

PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SAVE THE CABINET ACTION GROUP

Reed Parish Council consults on borrowing to buy village pub, as developer lodges an appeal against planning refusal

Campaigners hoping to prevent the Grade II listed Cabinet pub at Reed being turned permanently into a house have welcomed Reed Parish Council's decision to consult parishioners on the possibility of borrowing money as an additional option to buy the pub if it comes back on the market. A public meeting is to be held on 29 November.

A government body called the Public Works Loan Board makes loans to parish councils at preferential rates, and such loans can be used to save local pubs and other facilities. As a first step, parish councils must seek permission from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to borrow the money.

The present owner of The Cabinet, a property developer, turned the building into a house without planning permission or listed building consent, only applying for these retrospectively.

In July, North Hertfordshire district councillors refused planning permission for change of use of the building to a private house. The developer has now lodged an appeal, which is likely to be heard in the spring.

Mike Howes, chair of the Save the Cabinet Action Group, said

“We are committed to resisting the developer's appeal as strongly as we can. If we are successful, and the pub is put on the market, we may have to move quickly to make sure it is restored to pub use.

“We therefore welcome the initiative by Reed Parish Council to see if there is public support for buying the pub on behalf of the community. We know of interest from a potential private buyer and a local consortium, but this would provide a new option for reopening The Cabinet as a pub.

“Meanwhile we need to raise money urgently to cover the costs of making our case at the appeal as effectively as possible.”

On Saturday, the Action Group held a well-attended Pop-up Pub night at Reed Village Hall which raised over £800 for the Save the Cabinet Fighting Fund.

More information about the campaign, including how to donate, can be found on the Action Group's website: www.savethecabinet.uk.

Contacts (not for publication please):

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Save the Cabinet Action Group was established in October 2016 to resist the application to turn The Cabinet at Reed into a house.

The Cabinet is a 400-year old building, and is considered a village icon – it even appears on the village sign. It is believed to be the only pub in Britain bearing the name.

The Cabinet was a thriving, popular pub, widely known as “a little gem”.

It closed in 2011 and was put up for sale. The Action Group provided evidence of several offers to buy the pub which were refused by the then owners. It was eventually sold at auction in late 2015 to the present owner for £375,000. Documents before the Planning Control Committee suggested that the building was, as a pub, valued at no more than £250,000.

The kitchen was removed during 2015, and further works were carried out in mid-2016. The retrospective applications for planning and listed building consent were submitted in September 2016.

Although planning permission was refused by the members of the Planning Control Committee of NHDC in July, the linked listed buildings applications have not yet been determined.

The developer has lodged an appeal against refusal of planning permission for change of use. Interested parties, including objectors, will have a further opportunity to make representations and submit evidence at any hearing. The appeal will be heard by a planning inspector independent of North Herts District Council.

Under Section 9 Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, carrying out work to a listed building without first obtaining the necessary consent is a criminal offence.

According to the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), 21 pubs are closing every week – see <http://www.camra.org.uk/kc2-pub-protection> .

More information, including background on the Public Works Loan Board, is available on the Action Group’s web site www.savethecabinet.uk.

The Action Group is also on Facebook, “Save the Cabinet at Reed”, and Twitter @SaveTheCabinet.