

THE WHITE HORSE, UPTON

RETIREMENT & CLOSURE?

How to achieve one without the other.

Our record breaking longest serving landlord in Norfolk (Mr Ray Norman) is seeking to retire after nearly 40 years in charge. As you may be aware from recent stories in the media, Britain is losing its village pubs at an alarming rate. We have been fortunate to date and currently still have the White Horse Public House in Upton. However, nothing is forever and many other pubs (particularly on the Broads) have been closing around us.

You may already know that the pub has been on the market as a going concern for some time, but with insufficient interest to secure a satisfactory sale. The harsh reality is that if a suitable purchaser is not found in the near future, the White Horse could close its doors for the last time and become another statistic in the growing band of village pub closures.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT A VILLAGE WITHOUT A PUB?

The role of the rural British pub as a cohesive centre of its community has never been more important than it is today. In Upton we've already lost the school, Post office, shop & chapel. What's next? It is said that without such social centres in a village a village dies and property prices fall as it fails to attract newcomers into the village.

We (amongst many we hope!) do not want to see Upton further becoming a dormitory for Norwich and Gt. Yarmouth so we want to preserve what we have and even replace or develop what we've lost. Some pubs around the country have been able to escape the axe by being taken over by a consortium of interested villagers thus preserving a popular meeting place for locals and visitors alike, as well as remaining at the heart of village life.

POSSIBLE OUTCOMES:

- A. We do nothing and the current owners of the freehold reluctantly apply for "change of use" planning permission. A Developer buys it, bulldozes the site flat and then proceeds to build three or four properties on the site.
- B. We (Upton & the wider Community) find out if there is a desire for saving our pub as a going concern to keep the White Horse open without Ray Norman's involvement. Also, ultimately to see how we can up-date and improve the premises and perhaps even extend the scope of business beyond its current use as a public house. The pub then becomes a Community pub owned & run by these shareholders.

In order to gauge the level of support for consortium action it is proposed to hold a public meeting in the Village Hall on **Friday 9th April at 7:30 pm.**

At the meeting there will be an **OUTLINE PLAN** to put to fellow villagers and other interested parties about how a consortium arrangement may work, how sufficient funds could be raised initially and how it is envisaged that the pub be run in the future together with the on-going financial commitments that it may entail.

Constructive comment & suggestions will be most welcome on the evening and we look for your support in attending the meeting.

Please come along, lend your support and exchange ideas on what we can do to

SAVE OUR PUB
from possible bulldozers.

If you are unable to attend the meeting on Friday 9th April then we have produced this background information.

It is proposed to try to raise the necessary initial capital by way of share purchase. Any number of shares can be bought by an individual, at a price of £500 per share. This would entitle the individual to become a Stakeholder in the White Horse.

The number of individuals who participate in the possible purchase of the pub would have an equal say in the business irrespective of the number of shares they held. However, if future dividends were to be paid or if the pub were to be sold on in the future, then those dividends would be paid pro rata to the number of shares held.

So, assuming there is sufficient up-take in the next few weeks for community support & investment in The White Horse and that we are able to prepare an appropriate & acceptable investment document, how much would you be prepared to invest?

In order to judge the level of possible interest in the venture, and therefore gauge how much money we could reasonably expect to raise initially, you are invited to complete the pledge form below.

If the meeting decides to move the venture on to the next stage, then we would be required to form a working committee to progress matters. In this context, we would be pleased to receive nominations from anyone who feels they could bring a particular skill/ relevant experience to the table that would be prepared to sit on this committee. If you are one of these people, then please tick the box below.

Name:
Address:
Telephone:
Email:

Pledge Amount (min £500 or multiples thereof).....£

Please note that by "pledging" an amount of money, you are not legally bound by it; this is merely a guide to measure initial interest, and judge the feasibility of the scheme.

I would be prepared to stand as a committee member of the proposed consortium (please tick)

Please return this either at the public meeting or by post to:
Gordon McFadyen, 32 Marsh Rd, Upton NR13 6BS, by 30th April at the latest.
All replies will be treated in strictest confidence.