

BGGC Clubhouse Proposals

BGGC Committee

March 2017



The Old Flying Club At Nympsfield

A proposal to revitalise
the Gliding Club Cafe.

BGGC Clubhouse & Café Strategy

Since the departure of our last tenant the downstairs café/canteen facility in the “new” clubhouse has been empty and mostly un-used. The committee believe that it should be a priority to bring this area back into use. There are three objectives that we believe any use needs to fulfil. Ideally the café area should:

- Provide a facility that is attractive and welcoming to members and potential members, providing a focus for the club and attracting potential trial lesson/members.
- Provide a potential income stream for the club, adding to the money we make from non gliding activity
- Provide a flexible catering arrangement that can cater for special events and occasions within the club (e.g. competitions, juniors weekends, club events and celebrations).

For these reasons we believe that the lower floor of the “New” clubhouse should be used to provide a catering facility, rather than renting it out for other unrelated purposes. There are three possible approaches that could be taken to providing a catering facility:

1. We could run a volunteer staffed canteen aimed at club members
2. We could look for another tenant to run a café on the premises, which would necessarily be aimed at the general public as well as club members.
3. We could run a club-owned café, generating business from the general public as well as club members

We believe that the last of these is the best approach, in that (given the success of other café's in the area) it should be possible, with the right management, to generate a sustainable income from a quality café service to the public. We can make a facility that is attractive to both the public (walkers, cyclists, lunch traffic etc.) and members along the lines of local café's such as Thistledown or at Prema in Uley.

Keeping the café under club ownership also means that if we require special events or wish café staff to carry out activities such as welcoming (or selling) trial lessons then this is under our control. It also reduces potential conflicts between self catering activity (e.g. in the old clubhouse or at BBQ's) and the café management.

However we should recognise that the café needs to succeed as a business, and so we will need to be supportive and welcoming to café staff and visitors and respect the business presence (for example by not taking our own food into the café).

We believe that with the support of members and the right management we can have a facility that is a major enhancement to the life of the BGGC and contributes financially to the running of the club. The committee plan to proceed with this development over the next two months with the aim of having the café up and running by the start of the summer. This document covers some of the questions that you may have about this development. We will keep you informed of progress, meanwhile please feel free to email suggestions to the committee (committee@bggc.co.uk) and any offers of help and assistance will be welcome.

Café Q&A

Q: How will the café pay it's way?

A: The café business case is based on sales of food and drinks to the general public. Opening hours (at least initially) will match that of typical cafés in the area, probably 09:00 to 16:00, seven days a week as this is the core period for morning coffee, lunch and afternoon teas.

Q: Why is the café not open in the evenings or after flying ?

A: There are significant extra costs in extending the opening hours, and not enough business solely from club members to justify this on a permanent basis. We believe, initially at least, we should target "café hours" although this might be extended in due course if the demand is there. We also intent to offer evening meals for club members on selected dates for special events.

Q: Will members get a discount?

A: Our plan is that members will get a discount, although we have yet to work out how much or exactly how this will work.

Q: What about the members kitchen and bar?

A: We recognise (as do the café management) that members will not want to pay café prices all the time – although we hope they will give the café their custom when they can. The members kitchen will continue to offer a facility for members to make their own drinks, meals, sandwiches etc. Similarly the bar will continue to be a members only facility just as it is today. Longer term we hope to be able (with volunteer effort) to refurbish the members kitchen and dining area in the "old" clubhouse.

Q: We're a gliding club, what do we know about running a successful catering business?

A: The answer is (of course) "not much". For this reason our plan is to employ an experienced café manager who has a track record of running other catering businesses. That person will handle all of the operational management of the café and be rewarded for it's success.

Q: What about our CASC status, won't this be affected by a commercial operation?

A: The café will be a separate limited company. It will run it's own accounts and have club members as directors, some of who will be chosen from outside the committee or BGGC Pty.

Q: Who owns the café and who employs the staff?

A: The café company will be a subsidiary of BGGC Pty Ltd. The café manager and staff are employed by the café company and appear on the café accounts, not the accounts of the "Operating Company " (i.e. the Gliding Club).

Q: Will this not distract us from core gliding activities ?

A: The café will run as a stand alone company, with it's own accounts and payroll and management, so will not take up resource or time from the committee or the gliding club staff.

Q: How much will it cost to set up ?

A: There are some setup costs around equipping the kitchen and dining facility, marketing the café and providing working capital. These have budgeted and will be subsidised by the club until the café business becomes self sufficient

Q: What about the clubhouse itself ?

A: There is some work required on the clubhouse, we need to replace some of the window frames and entrance doors (as we have done in the bar already) and we also need to provide disabled toilet facilities. In addition the café area and reception would benefit from decorating and new lighting. However most of this work is needed whether or not we proceed with the café plan. While some of it has to be done professionally we will be looking for volunteers to help with other aspects.

Q: What about electric, heating and rates etc?

The Café company will pay a monthly rent to the club to cover utility bills. While we may not make a profit on this element it should mean that the café is cost neutral to the club on a week to week basis

Q: When Will the café pay back the initial investment?

A: We believe that the café should become self sufficient, covering it's operating costs, within 12 months of starting. After that period, provided it is successful, it should make a small profit each year which will come back to BGGC Pty and repay the initial investments. How quickly this happens will depend on the success of the business, but we are hopeful that the initial investment should be repaid within 3-4 years. After that the profit will go to general reserves.

Q: Is this a good investment given the payback period?

A: As discussed earlier much of the investment spend on the clubhouse needs to be done anyway – as we have already started to do with the bar area. Having a vibrant and active café will encourage both members and the public to come to the club and greatly improve the overall atmosphere. We believe there will be significant upside in increased trial lesson and other club activity which will add to direct profits from the café to justify the investment

Q: What if the predicted revenue targets are not met?

We believe that there is a very good chance of the café getting to a position where it covers it's own costs. If this does not happen then we may have to reduce its operation such that it can do so. There is a risk that the café may not fully repay the initial investment. However as has been explained much of that initial investment (such as building refurbishment) is needed anyway and we will end up with a much better clubhouse facility even if the café does not succeed.

Q: Why not get a self employed person in to run a business in the clubhouse?

A: We have tried this with several tenants over the past 15+ years with limited success. It is difficult to find someone willing to compromise their business model to meet the needs of the club, and in every case conflicts have arisen that means the arrangements have broken down.