

FRIENDS of the JOINERS ARMS / BUSINESS PLAN



FOUNDATION
FOR FUTURE
LONDON



Social
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Business

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CREATIVE
FUTURES FUND



Community
Shares

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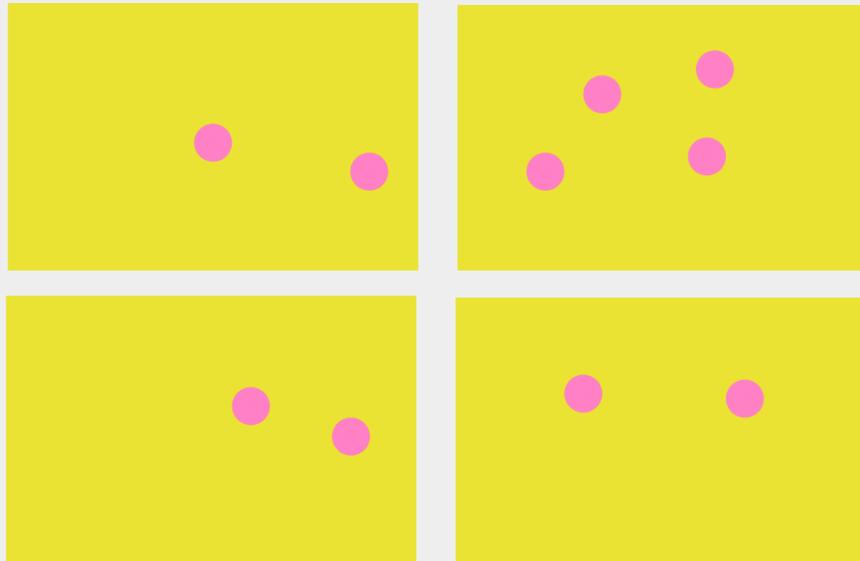
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WHAT

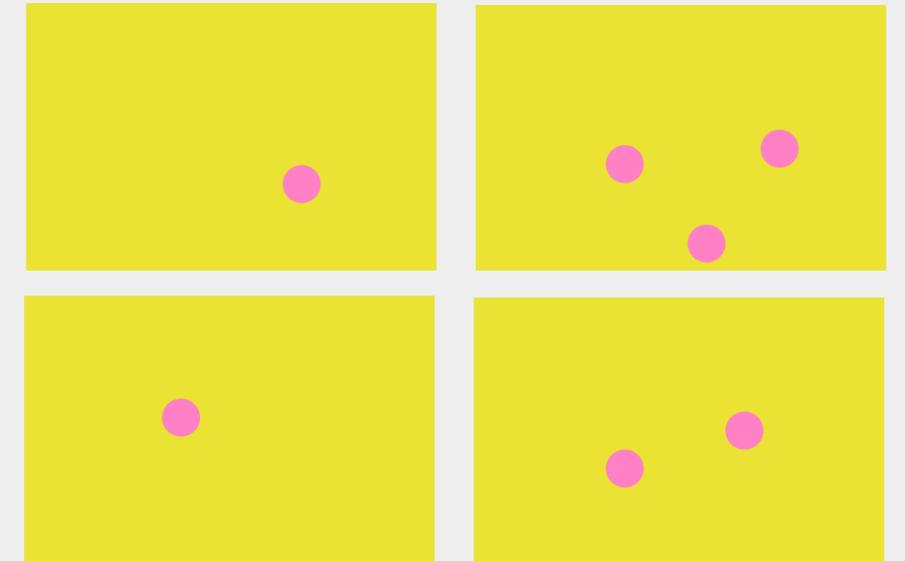
VISION

Our vision is to create East London's first LGBTQI+ community-run pub/venue that is truly inclusive and pioneering in its approach to social change.



MISSION

For marginalised members of the queer community who are under-represented in existing spaces, our community-run pub will be a queer, not-for-profit, later licence and accessible space that provides opportunities for socialising, performance and jobs, and funding for community services.



VALUES

Friends of the Joiners Arms (FOTJA) are an award-winning¹ campaign group who fought for historic planning protections for the Joiners Arms on Hackney Road, which secured a long-term replacement space for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Intersex (LGBTQI+) community of East London.²

FOTJA are passionate about breaking down barriers and empowering LGBTQI+ people, and believe having access to LGBTQI+ spaces is fundamental to our wellbeing as well as creating much-needed employment opportunities for LGBTQI+ people. FOTJA aim to open London's first community-run LGBTQI+ space and want to help reverse the pattern of mass closures of queer venues.

FOTJA use the term 'queer' as a radical word which encompasses the widest range of sexualities and genders, to indicate "queer not as being about who you're having sex with (that can be a dimension of it); but queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live."³

FOTJA are registered as a Community Benefit Society (CBS)⁴ to allow us to operate with the community as our focus, and aim to open a space that is fun, accessible, inclusive, diverse and builds community cohesion in the process.

¹Sheila McKechnie Foundation's 'Best Community Campaign' award in 2018.

²<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/12/joiners-arms-redevelopment-must-include-lgbt-nightclub-council-rules>

³Quote from bell hooks, 2014.

⁴The purpose of a community benefit society is to serve the broader interests of the community, in contrast to co-operative societies that serve the interests of members. Any profits are reinvested back into the business. Business details can be found on the [FCA Mutuals Register](#), registration no. 7735



Queer not as being about who you're having sex with

(that can be a dimension of it);

but queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live

- bell hooks

THREE YEAR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES, 2022-2025

1

Transfer FOTJA's current events programme into a permanent space by the end of 2024

- a. Identify and acquire the lease on a meanwhile space for a minimum duration of 15 years
- b. Utilise the early period of occupation to test and refine the operating model
- c. Document and evidence the social impact of the model to adapt the business plan
- d. Identify, qualify and secure additional fundraising required by 2026, including trading reserves, new share capital and mortgages, as voted on by Members⁵.

2

By June 2022, launch a Community Share offer to part finance the operating model and develop a wider cohort of members to shape the operating model

- a. Launch a Community Share offer by June 2022
- b. Raise a minimum of £125,000 in Community Shares by August 2022, with a maximum raise of £175,000 (both of these figures include £25,000 in equity funding to be secured via Community Shares Booster Fund)
- c. Recruit 1,000 members to our Community Benefit Society (CBS) and hold at least two meetings per year for society members
- d. Create community engagement and sense of ownership in the space, and achieve 25% of members voting in the Year 1 AGM
- e. Investigate and implement innovative ways for members to shape the operation of CBS and venue

3

Position FOTJA as a queer champion in the wider London LGBTQI+ scene

- a. Centre accessibility in the design of the space and have 75% of performance events with paid-for accessibility support (such as BSL interpreters, live-captioning, audio description, and/or live-streaming) by Year 3
- b. Facilitate the launch of 6 new cabaret/club nights by emerging producers in the first year of operation
- c. Partner with 6 registered charities or community organisations in the first year of operation to host drop-in events and services at the space
- d. Create well-paid, secure employment opportunities of at least 8.3 FTE by Year 3 – including sponsoring individuals to obtain their security licensing
- e. Create a Community Advisory Board by end of Year 1 of at least 6 members representing different marginalised communities, to deliver biannual review on delivery of provision
- f. Implement the findings from the 12-month research project entitled '*JOIN: Queer Community Futures Project*' exploring how best to provide employment and training opportunities to LGBTQIA+ people facing homelessness or seeking asylum into our operating model by end of 2025

⁵We are asking people to invest in the first share offer as a long-term investment, with a plan to allow 7.5% of capital to be withdrawn each year after Year 5. If the second share sale requires a change to this, this will go to our Members to be agreed.



Why is an LGBTQI+ space needed?

LGBTQI+ bars have historically been empowering spaces, offering sanctuary, self-discovery, and employment, where friendships and romances are born, and communities thrive.

However, London lost 58% of its LGBTQI+ spaces in the 10 years leading up to 2015.⁶ These closures have disproportionately affected the most marginalised within LGBTQI+ communities including trans people, people of colour (POC), and disabled and neurodiverse people, and the imminent pressures on the remaining spaces make profit-making a priority.

The issues currently affecting London's LGBTQI+ spaces include:

- None are fully physically accessible, and do not make accommodations for disabled and neurodiverse people, for example blind, D/deaf and/or neurodivergent people
- Collapse in number of venues means fewer employment opportunities in LGBTQI+-run businesses
- Many have exclusionary door policies, or limit access to marginalised groups in other ways (e.g. marketing and programming aimed at a white cisgender gay male audience)
- Increasing cost of running nights/spaces limits who can afford to perform at and produce nights
- Limited scope of profit-driven activities inside the venues leads to exclusion

Together, these issues lead to **marginalisation and under-representation in who designs, delivers and accesses LGBTQI+ social spaces, all against a backdrop of rising numbers of hate crimes against LGBTQI+ people.**⁷

⁶LGBTQ+ Cultural Infrastructure in London: Night Venues, 2006-present' Campkin & Marshall, 2017

⁷<https://www.itv.com/news/2021-12-02/police-recorded-lgbt-hate-crimes-up-sharply-since-lockdown-figures-show>

⁸25th Feb - 15 Oct 2019; 138 responses.

In an anonymous online survey conducted by FOTJA in 2019 :

91%

said they felt queer spaces furthered the social well-being and interests of the LGBTQI+ community

67%

of respondents said they feel like there are now fewer venues that they can go to that they feel completely comfortable in.

However, this percentage increased to

75%

for respondents who identified as Jewish, Black, Asian, POC, Mixed Race or Latinx.

99%

of respondents said they believed it is important to have queer venues and spaces

London lost

58%

of its LGBTQI+ spaces in the ten years leading up to 2015

Why is a community-run space the right model?

FOTJA came into existence in 2014 to fight against the closure of the Joiners Arms on Hackney Road.

This campaigning experience has given FOTJA a detailed working knowledge of planning processes in East London and the threats posed to queer spaces. FOTJA have since transformed into an organisation passionate about protecting and creating queer spaces, and have chosen to use the robust community-run business model: a staggering 99% of community pubs survive the first 5 years, whereas average small and medium sized enterprises have a 5 year survival rate of 44%.⁹

FOTJA have been awarded bursaries and grants, and participated in business support programmes¹⁰ to develop a community business model. The queer space will be community organised and operated, and the structure of our operation will take precedent from other community owned and operated pubs such as The Bevy¹¹ and Ivy House¹², with the day-to-day operations run by paid, professional staff.

⁹ https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/FINAL_Impact-Report-2021-5.pdf

¹⁰ Plunkett Foundation 'More Than A Pub' 2017 programme, including a £2.5K bursary; [The Hive](#) peer-mentoring support programme (run by Co-operatives UK) in 2018; the GLA's [Cultural Infrastructure Special Assistance](#) (CISA) – Pilot programme in 2020; £10K development grant by Co-operatives UK (funded by Power to Change and the Mayor of London) as part of their 'Boosting Community Business London' programme in 2022

¹¹ <https://www.thebevy.co.uk/>

¹² <https://www.ivyhousesunhead.com/>

What is the demand for a new queer space?

Since 2018 FOTJA have operated the bimonthly cabaret night *Lèse Majesté* in venues in Hackney and Tower Hamlets.

These nights celebrate and centre queer women, trans, non-binary people, and platform Black & POC queer/trans performers & DJs. *Lèse Majesté* nights have been instrumental in creating much-needed inclusive nights for marginalised members of the LGBTQI+ community, and also offer a snapshot of what our future space will offer (as well as allowing us to test and develop ideas, and gather feedback).

Since returning in November 2021 following a hiatus during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, tickets for *Lèse Majesté* have sold out for each event, clearly demonstrating the need and appreciation for such nights. In addition, *Lèse Majesté* has taken place on both Thursday and Friday nights and demonstrates the demand for such events is not limited to the weekend.

As the revenue from *Lèse Majesté* has increased with its increasing popularity, FOTJA have taken advantage of our not-for-profit model by increasing performer fees, and creating additional paid opportunities (e.g. stage manager and mental health first-aider). As of Spring 2024, *Lèse Majesté* has BSL interpreters, live-captioning and mental health first aiders. Additionally, in 2019 FOTJA (in partnership with The Outside Project) piloted two sober cabaret events named *Lèse Majesté: Sober Kingdom* which allowed us to explore ideas around providing sober events.

¹³ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/culturalidentity/sexuality/bulletins/sexualidentityuk/latest>

¹⁴ https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/1a/1946157248/subreports/wapop_compared/report.aspx?

¹⁵ <https://www.crunch.co.uk/knowledge-running-a-business/pursuing-the-pink-pound-how-big-is-the-uks-lgbt-market>

¹⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2019>

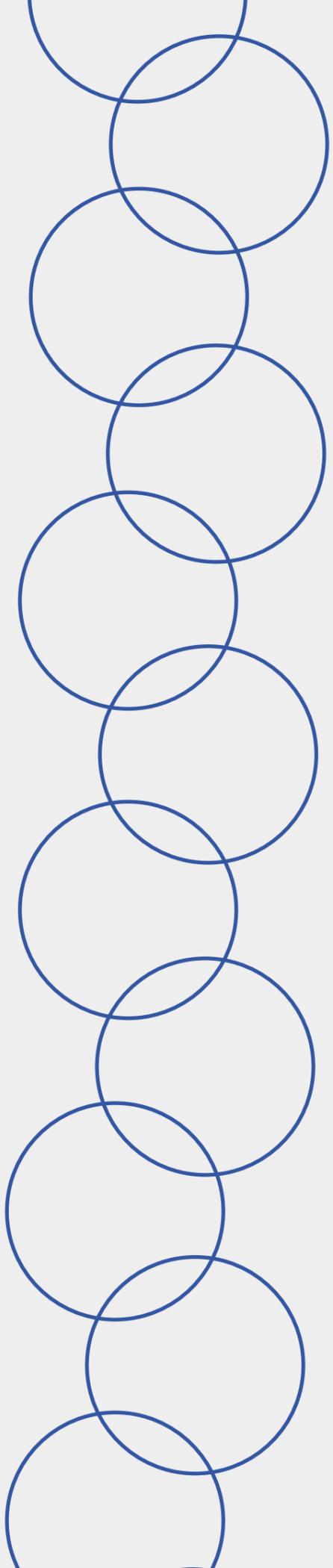
Further proving the commitment to community engagement, FOTJA have anonymously surveyed ticket holders after each event, and strive to implement the changes requested in time for the next event. This has resulted in improving punctuality for show start times, additional seating, and creating an accessible bar area. Respondents to our post-event surveys attested to the need for these events at the community level, with 100% of respondents saying they'd recommend Lèse Majesté to a friend.

In addition, free-text responses from attendees demonstrate the importance of creating such spaces to individuals:

“It felt safe and revolutionary all at the same time.”

“A genuinely supportive and safe community space”

“As a trans person it honestly feels like coming home when I go to a space like this, a rare opportunity to feel truly comfortable in London, I’m still buzzing the day after!”

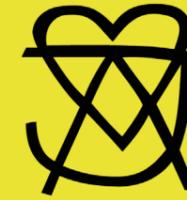


Our permanent venue will allow us to build upon the inclusive queer events and activities that FOTJA already produce, with greater ability to make these even more diverse and accessible, without being limited by other venues' support and decision-making.

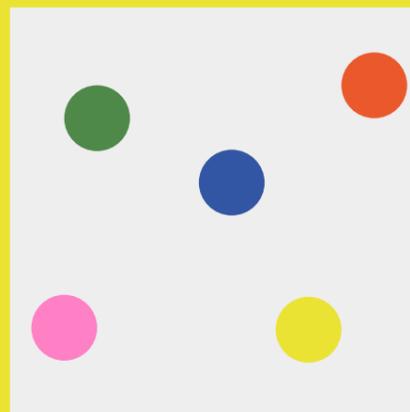
The ONS Census 2021 surveyed sexual identity and gender identity for the first time. Based on these results, there are 56,650 people who identify as LGB + in the boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Newham and Waltham Forest. There are 11,460 people who reported that their gender identity was different to their sex registered at birth. These populations are likely to intersect, and there are large numbers of people who chose not to answer these questions – however, they give some indication of the potential number of LGBTQI+ people in these boroughs.

Spending power is very difficult to quantify (not least because of the lack of population data), but it has been suggested that the concept of the 'pink pound' (the idea that LGBTQI+ people are more prosperous than heterosexual counterparts) may be a myth.¹⁵ The boroughs of east London contain neighbourhoods which are in the highest decile of the Index of Multiple Deprivation; yet it's to be noted that there is a variety with the boroughs. For example, Tower Hamlets also contains neighbourhoods which are in the lowest decile (likely due to the proximity to Canary Wharf), and Hackney contains neighbourhoods which are in the lower deciles.¹⁶

Our intention is to offer a space which actively works to lower barriers of entry (for example, by keeping drinks prices low, offering bottomless filter coffee, and allowing people to use the venue without requiring purchases), whilst also using the revenue generated by those who have a higher spend to cross-subsidise the lowering of barriers. Our share sale reflects this, in that we kept the minimum purchase price lower than the average for a CBS share sale, and allowed people to purchase Pay It Forward shares to assist those members of the community who are unable to afford the minimum purchase price.



“As a trans person it honestly feels like coming home when I go to a space like this, rare opportunity to feel truly comfortable in London, I’m still buzzing the day after!”



What is the existing market in London for queer venues?

FOTJA is unique in its ambition to launch a space as a CBS – there are no community businesses in the UK run by and for the LGBTQI+ community. However, FOTJA build upon the robust community-business sector,¹⁷ and take particular inspiration from the long-standing community-run pub Ivy House in South London.

FOTJA carried out a competition analysis of LGBTQI+ and community-run spaces in London. Our analysis revealed there are no accessible LGBTQI+ or community-run spaces, and there are zero not-for-profit LGBTQI+ spaces in London. Our vision is serving these intersecting unmet needs within London and seeks to establish a truly unique LGBTQI+ space. Whilst there are other LGBTQI+ spaces in east London, and in the wider London area, they are subject to commercial pressures (particularly regarding increasing rent costs) and this can affect their programming and need to appeal to customers with a higher average spend-per-head. It should also be noted that there are no community-run LGBTQI+ spaces in London, and there is a real need for a grassroots community LGBTQI+ space that is truly democratically run by the community and is accountable to their needs.

¹⁷ 147 community pubs trading in 2021 <https://plunkett.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-Impact-Report-2021-5.pdf>

FOTJA has also undertaken analysis of emerging queer nights, events and groups that are focussed on serving marginalised members of the queer community, and that would benefit from having a long-term venue to operate from. Our analysis reveals that there are a large number of nights, events and groups – with potentially large customer bases – who would be ideal to make use of our main space and/or function room. We would seek to provide a space for these groups, and also to develop and strengthen community networks amongst the promoters and attendees. This would be operated under a model where revenue from ticket sales is kept by the organisers, and revenue from the bar is kept by FOTJA. Events, nights and groups we identified in 2022 that we would seek to work with include **Dykes With Mics, Queer House Party, TransActual UK, Gendered Intelligence, Opal We Exist, Queer Running Club, Pxssy Palace, The Bitten Peach, The Cocoa Butter Club, Not a Phase, Transmissions, The Gold Rush London, Louche Magazine, Boi Box, Kings of Club, Them Fatale London, Queefy Cabaret, ThroughMelanEyes, Sexquisite, Cybertease, Bar Wotever, Non-binary cabaret, Woof cabaret, Queer Prom, The Enby show, Haus of Dons, Scissor Cis Tears cabaret, We Exist London, GGI Club, Cookie Jar, Gender Swap, Pecs Drag Kings, Chaos Cabaret, Transome Club, Raze Collective, Lounge Onyx, NOT OK Club, Riposte London, Transvision, Queer Life Drawing, LICK events, U OK HUN?, 56 Dean Street, Khandi Shop Cabaret, Dragiators cabaret, Ugly Duck, Sissy Scum, Euro Pee Huns, Fussy Party, Fèmmme Fraîche, Drag Syndrome, Misery Party.**

HOW

We had originally aimed to use the ‘Meanwhile Use’ model of turning a vacant building into socio-economic value for the local community,¹⁸ before moving into a permanent space. However, following the news that the proposed redevelopment of the Joiners Arms site is no longer going ahead, we will aim to secure a lease for our community-run LGBTQI+ space in east London for at least 15 years from 2024.

Working in partnership with the GLA and partner organisations (including TfL, London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Newham), we will find a suitable site, agree lease terms, re-develop and fit-out the space, and seek planning conditions to change the use class and obtain a licence where appropriate. If no space can be identified by 2024, share capital will be returned.

We are currently working closely with colleagues at the GLA, who have agreed to support discussions with negotiate with stakeholders and with our architecture/design partners at (ab~), to secure a lease on a suitable site. We are meeting regularly to monitor progress on this, with stakeholder meetings occurring in between. We commenced physical inspections of potential sites in late May 2022, and we will move at pace once a suitable site has been identified to agree heads of terms before the end of 2024.

The proposed site will be located within Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest or Newham and a detailed programme of work will commence immediately following the signing of the lease agreement which centres community involvement in the design and fit-out. This should lead to us being in a position to open the venue in early 2025.

¹⁹ A detailed First Scope of Works has been agreed with (ab~), the queer collective of architects and designers who will lead on work required to turn the site into a venue.

²⁰ We will seek to obtain a licence and operating hours for the venue of 16.00 to 00.00 each day (with the ability to apply for Temporary Event Notices) but this can not be guaranteed until it has been granted

¹⁸ https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/meanwhile_use_for_london_final.pdf

The space will:

Be open to the public 7 days a week, 4pm to midnight²⁰

Be a multi-use space, with a main bar area plus a small function room available for private hire

Have an estimated maximum capacity of 250 people

Offer alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, and a limited menu of hot snacks

Generate surplus revenue from a viable business model

Accessibility and inclusion

The space will be open 7 days a week, offering a safe space for LGBTQI+ people to socialise and engage with a range of activities throughout the week. Having a multi-use space (with a main bar and separate function room) will allow FOTJA to cater for different groups within the LGBTQI+ community who currently are not able to access queer spaces (e.g. family events, older people socials).

FOTJA will seek to work with the community – customers, promoters, and community groups – to create a varied programme of cultural and social events, which platform and engage members of more diverse groups. FOTJA will hire an Operations and Marketing Manager, who will be able to focus on programming events and marketing the venue to groups who are usually excluded or minimised. FOTJA are passionate about creating spaces for people to learn creative skills (e.g. drag workshops) as well breaking down barriers for people wanting to host their own nights. The management committee will review the progress through internal quarterly reviews and regular feedback opportunities, in collaboration with the dedicated Operations and Marketing Manager (see Management section).

FOTJA aims to create the most accessible queer venue in London and will centre accessibility from the design onwards. This will include securing a single-level space, with step-free access, wider door frames, accessible tables, dedicated bar-section, and more. FOTJA will also seek to create and support a network of accessibility support workers for nights at the venue, including BSL interpreters, live-captioning, audio description, and the infrastructure to support live-streaming. We will work with external accessibility advisors to develop and test the accessibility of the venue and our events.

This will allow us to:

Prioritise accessibility and inclusion in its design and programming

Create employment opportunities for staff and members of the night-time economy

Subsidise non-profit making activities

Act as a catalyst for social change

²⁰ We will seek to obtain a licence and operating hours for the venue of 16.00 to 00.00 each day (with the ability to apply for Temporary Event Notices) but this can not be guaranteed until it has been granted

Reinvesting in the space

The space will have a bar which will be profit-making allowing reinvestment of surplus revenue – after paying staff – back into the operation of the CBS. The not-for-profit model allows FOTJA to host less profitable events such as alcohol-free parties, or free-entry cinema nights, as well as offering use of the function room free of charge to the community (e.g. for meetings, rehearsals, social meet-ups). Furthermore, this not-for-profit model enables FOTJA to invest in resources to further meet accessibility needs (e.g. hiring BSL interpreters for events, or keeping part of the space on busy nights as quiet areas).

Full details of financial projections are available in the 'Finance' section.

Employment opportunities

The space will create employment opportunities equivalent to 5.6 FTE at London Living Wage or above in Year 1, increasing to 8.3 FTE by Year 3 and beyond. In addition, FOTJA aims for the space to host 3 nights per week with additional entertainment which we estimate will create over 750 paid slots for performers and DJs each year. Such nights also create paid opportunities for many other people working in the nighttime/entertainment ecosystem such as sound technicians and photographers, as well as opportunities to platform new promoters. Taking the Lèse Majesté cabaret nights as a pilot, across ten events FOTJA have created paid opportunities totaling £8,350 for 96 performers and DJs, 10 photographers, and 10 sound technicians. We will aim to facilitate the launch of at least six new cabaret/club nights in Year 1 of operation.

FOTJA are passionate about providing training for staff through initiatives such as sponsoring individuals to obtain their security licensing. This will make door policies safer for LGBTQI+ people, and is just one example of how our project will seek to increase the employment opportunities for members of marginalised demographics who face disproportionate unemployment.

Catalyst for social change

Transparency and accountability are key values to FOTJA. We will be transparent with our finances and publish open annual reporting. FOTJA aim to be a catalyst for wider change, and therefore we will be open to sharing advice and experience with any groups across the UK wishing to replicate our model. FOTJA will also have a constant process of seeking to improve our best practices, through regular opportunities for feedback from customers, promoters and any other stakeholders to be reviewed by the Management Committee, staff, and the wider membership. We will hold at least two meetings each year for members of the CBS to learn about and input into the operation of the space, and will aim for 50% of members to attend at least one membership meeting per year. We will share all advice and experience with the wider sector of community-run and LGBTQI+ spaces. FOTJA will seek opportunities for collaborations and work cooperatively with others, and aim to partner with at least 6 queer charities or community-run organisations in Year 1 to host events/services at the space.

Target Audience

The space will centre those who are marginalised within the LGBTQ+ community. This includes:

- Black people & people of colour
- Women
- Trans and non-binary folk
- Older people
- Disabled people

Whilst their needs are diverse and complex, and these groups can intersect, FOTJA seek to provide a space which reduces barriers to entry and inclusion, includes their voices in decision making, creates opportunities to socialise, perform and work, and provides spaces for community functions which do not necessarily need to be for-profit.

The Community Share offer, which ran in summer 2022, was marketed to a marginalised and diverse community. In doing this, FOTJA created a community business with a completely different community of over 2,000 shareholders who will be empowered by the democratic structure of CBS. Only 5.5% of community businesses are in London, 92% of community shares are held by white people and 33% by those over 65 years of age.²¹ The venue will function as a social space where participants can form and grow their networks. Events run specifically by and for marginalised groups will ensure that participants can gain confidence in their potential and self-initiative, without physical or financial barriers.

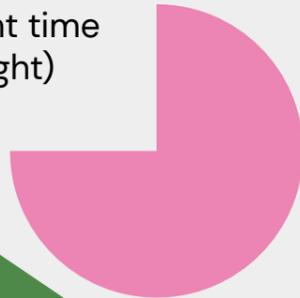
²¹ https://www.uk.coop/sites/default/files/2020-10/community-shares-report-2020-final_0.pdf

Our target audiences can be broken down into:

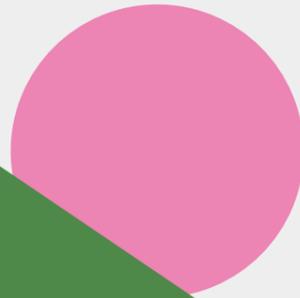
Afternoon / early evening (4pm - 8pm)



Weekday night time (8pm - midnight)



Weekend night time (8pm - midnight)²²



²²Additionally, we will seek to use a limited number of Temporary Event Notices (TENs) to obtain later licences for special events throughout the year

1. Afternoon / early evening

FOTJA will create a relaxed space for those arriving from opening time (4pm) to the start of any evening events (8pm). There will be a focus on relaxed socialising in the main area, with a range of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, and a limited menu of low-price hot snacks served. We aim to keep drinks prices as low as possible (i.e. around £5 incl VAT per drink, with costs estimated at 40%) and hot snacks to be in the form of a limited selection of toasted sandwiches (priced at £5 incl VAT) to be prepared in advance and heated/served by bar team.

We will seek to programme smaller events that encourage forming of social relationships and networks (semi-hosted, low-key mixers events, e.g. board games, crafts, quizzes, zine making), whilst also making space for people to socialise and drink in the style of a traditional 'local pub'. In addition, we will enable people to use the space for work, with a flat-rate charge for refillable coffee, and improve digital access by making a small number of laptops available for people to borrow on request. We will also seek to create a relaxed, welcoming atmosphere through the provision of a free library of queer books and zines.

In the function room on weekdays and at weekends, we hope to work in collaboration with other organisations (e.g. Outside Project, African Rainbow Family, Positive East HIV testing/healthcare, ELOP, Gendered Intelligence) to create a programme of regular drop-in events such as housing advice clinics, HIV/AIDS testing, health outreach and signposting. In addition, the function room will be available to community groups and campaigners to book for free for non-profit-making events, where a private space is required (e.g. meetings, book clubs). We also expect a small number of for-profit events to be booked in the function room, e.g. small parties and gatherings. The cost of hire will be £250 (incl. VAT) per evening.

2. Weekday Night Time

During the week, we will focus on a welcoming pub culture with high lighting and low music to improve accessibility.

We would expect most of our regular customers in this timeslot to be travelling short distances from the local East London area to meet friends or new people. To drive up footfall, we will create a regular programme of events on specific nights that attract local people and those who may travel from other areas of London, such as film nights, live music, quizzes, karaoke, stand-up comedy – and expect to be busier on Thursdays and Sundays, when these events would be more likely to be programmed. We will continue our daytime offering of non-alcoholic drinks and a limited selection of hot snacks into the evening, encouraging a more relaxed space to socialise rather than one focussed purely on consumption of alcohol.

We expect an average footfall of 60 people per night in Year 1 (rising to 90 people per night in Year 2, and 100 per night in Year 3). We expect an average spend-per-head of £12.60 (incl VAT) per person in Year 1, rising to £14.30 per head in Year 2 and £14.90 in Year 3 as our programming, events and social cohesion lead people to stay for longer when attending.

3. Weekend night time

Our weekend night time programming will have a broader reach and people will travel further to come to the bar or for our programme of regular, high-profile events.

The customer profile will be a mixture of regulars and one-off users, including those who have built friendship networks through our daytime services. We would expect customers to travel from other areas of London, and for some higher profile events to attract customers from across the UK and other parts of the world. Events and programming will seek to platform members of groups that are marginalised within the queer community, and attract customers who struggle to access existing spaces (whether due to physical or financial barriers, or other forms of exclusion). We will seek to programme events that platform innovative, emerging, or under-represented art-forms (such as our existing drag king cabaret, *Lèse Majesté*) which we hope will both attract loyal audiences, develop exciting musical and artistic practices, and feed into our marketing.

We expect an average footfall of 140 per night on Fridays and Saturdays in Year 1 (rising to 200 per night in Year 2, and 235 per night in Year 3). We expect an increase on average spend-per-head compared to weeknights, starting at £15 (incl VAT) per person in Year 1 and rising to £20 per person in Year 2 and 3.

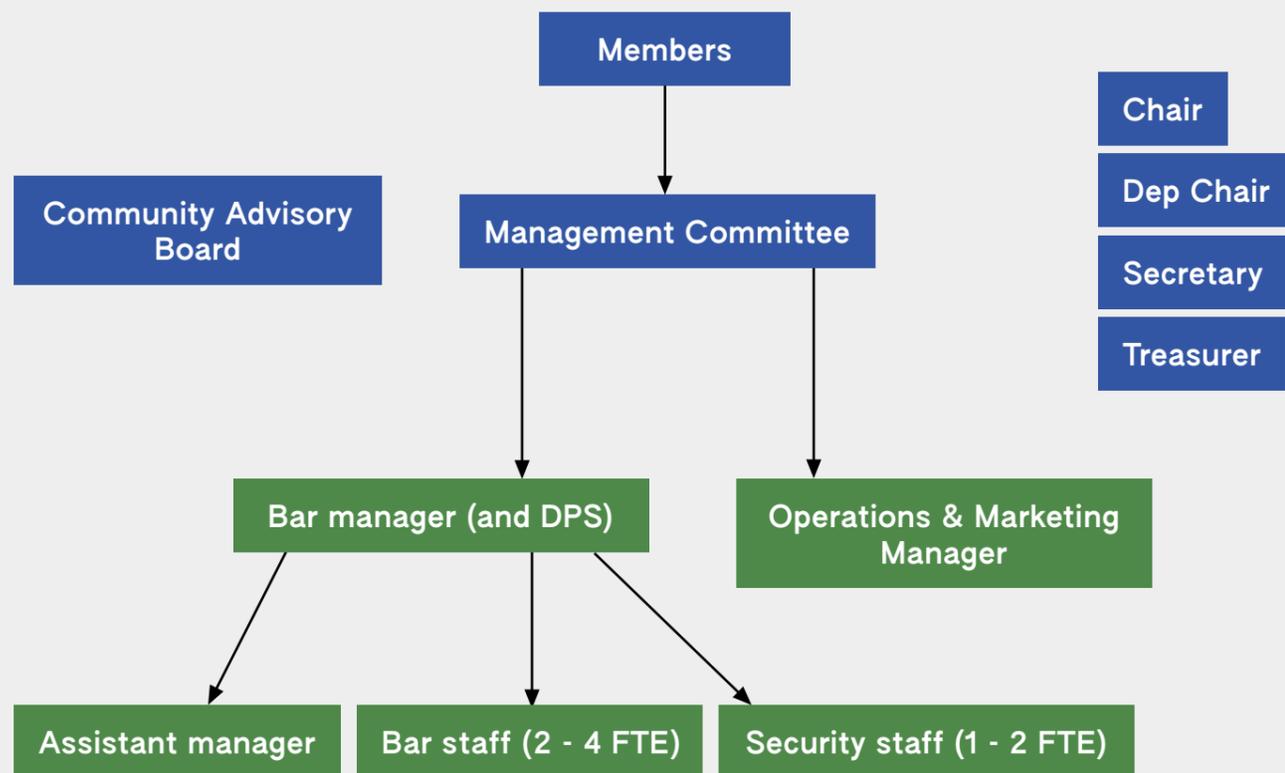
WHO

Overview

Members of the Community Benefit Society will elect a Management Committee of between 8-10 members. The Management Committee will lead on the strategic oversight of the organisation and the venue.

For the day-to-day running of the venue, FOTJA will hire paid employees. Additionally, the Management Committee will continue to seek support from outside advisors, and hope to formalise this into a Community Advisory Board.

The proposed structure to be implemented prior to opening the venue is indicated in this diagram:



Paid employees

Prior to opening, we will hire:

- An experienced bar manager to lead the team of bar and security staff, who is also the designated premises supervisor (DPS)
- An assistant manager, who can support the bar manager in the day-to-day running of the bar and staff
- Bar staff paid at London Living Wage (equivalent to 2.2 FTE in Year 1, rising to 3.6 FTE in Year 3)
- Freelance Security staff (equivalent to 1.4 FTE in Year 1 rising to 1.7 by Year 3)
- An Operations & Marketing Manager to provide support with back office functions (such as administration, book-keeping, programming, community engagement) and marketing/social media. This will be 1 - 1.5 FTE.

We haven't yet identified potential candidates for the aforementioned roles, but we intend to begin our hiring process once we have a confirmed timeline for the opening of our space.

FOTJA intend to implement policies including a positive discrimination policy (to allow us to target hiring marginalised members of the LGBTQ+ community) and a flexible working policy (to allow staff members to work in patterns that meet their lives and needs). Longer-term, we will also aim to bring freelance staff (such as Security) in-house and create more stable employment opportunities.

Further, FOTJA were awarded a Propel grant in 2023 to explore how our venue can best offer volunteering and employment opportunities for members of the LGBTQ+ community with experience of homelessness and/or precarious migration statuses. The findings from this research will inform our policies.

Outside Advisors

FOTJA currently have expertise from outside advisors including business planning support, architectural and design support, accountancy support, mentoring from other Community Benefit Societies, and expert support on share sales from Co-operatives UK and the Plunkett Foundation. FOTJA expect to continue to seek outside support through the life of the project, including expertise on accessibility, insurance, HR and employment policies, licensing and planning permission. We would hope to formalise this into a Community Advisory Board, of experienced paid-advisors and non-executive directors, who would meet twice a year to assess our progress.

CBS Members

As a Community Benefit Society (registration no. 7735) we operate by our society rules which have been approved by the FCA and the Plunkett Foundation. Following our share sale, our members (shareholders) are responsible for the overall direction of the organisation. FOTJA will hold an Annual General Meeting for all members, at which elections and other decisions will be voted on. Members can request an extraordinary meeting at any point, and have other democratic rights.

We currently operate under the Plunkett Foundation v6 model rules, together with three additional changes based on the Co-operatives UK model rules. The model rules are available on the FCA Mutuels Register.

Community Benefit Societies are encouraged by Plunkett Foundation to update their Model Rules for a variety of reasons: to make them more streamlined or readable, to be more descriptive, to inform users about new best practise and to adhere to legal requirements of new laws (such as the GDPR). We have also sought expert external advice and have included the following additional rules (based on rules included in Co-operatives UK's model rules) which:

- Cancel the shares of any members removed from the Register of Members (preventing unpayable debt)
- Alter the composition of the minimum required shareholding from 1 share at £25, to 25 shares at £1 each (to enable us to alter the cost of the minimum required shareholding, with approval from members, at a future date should we wish to)
- Include provisions to reduce the share values, should the liabilities of the society be judged to exceed the assets (enabling us to pay back a proportion of share value to members, in the event of winding up the society)

Management Committee

Our Management Committee will be elected by the members, and will continue to include the roles of Chair, Deputy Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Management Committee will be responsible for the strategic running of the organisation, and maintain oversight of the day-to-day running of the venue. Decisions will be voted on by the Management Committee, and can only be agreed if quorate. FOTJA intend to create a workers' representative seat on the Management Committee, and work proactively to ensure a diverse group of people make up the Management Committee. Places on the Management Committee will be up for election when a current member retires, steps down or is removed, and/or until we reach our maximum members of the Management Committee (set at 10 people). Our rules state Management Committee members have to stand for re-election after 3 years, for a total of 3 terms (9 years).

In line with our model rules, all members of the Management Committee are required to declare an interest and shall not vote in any matter in which they, or their spouse or partner or immediate relative, have a personal, financial or other material interest.²³

²³ See Appendix 2a, rule 5.18, and Appendix 2b, rule 5.17.

Our current elected Management Committee consists of:

Name	Role	Skills	Pronouns
Amy Roberts	Chair	Academic scientist with expertise in data analysis and evidence-based decision making. Lover of pubs and queer spaces.	She / her
Peter Cragg	Treasurer	Project manager, writer, queer campaigner, and big fan of going home early (or sometimes "one more pint")	He / him
Prinx Silver		Drag king, Trans icon, event producer, social media wizard	They / He
Cal Marrin		Child & adolescent counsellor for Place2Be and Mosaic LGBT+, also a sex + relationships educator for Brook and starfish.	They / them
Jon Ward		Queer Black academic who teaches and researches cultural representations of the body, identity, and nation. Lover of pubs, queer spaces, and dancing in both.	He / him
Isabella Lewis	Deputy Chair	Project Manager in the sexual health sector with a background in events production spanning Latin America and Europe, queer campaigner and always up for a dance.	They / them
Joe	Secretary	Trainee art psychotherapist, not psychoanalysing these profiles. Loves moving body but also loves having a sit down.	He / him
Dr Olimpia Burchiellaro		Academic and anthropologist of gender/sexuality, queer politics and political economy.	She / her

MILESTONES

2015

January: Secured Asset of Community Value (ACV) status for the Joiners Arms

2017

October: Won historic planning protections for redevelopment of site of the Joiners Arms

2018

March: Registered as a Community Benefit Society

2021

January: Won further planning protections for redevelopment of site of the Joiners Arms

2022

January: Secured funding from Co-operatives UK for community share sale

March: Secured first tranche of capital grant funding from Foundation for Future London

June: Launched community shares sale

August: Successfully reached minimum required share sale and raised £127K

2023

- Established connections with council representatives in London Boroughs of Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Newham
- Held first AGM with 15% turn-out
- Considered 18 sites as possible venues
- Secured funding from Propel for a 12 month research project on the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people facing homelessness or seeking asylum

Future Aims

2024

- Secure minimum 15-year lease on suitable space in Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest or Newham

2025

- January–April: Design and fit-out of space with community engagement
- April: Hire paid bar manager, assistant manager, bar staff prior to opening
- May: Open our venue

2026 (end of Year 1)

- Hire Operations & Marketing Manager
- Create Community Advisory Board

2030 (start of Year 5)

- Anticipated 7.5% of share capital withdrawable by members²⁴

²⁴ We are asking people to invest in the first share offer as a long-term investment, with a plan to allow 7.5% of capital to be withdrawn each year after Year 5. If the second share sale requires a change to this, this will go to our Members to be agreed.

Pre-Launch

Our starting financial position is £0: all grants received prior to this, and any income earned through trading, have been spent on creating the share offer. 3 years of accounts are available via the FCA Mutuals Register.

The total amount required prior to launch is estimated at £203,059, which will cover:

- the cost of designing and fitting-out the venue
- installation of a fully-functioning bar and venue
- the costs associated with staffing the design / fit-out / installation project
- the costs to become ready-to-open

Item	Cost
Design and fit-out of venue ²⁵	£156,292
Installing a fully-functioning bar ²⁶	£22,200
Ready-to-open ²⁷	£24,567
Total	£203,059

²⁵ This includes funds required for all stages of build; outside (signage etc); equipment (including full sound system); costs for architects, designers and contractors

²⁶ This includes funds required for equipment and stock required for the serving and storage of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks

²⁷ This includes funds required for lease; insurance; licences; promotional/marketing costs; legal fees; utilities; staffing costs for pre-trading period; and contingency

We expect to meet these costs through a combination of:

- £92,000 in capital grant funding (already secured via Foundation for Future London)
- £116,500 from the sale of community shares (undertaken in summer 2022)
- securing a £25,000 equity investment from the Co-operatives UK Community Shares Booster Fund (to be paid on signing lease), which is recorded in our financial forecasts as part of the total for Members Shares

We developed detailed financial projections for the minimum raise scenario and the maximum raise scenario (our maximum target is £175,000, which includes £25,000 to be secured as equity investment via the Community Shares Booster Fund).

The amounts raised will generate a cash contingency to support cashflow on opening. Depending on cost fluctuations, this will allow us to employ an Operations & Marketing Manager (1 FTE) from Year 1 onwards which will improve our programming, organisation, and community engagement and consequently drive an increase in trade/average spend-per-head. It will also allow us to bring security staff in-house from Year 2, creating additional secure employment opportunities. The maximum raise will also allow us to offer accessibility support workers for a larger number of performance events. All of these additional costs will enable us to better meet our aims as a society, as well as generate more revenue over the longer term (even though the higher staffing costs will generate a bigger loss in the short term).

Our financial forecasts were produced for our share sale, and the numbers in this plan reflect these. We are updating our financial forecasts to reflect any viable spaces we view, and will continue to work with our advisors on these.

Operating Budget

Based on the assumption that we achieve our minimum target of £125,000 from the sale of community shares (including equity funding via the Co-operatives UK Community Shares Booster Fund), we will open with a small cash reserve of £57,000.

We are predicting a turnover of £370,550 in Year 1 – based on a footfall of 591 covers per week, with an average spend of £11.68 (excl VAT). We also expect to make smaller amounts of income from the sale of hot snacks (70 covers per week at £2.50 per item excl VAT) and the hire of the function room to profit-making groups/events (equivalent to 1 hire per month at approx £200 excl VAT). This would lead to a loss of £66,900 in Year 1, although that will be mitigated by the money raised via the share sale – leaving us with cash reserves of £16,200.

Turnover will increase in Year 2, as our reputation and offer improves (including the impact of employing an Operations & Marketing Manager to assist with programming, community engagement and administration) – we are predicting a turnover of £649,443 in Year 2. This is based on an increased footfall of 837 covers per week, and a slight increase in average spend to £14.57 (excl VAT) as customers spend longer at the venue. We plan to increase wages for all staff in Year 2. Overall, this would lead to a profit of £31,898 in Year 2, leaving us with cash reserves of £59,957.

In Year 3, we expect turnover to continue to increase as we start to reach capacity – we predict an increased footfall of 985 covers per week, and an increased average spend of £14.73 excl VAT. Combined with modest increases to the sale of hot snacks, we expect turnover to reach £773,791. This will enable us to continue to increase wages for all staff, and employ the equivalent of 1.5 FTE in Operations & Marketing Manager roles. Our overall profit for Year 3 would be £15,819, with cash reserves of £86,715.

Assuming our income and expenditure reaches capacity in Year 3, but rise in line with inflation, we forecast turnover of £804,743 in Year 4 and profit of £19,436 (with cash reserves of £116,272) and in Year 5 a turnover of £836,933 and profit of £22,774 (with cash reserves of £139,840).

We therefore forecast that our Profit & Loss Reserve will reach £23,026 in Year 5, which will allow 7.5% of shares to be withdrawn each year from Year 5. If 7.5% of shares are withdrawn each year from Year 5, it would take 13 years after the first withdrawal for all share capital from the first share offer to be paid back to investors (based on minimum share target of £125,000).

Financial Goals

Our main financial goal will be to generate sufficient income to be able to build up a reserve, to enable the long term future of the space.

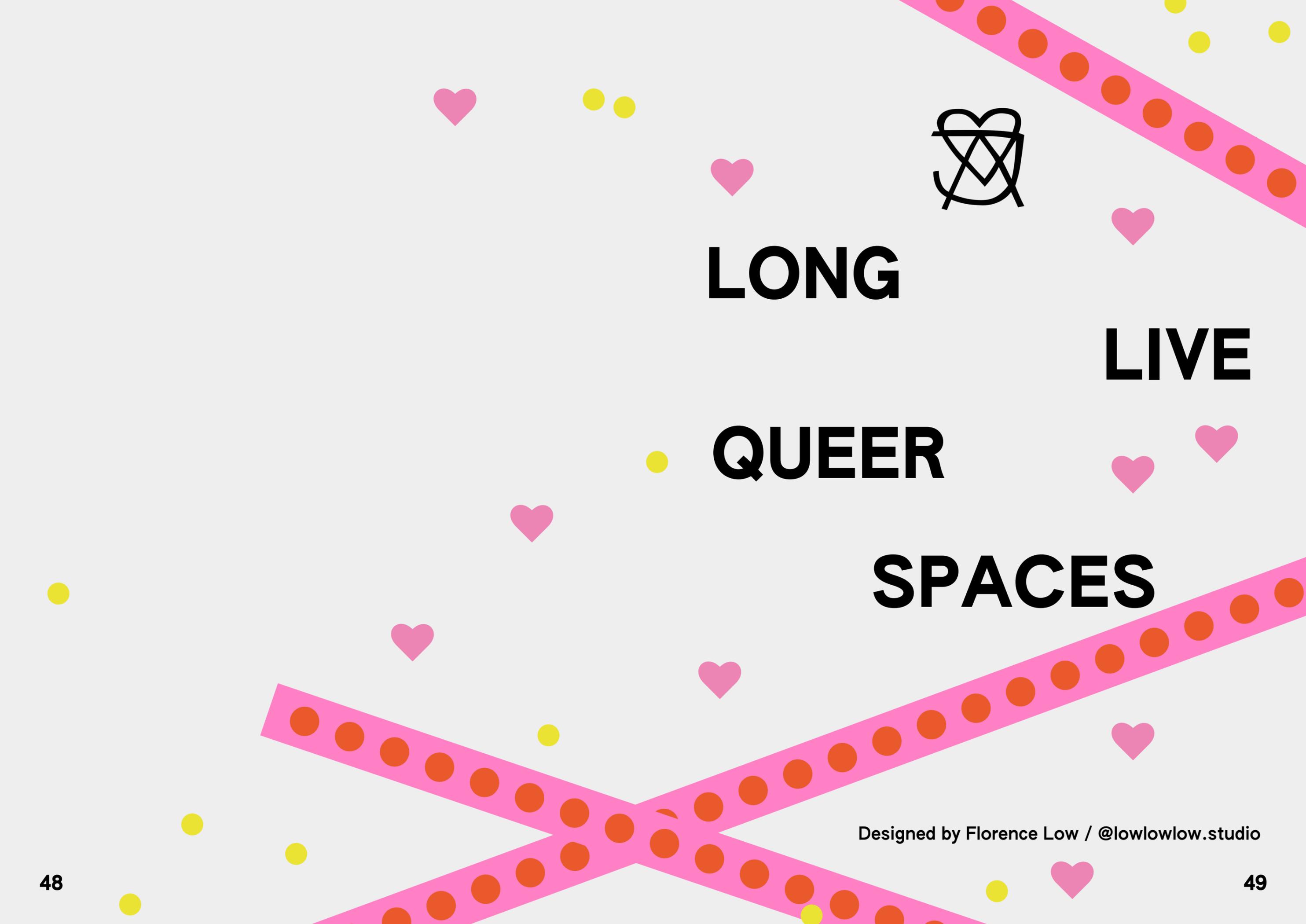
We will seek to increase the wages of staff above London Living Wage to reflect increased cost-of-living, inflation etc, and create secure/permanent roles where staff request them. Where trading allows, we would seek to bring freelance Security staff in-house, and increase the FTE employed in Operations & Marketing earlier in Year 1.

Our financial model will allow for us to make 7.5% of share capital available for withdrawal from Year 5 onwards. Whilst we are aiming to facilitate a moderate level of share withdrawal each year, the priority will be to build reserves and eventually launch a second share offer to expand our membership and raise further capital.²⁸

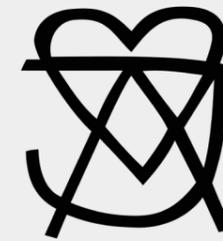
We will consider the emergency option of operating another share sale in Year 2 if the business requires a further injection of capital to ensure it operates on a sound footing. We will also consider other sources of funding (e.g grants, loans) if necessary - we would investigate funders we have already worked with and have a higher likelihood of securing funds from (Foundation for Future London, Co-operatives UK) and funders we have not yet worked with (e.g the

National Lottery Community Fund, LGBT+ Futures Equity Fund), using our network of support and potentially obtaining assistance from the GLA's Tactical Fund to pay for a bid-writer. There is additional potential for accessing loans via our bank (Triodos). We would prioritise seeking grants before issuing a subsequent share offer, and certainly before taking on any loans. However, our first priority would be seeking to reduce costs before seeking additional funding, and we have developed detailed plans to mitigate losses should trade fall below our forecasts.

²⁸ We are asking people to invest in the first share offer as a long-term investment, with a plan to allow 7.5% of capital to be withdrawn each year after Year 5. If the second share sale requires a change to this, this will go to our Members to be agreed.



LONG



LIVE

QUEER

SPACES

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