

## WINSHAM SHOP LTD

Church Street  
Winsham  
Chard  
Somerset TA20 4 JA

Tel: 01460 30225

VAT No. 631 3727 5

9 June 2018

Dear Mr Hicks

### **The George, Winsham**

**Ref: 18/00001/FUL,18/00002/LBC,18/01705/ADV**

I am writing in my capacity as Finance Director of Winsham Shop Limited (a position I have held on a unpaid volunteer basis for over 8 years) to give my full support to this application

Secondly, to state in no uncertain terms that this application is crucial to the future of there being a shop and Post office in Winsham. Without it our shop & Post Office will likely close and the hub of our village will be lost, with devastating impact on our village, as well as the loss of 5 local people's paid jobs.

Our shop is a Community Based Society owned and run by our community for the benefit of our community for the last 15 years. Its objective is to serve the community and to break even .It is only able to do this due to the many volunteers who give their time free of charge to keep our costs low. However, we are finding it increasingly hard to break even and last financial year we made a loss and know we are currently facing further costs increases including a 14% rent increase and wage increases due to living wage legislation.

We cannot continue to trade knowing we will make a loss.

In addition, our existing premises are not fit for purposes and with our lease due for renewal in 2019 our landlord had intimated that our lease will not be renewed and we will not have any premises.

We have been clear since December 2016 that we had to find new premises and create a more viable financial model and have worked tirelessly with our village to review all options.

The George was our only viable option, it is available to be bought and its location and layout make it well suited for our purposes. We have raised over £300,000 via a community share issue and expect the remainder we will need to be supplemented by grants.

We have produced a business case to show how our new financial model will work. HMRC have recognised our efforts to help our community by granting our project Social Investment Relief status which is a massive bonus for our investors.

We recognise that road safety has been raised as an issue .The view of the Shop Management Committee is that the highways issues are no worse than the existing situation. In fact we believe that due to the fact that Back St. has significantly less traffic than Church Street and because of the many deliveries we receive (a minimum of over 30 deliveries a week plus Post Office pickups) then Back St. in front of The George will create a safer drop off and a better road safety environment for all

We have demonstrated our capability to provide a credible solution for our village which benefits all residents. The approval of this application is essential to this solution.

Our hope is that our district Council will support this initiative and enable the future of this valuable resource and continue to make Winsham and surrounding areas an attractive place to live because of it.

Yours sincerely

Paula Bramley Ball Finance Director Winsham shop Limited