



WHITE LION ALDERSHOT

Community Pub

Newsletter No 4 16 May 2020

Important Updates:

***As 6-month deadline looms, offer to buy submitted!**

***£2,500 campaign expenses bursary secured!**

Campaign submits offer to buy White Lion, Aldershot

As one of Aldershot's last remaining genuine 'locals', the White Lion is on the list of public houses designated by Rushmoor Borough Council as an **Asset of Community Value (ACV)**. This means it's protected in important ways.

If the owner wishes to sell and a local '**community interest group requests the right to bid**' it can't be sold for six months from the time it is put up for sale, allowing the local community time to get organised and make a realistic offer to buy, in our case by **15 May 2020**. This has now been done. Formal notification has been sent by Aldershot Community Pub Limited (ACPL) our registered Community Benefit Society to the agent handling the sale of the White Lion with an offer to purchase the freehold of the property.

What does this mean in practice?

Well, to put it bluntly, the premises can now be sold to **any** purchaser. The 6-month deadline has been met and we've put in a serious bid to buy the pub at a realistic price, subject to the appropriate inspections, survey assessments and other necessary enquiries. There are no guarantees and we do not have a right of 'first refusal'. But we are hopeful that, if all goes well, the current owner will look favourably on our offer.

The White Lion is well protected by local planning policy.

Rushmoor Borough Council has a strong pub protection policy in place, which means that anyone wishing to develop the White Lion and change its use needs to be able to clearly demonstrate there is no long term need for it to trade as a pub and provide a lot of information to justify this assertion.

In other words, if a potential new owner wished to change its use to, say, residential accommodation (*more flats?*) or turn it into a retail outlet (*yet another shop?*) they would have to apply for planning permission and convince the Council to agree to a 'change of use'. The Council would then be duty-bound to follow its own published Pub Protection Policy.

Rest assured that your ACPL Management Committee, with the support of our colleagues in the Aldershot Civic Society, is prepared to work vigorously to oppose any predatory planning applications and make sure that Rushmoor Borough Council lives up to its pub protection policy. We are confident that **with your active involvement** we can show **just how much local support** there is to **keep the White Lion open** and make it a successful community business.

ACPL awarded a start up bursary of £2,500

On the same day that the offer was submitted, ACPL received confirmation that we have been awarded a bursary of £2,500 to help with our start-up costs. This very welcome award has been provided under the “More than a Pub” programme which is funded by The Power to Change Trust as part of a wider initiative to grow the number of community pubs opening across the UK. Plunkett Foundation is the lead organisation delivering the programme, and we are delighted to have met their stringent requirements to gain this bursary. It is a real boost to our campaign and shows that we have proven that we have **strong local support** and are following the correct route to a **successful** outcome!

So far the start-up costs have been paid out of the pockets of the Management Committee as we are 100% committed to success. The bursary will fund upcoming costs such as the pub survey, valuation and campaign publicity. There will be other costs to be met and we are working hard to set up the means for online payments from fundraising activities and donations (yes please!) to be made to support our ongoing campaign activities. Setting up financial arrangements is lengthy at the best of times and we are “pedalling hard” to do this in the extremely challenging lockdown environment.

The Plunkett Foundation has provided us with specialist advisors who are helping us through the key stages in our journey to success, but we still need **your** help.

How can you help?

We need all our supporters to spread the word as widely as you can. Everyone in Aldershot needs to know what we are doing as well as those in Aldershot Park and North Town. Let all your friends know what we are doing to keep our **local** as our **local**.

We now have a **twitter** account! Join in at <https://twitter.com/WhiteLionAlRoar>

More Than A Pub: The Community Pub Business Support programme aims to bring pubs into community ownership and to increase the range of services they offer to help local people. This new £2.2million round of More than a Pub, makes a range of support and funding available until September 2020. The support includes allocated business development advisers, help with community consultations, advice on legal forms, business planning, community share offers and, bursary awards of up to £2,500. Groups can access the full range of support from the pre-venture stage, or just the elements they need, depending on how well their plans are developed. When a group is ready to purchase a pub, we can offer a combined finance package of up to £100,000, made up of a loan and grant.