
<b>E4) Please ensure that you have attached all of the documents that are relevant to your application</b>	Yes