

Ye Olde Fighting Cocks

Fundraising Proposal 2020





About Ye Olde Fighting Cocks



Ye Olde Fighting Cocks (YOFC) is Britain's oldest pub, a hugely popular destination and tourist attraction located in the cathedral city of St Albans, Hertfordshire. St Albans was recently named the best place to live in the southeast by *The Times* (22 March 2020, pictured right).

The multiple award-winning historic pub is situated opposite St Albans' famous cathedral. Rumour has it, tunnels that stretch from the beer cellar to the cathedral, exist and were apparently used by monks centuries ago when the cathedral was an abbey.



The landlord, Christo Tofalli, has run the pub for the last eight years and in this time has increased revenue by 142% to more than £1 million per annum, with all profits being reinvested back into the business.

As part of the 10-year continuous improvement and expansion plan, we are seeking crowdfunding of £1.75 million for 25% equity to enable an extension to be built that will nearly double the available seating at the pub. The expansion will allow us to continue to increase our revenue and provide a fantastic experience to even more customers. The additional room will bring year-on-year revenue growth of 30%. Preliminary drawings and planning paperwork have been completed, and we are now ready for the next stage of the project.

As well as the development of YOFC in St Albans, we plan to acquire additional historic pubs in affluent areas and apply the YOFC methodology. In short, our method is to provide high-quality food and beer alongside excellent customer service while fully engaging with local heritage and communities.



Message from the Landlord

My plan is exactly the same as it has always been: to conserve England's oldest pub for the next 1,000 years and create a quality brand steeped in history, but now we just have to look at it from a different angle.

The current climate is testing but we are pushing ahead with our plan, which is without question, a conservation project with bells on that will benefit everyone. An investment that delivers a financial return along with long-term community gains.

Our plans have never included just serving high-quality food and drink; our plans have also covered delivering my view of what a pub is and what it does.

I haven't invented it, I have just brought it back to where it was centuries ago, covering all bases for a business within the local community.

Our community now stretches far beyond our local reach. I couldn't see how we were going to achieve our goals without informing people of what we were doing. If you



are reading this for the first time, it's the same plan I have been working to for more than eight years. Challenging times maybe, but the plan is still relevant, crystal clear and ready to go.

All of the building blocks have been laid to turn Ye Olde Fighting Cocks into one of the best pubs in the country.

Our building design has been a joy to develop; working alongside the incredibly talented architect Rogan Gale Brown, which has been incredible.

Our new pub will lead with disabled access to all areas which will also include a Changing Places facility, which offers full disabled toilet facilities with bench and hoist (www.changing-places.org). A pub serves 100% of the community, and we will offer up-to-date facilities and access for all.

We are also looking to move with the times when it comes to technology and will be integrating the latest technology and audiovisuals experience throughout the pub to enhance the customer experience even more.

The build will increase inside and outside seating - a must if we are to deliver long-term sustainability. We have found the formula with this build will not only make the figures work well, but will help springboard us on to the

next level of our plan which, in short, is in owning more pubs of the same excellent quality. I have done my homework and been involved in many projects that have given me the experience to make an impact wherever we go.

Over the last eight years, I have:

- Engaged in many sectors within the hospitality sector, from holiday camps across Europe to cruise ships in the Caribbean;
- Been extensively involved with the build project of an eco resort, to be completed by 2024 of 500 two to four-bed luxury cabins in Spain and have been offered first refusal for the main pub and catering facilities;
- Been involved in a site of 300 units in southern France and offered the opportunity to run the pub and catering side.

I look forward to pushing forward the plan when we are ready; it's an enormous marketplace that hasn't been touched. All the projects I am involved with have thought positively about our USP. The idea of the oldest pub with awards galore as a benchmark is too good to refuse.

Imagine two destinations that both have a British pub, however one is linked to the award-winning oldest pub in Britain, and the other is an unknown pub. Where would you choose to spend your money? Assured quality with the history to prove it wins every time. We are unique and that makes a difference.

Tourism is a fantastic sector for us; being an ambassador for Visit Herts has given us international exposure. Only recently, head chef Ian and I have done a blog about YOFC, which will be available for passengers to listen to on all inbound British Airways flights from the US.

I have also been an advisor to the St Albans Visitor Partnership (SAVP), helping to develop tourism to the city, and I work as an advisor to the St Albans Business Improvement District (BID) on local events.

I am part of the Save UK Pubs team that delivered advice to the Treasury Select Committee in 2019 on changes that needed to be made to the way that business rates are calculated.

Outside catering is a big part of our offering too, and is a side of the business that is growing, with our reputation as Britain's oldest pub and multiple award winning really helping to raise our profile in this area.

An investment in YOFC is an investment in the future of a jewel in Britain's crown, which will not only reap financial rewards but philanthropic ones. It will also see you take your place in the history books, helping to preserve this historic building for generations to enjoy.

Christo Tofalli

Landlord, YOFC St Albans





The Ask

An investment of £1.75 million for 25% equity to build an extension that will nearly double the available seating at the pub. The extension will add 68 seated covers inside and 120 outside, along with additional space for standing. Additionally, we will be able to offer full disabled access to every part of the pub. The plan will be to open the new extension in January 2021.

The Business - Britain's Oldest Pub

This well-known public house is a top-rated tourist attraction in St Albans, steeped in history. It dates back to the 8th century with the pub you see today having been built in the 11th century. St Albans Cathedral and grounds are just across the road and rumour has it that there are tunnels stretching from the beer cellar to the cathedral, apparently used by Monks centuries ago.

Cockfighting took place in the main bar in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, hence the name of the pub. Cockfighting was a national pastime in England for 600 years from the reign of Henry II and through the reigns of the three Georges, and it is thought that the Cock Pit - about 8ft wide and 10ft long - was brought down from the Abbey when the original name, The Round House, was changed to Ye Olde Fighting Cocks.

Cockfighting as a sport was banned in 1849 and we understand that the pub's

name was changed to The Fisherman. However, it reverted some 20 years later and has been known officially as Ye Olde Fighting Cocks since 1872.

It is reputed that Oliver Cromwell, subsequently Lord Protector from 1653 until his death in 1658, slept at the inn for one night during the Civil War of 1642-1651.

The main structure is free-standing and has an octagonal appearance, attributable to its earliest use as a pigeon house. It has been added to over the years, but the original timber-framed structure is clearly visible. The octagonal half-timbered structure was once a medieval dovecote.

You will notice that as with many old buildings, the inn has quite low ceilings as well as intriguing nooks and crannies. There is an original bread oven next to the main fireplace. It was originally located close to St Albans Cathedral, at the time known as St Albans Abbey, and was moved to the present site after the dissolution of the abbey in 1539.

The current business was acquired in April 2012 by Christo Tofalli, his wife Sarah and a business partner. In 2015, Christo and Sarah sold their house to fund the buyout of their business partner and started trading as YOFC Ltd in April 2015.

Award-winning pub

Ye Olde Fighting Cockes is an award-winning pub, boasting many accolades since Christo became landlord in 2012.

These include:

- St Albans Food and Drink Festival Best Pub 2012, 2013, 2016, 2017 and 2018
- Christo Tofalli, Food and Drink Champion for Outstanding Achievement, St Albans Food and Drink Awards 2018
- Visit Hertfordshire Tourism Awards 2017 Raising the Bar Award winner
- Mayor's Pride Award 2017 and 2018 - finalist for community champion
- Parliamentary Chef of the Year - nominated 2017
- CAMRA's South Herts Pub of the Year 2017 Silver Award
- Christo Tofalli was one of 10 Tourism Superstar finalists in the Visit England 2018 national awards that celebrates the unsung heroes of the staycation tourism industry. The competition was run by Visit England and the Daily Mirror
- Cask Marque Approved 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020



Summary Financials

The turnover of the pub in the 12 months prior to Christo and Sarah taking over was £493k.

Subsequent turnover as below:

2012 - £592,000

2013 - £650,000

2014 - £683,000

2015 - £708,000

2016 - £835,000

2017 - £1,048,000

2018 - £1,076,000

2019 - £1,191,000

Investment to date has been consistent, with Christo ploughing all profits back into the business to refurbish various areas as per the list of spending below. Profits on final year-end accounts show as being low due to this reinvestment.

5-year Summary Forecast of Income

Year 1

Extension to be built during Year 1 and opening in April 2021 for the beginning of Year 2. Covers increasing from 292 to 480 (+188).

Launch external YOFC outside events and catering business.

YEAR 1	Current turnover (2020) £k Y/E 31/3/2020	End of year 1 (March 2021) turnover £k covid-19 plus building extension	End of year 1 (March 2021) net profit £k	Turnover difference £k
YOFC St Albans extension built, with ongoing normal trade.	1100K	550k	-40k	-£550k
Launch external YOFC outside events and catering business.	0	50	15	+50
Total	1100k	600k	-25k	+59

After planning permission and construction, the extension will open in April 2021. Note the pub will trade as usual while the extension is constructed.

After a successful trial of external catering in 2018/19, including events such as weddings, private functions and festivals, we are increasing our offering and marketing to drive additional turnover and profit. Part of this offering includes gaining a wedding licence at the YOFC to allow on-site civil partnerships.

Year 2 and Year 3

Full benefit of the new extension and continued expansion of outside events and catering business.

Acquisition (expected year 3) of a minimum of 1 additional historic public house in an affluent area and apply YOFC business strategy.

YEAR 2	Year 1 turnover (April 2020 to March 2021) £k	End of year 2 (April 2021 to March 2022) turnover £k	End of year 2 (March 2022) net profit £k	Turnover difference £k
YOFC St Albans extension built, opening April 2021.	550k	1362	184	+512k
Expansion of YOFC outside events and catering business.	150	150	45	+100
Total	1250k	1512	229	+912k

YEAR 3	Year 2 turnover (April 2021 to March 2022) £k	End of year 3 (April 2022 to March 2023) turnover £k	End of year 3 (April 2022 to March 2023) net profit	Turnover difference £k
YOFC St Albans Turnover	1362	1400k	184	+38
Launch external YOFC outside events and catering business	150	200	60	+50
1 additional pub, turnaround revenue increase	0	695	74	+695
Total	1512k	2295k	318	+783k

Historic Pubs Acquisitions

How we will find the pubs

We will focus on historical pubs with gardens that are located close to an open space in affluent towns or cities. Extensive market and competitor analysis will be undertaken to ensure an effective business plan can be implemented in a swift timescale.

We will increase turnover by:

- Using our experience in offering the best food and drink in the area;
- Engaging with the local community to ensure the pub is at the centre of events and occasions;
- Expertly analysing margins of food and drink and adjustment prices, where necessary;
- Creating and developing customer profiles to ensure our offering is suitable for the core customer demographic;
- Utilising space to ensure cost per head is maximised;
- Creating targeted marketing campaigns to increase footfall investigate corporate sponsorship and hospitality opportunities in the local area

YOFC External Events and Catering

Functions to-date

- Three weddings (average 12k per wedding). Catering for up to 400 people.

Events at the YOFC (Figures included as part of the YOFC turnover)

- YOFC May Bank Holiday music festival (£6k)
- St Albans Half Marathon (£4k)
- St Albans Fireworks (£8k)
- Oktoberfest (£7k)

All previous major sporting events held at YOFC

- Football World Cup (350k)
- Euro Football Championship (300k)
- Rugby World Cup (200k)

St Albans festivals

- Roman Festival at Cathedral 2019 (5k)
- Meraki Festival (14k)
- St Albans Christmas Festival (5k)
- St Albans Food and Drink Festival (2k)
- St Albans Film Festival (£4k)
- St Saviours Church Beer Festival (£5k)



Future Events Planned & Forecasts Income April 2020 - April 2021

St Albans events held at the YOFC (figures included as part of the YOFC turnover)

- YOFC May Bank Holiday music festival (£6k)
- St Albans Half Marathon (£4k)
- St Albans Firework event (£8k)

- St Albans Film Festival (£4k)
- St Saviours Church Beer Festival (£5k)
- Pub in the Park with Tom Kerridge (£20k)

YOFC will apply for a wedding licence that will allow civil marriages and partnerships to be conducted on site at YOFC St Albans.

Increase PR and Marketing for external events, specialising in wedding events:

- Attend prominent wedding fayres
- Increase advertising and marketing
- Numerous campaigns, including YOFC supporters' social media as well as local and national press.

Investor Membership Offer

1. An investment of £250

You will receive 20% discount on all food and local beer at YOFC St Albans and other YOFC pubs.

2. An investment of £1,000 or more, you will be entitled to option one and all of the options below.

- The opportunity to purchase a paving block with your name on it, located within the pub garden. There are further naming opportunities for significant investments.
- Preferential reservations including tickets for major sporting events.
- Unique YOFC T-shirt, baseball cap and lanyard
- Exclusive VIP investor event each year.
- 20% discount in adverts in the YOFC Times newspaper.

The investor return

An investment in the YOFC project is a long-term investment. This is a 10-year plan,

with the aim of building a large group of award-winning pubs, while conserving and protecting historic buildings. On purchasing shares, investors will be eligible for personal tax relief of 30% of the amount invested through the government EIS scheme. Any gains in the future are also exempt from capital gains tax, provided that the shares are held for at least three years.

Mitigating the Impact of the Coronavirus:

The YOFC team do not sit still in the event of an emergency and transformed the YOFC St Albans into Pub Community Supply Point (PCSP).

Playing a key role in the community as a pub has been so important to us but when the nationwide lockdown started in response to the covid-19 crisis, we realised that we could no longer do that. We discussed what we could do to help out our community and became a PCSP, possibly the first in the country, starting two days before lockdown.

We decided to turn back the clocks to the days when pubs sold more than just beer and we used our supply chains to bring fresh produce to the city's amazing community.

We had a market stall set up and were selling fresh fruit, vegetables, fresh meat and fish, cheese, dairy, bread and eggs.

Our services included home deliveries initially for elderly and vulnerable customers. All of the food was fresh and brought to customers at the highest standards. Our entire team were very committed to concentrating on what we could do rather than what we couldn't, and we were keen to do all we could to support our community through that tough time. We worked 18-hour days to help the vulnerable in our society when they needed us most. And all our amazing staff volunteered to make this happen.



Planning for the future

YOFC has enlisted the services of Philippa Jarvis BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI from Jarvis Planning and Architects to help them draw up extension plan to ensure the pub is fit for the 21st century. There has been a pre application meeting with both the planning departments and conservation departments of St Albans City and District Council and the YOFC Team along with the support of Philippa are currently working through the detail for the submission for the final planning application.

Philippa Jarvis says

"In preparing a suitable plan for the extension of the pub, we have considered not only its contribution to the local and wider community, but also its importance as a heritage asset within what is a highly sensitive historic environment. The public house building itself is a Grade II listed building and it is located within the St Albans Conservation Area. It lies on the boundary of a number of different 'character areas' steeped in history, and close to the famous Cathedral and Abbey Church of St Alban and historic Verulamium.

The design of the proposed extension seeks not only to preserve, but enhance the character and appearance of the listed building and the wider area within which it sits. Care has been taken to ensure that a high quality design is achieved that will respect and complement the historic significance of the pub building, whilst at the same time providing an accessible building suited to contemporary times. This will ensure that the building can continue to contribute positively to sustaining its important social and economic role in the local community, whilst at the same time making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

We will continue to work with the local authority and other interested persons to ensure that it will provide a suitable and sustainable future for the pub and enable it to continue to contribute to the rich local heritage for which St Albans is well known."



The YOFC team will be arranging presentations about their plans at the pub for potential investors. Any questions in the meantime, please email matt@pantons.net