

With reference to planning application **PL/2026/00323**

The Smithy, 73 High Street, Burbage, Wiltshire, SN8 3AA.

The Smithy is the blacksmiths' workshop attached to the Grade 11 listed cottage now known as The Old Forge. It is a 30m² room which I have restored to its original form, including two brick forges (one working with original bellows), stable gates and work benches. There are no material changes required for this project. It has been a work place from the early 17th century until approx 2019 when I delisted it to residential as I was retailing in London. Ironically, Covid was the death of that business and I am now seeking commercial Sui Generis status for the Smithy room to create a unique business.

I am a jeweller. At its heart, my application is to reinstate the Smithy to its original purpose, albeit replacing the blacksmith with a goldsmith. However, I have been a retailer for thirty years and know that it is a very difficult business to make work. The ongoing closure of shops, galleries, pubs, etc is a constant reminder of this fact. I know that a shop here would fail, hence the entrepreneurial experimentation I have been conducting over the last couple of years. Some ideas worked, some did not, both as a business idea and for the neighbourhood. This proposal is the idea fine tuned to bring prosperity to local artists, suppliers and practitioners (without them having to rent space), make the Smithy a sustainable business that will maintain the heritage of the building, give the local rural community a focal point for art, culture and wellbeing, whilst making little to no impact on the lives of our immediate neighbours beyond the joy it has brought so many of them already.

The idea is to bring the community together using small clubs or workshops. As requested, I have listed the groups we have started or are

planning to start. To make the atmosphere as comfortable and congenial as possible, we have a 'No Politics, No Religion' policy. In truth, it will be the local populus that dictates which club works or not. Some will fail, some will be weekly, some monthly, some annually. In my experience of hosting these events, it is far easier and more fun to have smaller groups. The list below shows the maximum number of attendees in (brackets) as requested. Most will never reach this maximum. Many of the events are for parents, kids and the retired and can be accommodated during the day, typically in the late morning. Some need to be in the evening after work or at the weekend, typically 6-9pm. Personally, I do not want to do more than two evenings a week. A few of the events are for larger groups. I have marked them with * in the list below. Although included in the two evenings a week quota, I do not want to do more than two of these a month. My idea is to bring new people to the space, make it a sustainable project in its own right through food and drink (made and supplied by local artisans) sales and profit from the sale of art, including my jewellery. I have no plans to do any more than this in the Smithy space. The expansion of the business will happen elsewhere once we prove it works. I intend to take the concept to other businesses, including galleries, shops, pubs, etc, to boost their footfall through community clubs and workshops. The Smithy will be the brand base for future social media, marketing and online sale purposes. In summary, if we had the capacity to accommodate all guests from 10am to 10pm, we would operate shop/gallery hours from midday to 5pm, 6 days a week. Closed Sundays.

I am an environmentalist. I support projects around the world. I want to make the Smithy a sustainable example as a microcosm for the global macrocosm. Rural community based projects like mine are the future for both multitudes of people on our planet and heritage buildings. The internal combustion engine will be a memory of the past very soon. To encourage local attendance, I offer a 5% discount on all products, whether a pint of ale or diamond tiara, for visitors on foot or cycle (The Smithy is on a National Cycle Network junction). Most visitors are from the village. When this project is sustainable, I plan to have an electric minibus to ferry those additional visitors arriving in Bedwyn by train, patrons from neighbouring

villages and those unable to walk in Burbage. A five mile catchment area will ensure that all interested locals reap the benefits of this beautiful project whilst not competing with the commercial town centres (in Hungerford, Marlborough, Pewsey and Tidworth). In the meantime, we have enough car parking (4 spaces) for most daily visitors. The High Street is a safe and legal overspill for all Burbage business and residential parking use (I often park there to slow traffic down when I'm pruning the road roses etc). I have a far lower footfall and greater parking capacity than both the White Hart pub and The Sprays Surgery. The 55m+ stretch of High Street in front of my house does not infringe on any junctions or neighbours' driveways. I always advise visitors to not park on the junctions illegally. For the rare events that are likely to bring more than 10 cars, I have an ongoing agreement with my closest neighbour (Will Franks, Esq., Cairn House, No67) to house up to 7 more vehicles. It has already proven popular with camper van guests as it is off road and sheltered. Although this application will not require greater numbers of parking spaces than described above, historically, the Blanchard family have been most amenable to us using their field which has easy access next to my own parking spaces on Smithys Lane.

I do hope that this information has provided you with all that you need to transform this experimental concept into a sustainable business. Beyond Council tax and Licensing Revenue, it will provide permanent and part time employment, a free commercial launchpad for artists, practitioners and suppliers, a trusting community atmosphere for individuals to practice and celebrate their amateur talents amongst likeminded friends, all with no discernable change to the local environment, including the fabric of this landmark building. Please do not hesitate to contact me should any of the points outlined need further clarification.

Clubs & Workshops

Acoustic (25)

Ale (25)

Alzheimer (5)
Book (25)
Cake (25)
Ceramic (10)
Cheese (25)
Chef (5)
Chess (10)
CD (25)
Coffee (25)
Concert* (50)
Cycle (10)
Dinner (25)
Drama (25)
Equestrian (25)
Embroidery (10)
Farming (25)
Folk* (50)
Gardening (25)
Gay (25)
Glass (10)
History (25)
Inter-Faith (25)
Jazz (25)
Jewellery (10)
Knitting (10)
Lunch (25)
Lesbian (25)
Meditation (25)
Mindfulness (25)
Painting (10)
Pastry (10)
Photography (10)
Poetry (25)
Soundbath (25)
Spiritual (25)

Supper (25)

Tarot (10)

Tea (25)

Tractor (10)

Vegan (25)

Vinyl (25)

Walk (25)

Wine (25)

Woodwork (10)

Yoga (10)