



# **Tender Document & Expression of Interest**

In relation to:  
The Old Black Lion  
Public House,  
Northampton

## 1. Introduction and project outline.

This document provides information to support initial offers from those interested in becoming operational partners with the Churches Conservation Trust at The Old Black Lion Public House, Northampton. It will enable the CCT to collate relevant information on initial proposals from potential operators, and help us to assess each representation objectively, with a view to finding the best long-term operator for the site and the community. We would like to find a forward-thinking, resilient and experienced operator who can help us realise the commercial potential of the site, as well as the wider social benefits of the project.

Where the Expression of Interest is being submitted on behalf of more than one organisation working in a consortium or partnership, please provide relevant information for all parties involved.

## 2. Some background on The Old Black Lion:

**The Old Black Lion project has been under development for several years.** The aim of the project is to create a successful enterprise in the Old Black Lion. It will be restored as a 'proper pub', a building rooted in its community, and a place for everyone to eat, drink, meet and enjoy the character of a historic coaching inn. By so doing, we hope to generate income to support a range of charitable purposes, including supporting the upkeep of the adjacent Grade I-listed Trust property, St. Peter's Church. The project will also help provide the church with hospitality facilities that will allow it to be used as a venue in its own right for a variety of public and private events. Additionally, the project aims to showcase and strengthen the traditional historic link between church and pub, and by investing in an under-utilised community asset, create a sense of place and community, and ensure that both buildings are looked after for future generations to enjoy.

The site has been closed since 2018 but trading figures from before closure and subsequent market research strongly suggests it is viable business. Its location is on the principal road into the town centre from the railway station and close to attractions such as Sol Central and St Peter's Church. The project is fortunate to have received funding from a variety of different sources, including a £1.8m National Lottery Heritage Fund Grant; this will be invested in an ambitious scheme to repair, extend and regenerate the pub to make it suitable for the next generation of hospitality enterprises, with an all-day offer of high-quality food and drink and a BandB business. The pub will be at the centre of a much broader regenerative vision for that area of the town, supported by West Northamptonshire Council.

St Peter's Church is one of the finest Norman churches in the country. Over 900 years old and filled with treasures, it has a long history and strong relationship with the Northampton community. Not now used for regular worship, it has found an alternative purpose as a location for events, such as concerts and theatre performances, as well as attracting visitors as a focal point for local heritage and history. There is plenty of potential to develop these audiences, and linking the pub and church, with the newly revitalised offering and facilities at the pub, will support further reuse of the church, as well as generate additional custom and revenue for the pub itself.

### **3. Current building plans and designs:**

The listed pub will be repaired externally and internally to a high conservation standard. The historic carriage passage from Marefair into the inn's courtyard will be reinstated and a new path and gate will connect the pub's courtyard entrance on St Peter's Street to St Peter's churchyard next door. There will be a new dining room extension at the rear, reinstating the horseshoe plan of the original building, and overlooking the courtyard, which will be a beer garden. The main pub bar and lounge will be for drinks and bar food. Upstairs will be five guest bedrooms providing bed and breakfast, and a meeting room and function room which will be available for private hire and for community use. A new lift will provide full access to all floors.

The plan delivers c. 175m<sup>2</sup> of tradable space, with around at least 100 covers, with further meeting/function room capacity and outside space too.

Current designs and floorplans attached for information.

### **4. The operating model & business opportunity:**

There are considerable benefits attached to the project, and with the right approach the potential to generate a high turnover and profit. The CCT will be working closely with the chosen operator to monitor how the project develops, and wider stakeholders will also need to have oversight of the business. Although day-to-day running and site operation will be down to the operator-partner to manage, and there will be a lease in place, because of the nature of the project, the overall approach is likely to be more akin to a partnership rather than the standard landlord/tenant relationship. The building is a heritage space too, so consideration also needs to be given to the long term care and related costs of this historic pub – further details are available by discussion with the CCT team below.

The Central Council of Church Bellingers: The project is fortunate to have many external supporters – one of these is the national organisation that is responsible for the promotion and teaching of church bellringing in the UK. They have many members, and their Northampton branch is also very active, and they would like to use the Old Black Lion and St. Peter's as a base for their national training centre. This will mean that the project comes with a partner organisation prepared to deliver custom and footfall as well as the likelihood of a base level of demand for hire, catering and accommodation. The Friends of St Peter's Church are another partner who will bring additional footfall to the premises; they hold regular events at the church and have no alternative venue for hospitality. Managing these relationships will be crucial to the long-term success of the business.

The detail of how the business runs, eg the mix of wet/dry trade, price points, opening hours, menu etc, will be the preserve of the operator. Communication and openness; eg. sharing of accounts, trading numbers and overall vision, will also be important to the long term working relationship. In addition, the project will be supported by some additional resource through the NHLF funding, likely to be in the form of a marketing/community support role, to additionally help build capacity and market the business.

## 5. The Project timeline and schedule:

Currently, the project is on track for the Capital build phase to commence in Spring/Summer 2022; with a view to having this completed and the site ready for opening Summer 2023. We would like to have a agreement in place with our chosen operator for the business by March 2022, with a view to a full lease starting in Spring 2023.

Please submit all Expressions of Interest to us, along with any supporting documents by **Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December**. We will get in touch with applicants directly to discuss their interest further and proceed on a more formal basis after this. The chosen operator will be asked to enter into a leasehold agreement for the site on a suggested term of 15 years, although this will be negotiable.

## 6. Background on The Churches Conservation Trust:

The Churches Conservation Trust (CCT) is the national charity for historic churches at risk – launched 50 years ago in 1969. We protect and look after over 350 churches now no longer used for regular worship. Our unique collection includes irreplaceable examples of architecture, archaeology and art from 1000 years of our shared history.

With the support of local volunteers, businesses and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties, they are kept open and in use – living once again at the heart of their communities. It is by encouraging this use and enjoyment by local communities and partner organisations, that we can sustain their long-term future, and ensure that these magnificent buildings are cared for and maintained for future generations. We operate the third largest heritage estate in charitable ownership in the UK.

For further information on The Churches Conservation Trust, please refer to CCT's website at [www.visitchurches.org.uk](http://www.visitchurches.org.uk)

Please complete the form below, accompanying it with any additional supporting documents or evidence such as business plans and projections, in order to support the Expression of Interest, as required.

All information within the tender document will be treated as confidential.

**1. Main Applicant:**

Title:

First name:

Surname:

Telephone Number:

Mobile Number:

Email Address:

Business Address:

**2. Business/Organisation Details:**

What is the size of your Business/Organisation?

How many sites do you currently operate?

What is your approximate annual turnover?

Organisation reference no. (Charity/Company reg no – if applicable):

Please provide examples of 1 or 2 partner/client businesses or organisations that you have worked with in the past:

Please attach a copy of your annual accounts.

Is this a new venture for you? Y/N

### **3. Operational Outline:**

Based on current plans, project vision and the scale of the building, what annual turnover would you expect to be able to generate at the Old Black Lion?

Based on the current market rate, what kind of annual rent would you expect to pay for the space?

Please describe what type of food and drink you would be offering through the Old Black Lion eg. outline menu/description of type of dishes/price point.

Please detail some of the food and drink suppliers that you would be sourcing from:

We would anticipate operating partners being able to fund furniture, fit-out and kit. Please outline what items and/or sum you would be willing to cover:

How are you aiming to fund your project and cover any capital investment or initial cashflow?

How would propose working with the local community to support benefits that you bring to the local area?

How would you run your business so that it is environmentally sustainable?

What are your views on retaining the name of the Old Black Lion – would you want to change this? Are there any aspects of the proposed plans that you would seek to change?

**Signature:**

**Date:**

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Please email completed submissions through to: [commercial@thecct.org.uk](mailto:commercial@thecct.org.uk). If you would like more information, and a more informal discussion around the various options and partnership opportunities, please do get in touch with either Guy Foreman, CCT Head of Enterprise, on [gforeman@thecct.org.uk](mailto:gforeman@thecct.org.uk) – 07823 341 544; or Hannah Parham, Project Manager, [hparham@thecct.org.uk](mailto:hparham@thecct.org.uk)

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