



WACA Newsletter: March 2026

What sort of an organisation is WACA?

- WACA is a Community Benefit Society.
- We are all volunteers - we have a Board of Directors and have set up Working Groups to cover various elements of our projects.
- Our aim – to maintain businesses and resources on behalf of the people of Wadsworth.
- WACA's role: networking, research, collating evidence, community voice, community representation, purchasing community assets and running them on behalf of the community.

What projects is WACA currently working on?

- We're working to save the Hare and Hounds Inn in Old Town from permanent closure since it was bought, last autumn, by a property developer.
- We're working alongside Friends of Pecket Well Playground and Wadsworth Parish Council, to refurbish and revitalise Pecket Well Playground.

I thought WACA was involved with Old Town Post Office – what's happening there?

- That's right – that's why WACA was originally set up.
- Sadly, we couldn't agree a purchase price with the current owners.
- Happily, they have since sold the Post Office, shop and café business to a private purchaser, and we believe she will be taking over from early April.

What happened with the Hare and Hounds Inn?

- In July 2025, the Hare and Hounds Inn was put up for sale, and by November the sale was completed.
- It was on the open market for less than one month.
- Soon after, a Change of Use (CoU) Application was submitted to Calderdale's Planning Department.
- The Change of Use requested is from a public house to a single residence.
- There was no consultation with this community before the sale.

Why didn't WACA make an offer to purchase the Hare and Hounds Inn?

- WACA was effectively prevented from consulting the community on making an offer, because we were told that the sellers wanted a quick sale.
- And we were reassured by the agent that there were serious potential buyers who would reopen the Hare and Hounds Inn as a pub.

Is the Hare and Hounds Inn an Asset of Community Value (ACV)?

- Yes, WACA applied, under the Community Right to Bid legislation, for the Hare and Hounds Inn to be registered as an Asset of Community Value, and this was granted on 2nd March 2026.
- That means, if and when the property is put up for sale, community groups **will** be given 6 months to put a community bid together.
- Both the ACV and the CoU processes are managed by Calderdale Planning Department according to their own Local Plan policies – having the ACV registered is certainly a very positive message in our favour.

How do you know that you have community backing?

- 317 responses to our Public Survey (as of 23rd Jan 2026), 98.4% of which stated they would support WACA in an ACV application for the Hare and Hounds Inn...
- ...and the majority offered very positive statements about their wish that the pub remains a public space.
- Two Public Meetings (23rd Jan 2026) with 140+ attending - the vast majority present stated their wish for us to fight the closure of the Hare and Hounds Inn.
- 320 official objections to the CoU application on Calderdale's planning portal (and only 2 in favour).
- 1,116 signatures on WACA's "Save the Hare and Hounds from Permanent Closure" petition (as of 21st March 2026).

But the purchasers have moved in - isn't it too late?

- Moving in does not change lawful use - the building remains a pub in legal planning terms.
- This is not personal - it is about following legal planning procedures.
- Planning law is set up to protect communities from just this situation.
- The purchasers both identified themselves as “Property Developer” on Companies House. We believe they will have known that this was a speculative purchase.

So what is the process for a Change of Use Application?

- Local Planning Policy requires these checks before a Public House is changed to a residential property:
 - 1: There is an appropriate alternative
 - 2: The pub is no longer required
 - 3: The pub is no longer viable
 - 4: All reasonable efforts have been made to retain the pub... (including) community ownership.
- WACA has evidence to demonstrate that there is **no** alternative, that the Hare and Hounds Inn **is** required by its community and **would** be viable under a different model, and that **no** efforts were made to retain it as a pub. Therefore we've formally objected to the Change of Use application....
- ...as have more than 300 other people.
- We're still waiting for the planning application to be decided – and we currently have no definite timescale for when this might happen.

What are you working on with Friends of Pecket Well Playground?

- WACA is supporting FoPWP, and working with Wadsworth Parish Council to look at ways to improve the playground, and to encourage increased community use of the area.
 - Together, we are applying for a grant to upgrade the equipment.
 - FoPWP have recently launched a consultation via their Facebook page.
 - There's also a fundraising and information event on 16th April – see details PTO.
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What to do...?

Find out more about
all our projects at
WACACoop.org.uk

Follow us on
social media



Get involved with anything
that takes your interest...
...email us at
info@WACACoop.org.uk

Join our mailing list at
WACACoop.org.uk/contact

Watch out for future
fundraising events,
including a Ceilidh on
30th May 2026 at WCC

Become a WACA
Member – watch
for more info

Sign our save the H&H
petition on our Hare and
Hounds page

Come to the FoPWP Pub
Quiz on 16th April at 9pm
at the Robin Hood Inn

Friends of Pecket Well Playground

Buy a FoPWP Raffle Ticket
on our FoPWP page

