

PRESS RELEASE: REED RALLIES ROUND TO SAVE ITS PUB

Between 65 and 70 villagers and supporters attended a specially-convened meeting of Reed Parish Council on Monday evening to resist proposals to turn the 400-year-old Cabinet pub into a house. The attendance was such that there was standing room only.

North Herts District Council will consider an application for change of use and for retrospective listed buildings consent. Reed Parish Council had invited public representations to help its own deliberations. District Councillor Gerald Morris was present.

During passionate exchanges at the meeting, Mike Howes, of the Save the Cabinet Action Group, said

“Reed needs a pub. Without it, Reed has no centre – no heart – for the community. Pubs are not just places for people to drink. They are places where neighbours and friends can drop in and see each other, places for new friendships to form, and places where village societies can meet.”

He accused the present owner, Richard Newman, of “riding roughshod” over the planning laws by making alterations without first obtaining the requisite permission or consent.

Responding, Mr Newman said that his understanding had been that there was no interest in running The Cabinet as a pub. He said that urgent repairs had been needed to preserve the listed building and that the planning authority had been aware of his actions.

But other participants at the meeting insisted that a consortium who would have taken over and restored the building as a pub had been outbid; that Mr Newman had over-paid for the property – and that The Cabinet’s closure had been nothing to do with its viability.

Others questioned the lack of enforcement action by North Herts District Council when alterations were being carried out, one speaker describing it as “supine”.

A 21-year-old Reed resident highlighted the importance of the village pub in providing opportunities for younger people – including local employment.

The Parish Council decided to oppose the change of use and retrospective listed building consent.

The final decision rests with North Herts District Council. The public consultation remains open and members of the public can comment on the proposals on the NHDC web site or by letter until 6 October.

Mr Howes said:

“It isn’t too late to save The Cabinet. But everyone who supports our campaign needs to make sure they send in a written objection, online or by post, by the deadline of 6 October.”

CONTACTS:

NOTES FOR EDITORS

Villagers in Reed have formed an action group to try to save the 400-year-old Cabinet at Reed – the only pub in the village – from being turned into a house.

Although The Cabinet has been closed for a number of years, villagers had been confident that a buyer would come forward to restore the building and re-open it as a pub. But after it was sold at auction in November, the new owner made alterations designed to convert it to a house. Retrospective planning permission has now been applied for.

The action group has written to every household in the village asking them to object by the deadline of 6 October, pointing out that if planning permission is granted, Reed's only pub will be lost forever.

Oliver Heald MP has said he will ask NHDC to take full account of the representations made.