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DECISION NOTICE – COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BID

Reference: 2019.003

07 October 2019

Proposed Asset of Community Value – The Wheatsheaf Public House

Nominated By: Titchmarsh Parish Council

Deadline for listing decision: 09/10/2019

Current Owner – John Richard Moffitt and David Edward Moffitt

Action Taken Prior to Decision

- Notification to current owner of nomination – no response received.
- Consultation with Chair of Policy and Resources Committee (Cllr R Lewis) and Ward Member (Cllr Geoff Shacklock) as required under the council's Community Right to Bid Policy.
- Viewing of the Pub's Website.
- Research for references on the definition of current and realistic future 'community use' for the purposes of making a decision on the nomination, in Assets of Community Value Guide by Christopher Cant QC.(Version 6)
- Consultation with colleagues across the council including planning, economic and commercial development, finance and community development regarding the current and future community use of this potential Asset of Community Value.

Background

Nomination History

This nomination is the second for this property. The Wheatsheaf was initially listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) on 19/01/14. The legislation decrees that an asset should be listed for 5 years unless a relevant disposal is made during this period. The listing expired on the 09/01/19 and ceased to be an asset of community value as a result.

The property has now been subject to a second nomination by Titchmarsh Parish Council. This decision relates to the second nomination which has been considered in the same way as a completely new nomination would be. We are not able to consider any representations made as part of a previous nomination for the same asset. It should be noted that the interpretation of Asset of Community Value legislation has developed since 2014 through case law, as noted in Christopher Cant's Guide.

History of the Site

The Wheatsheaf is situated in the centre of Titchmarsh village and is the only public house in the village. The closest Public Houses to The Wheatsheaf are:

- Various pubs in Thrapston (approximately 2.5 miles)
- The Fox Inn in Thorpe Waterville (2 miles)
- The Pheasant in Keyston (4.5 miles)

The Wheatsheaf has been the only public house in the village of Titchmarsh for over 100 years.

Considerations

Does the proposed asset meet the definition of an asset of community value specified in Section 88 (1) paragraphs (a) and (b) of the Localism Act 2011, i.e. the main (i.e. non-ancillary) use furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community, or has recently done so, and is likely to do so in the future (during the next five years)?

Evidence of recent community use that furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community:

According to the nomination form, The Wheatsheaf remains the only public house in the village and is pivotal to the community as it provides a social centre for the village. It also attracts outside business to the village.

The Wheatsheaf's website provides further evidence of how the pub's community use furthers social wellbeing and social interest stating that:

'Planning an event? Want to hold a meeting? Our snug and garden rooms are both available for private hire'.

The website also advertises an array of social events including quiz nights, coffee mornings and food club events.

Reviews left by customers include 'always a great atmosphere', 'lovely contemporary pub', 'wonderful atmosphere', 'a hidden gem', and 'always something special going on'.

As already stated, The Wheatsheaf is the only public house in the village. There is a village hall; however, this is only used for pre-arranged events. Without this public house, the community of Titchmarsh would have nowhere to meet which could be detrimental to their social wellbeing and social interests.

I'm satisfied that the above is evidence of recent community use which furthers the social well-being and social interest of the local community.

Evidence of Realistic Future Community Use

It's realistic to believe that the pub is, and will continue to be used for a range of community events, activities and social events as advertised and promoted on the pub's website, with future events being advertised currently.

There is no evidence to suggest that the pub's continued function as a public house at the heart of its community is in doubt and it is therefore realistic to assume that it will continue to further the social wellbeing and social interests of the local community as it is doing so now.

For those properties where a sale is considered imminent, please provide details of how the property would be managed and/or the business case for long term financial stability if known?

The nominating group did not provide any details in relation to this question; however, there is nothing to assume that a sale is imminent.

Does the proposed asset meet any of the criteria for exemption specified in Section 88 (3) and associated regulations?

There is no evidence that the asset meets any of the criteria for exemption.

The views of the Chair of Policy and Resources Committee and Ward Member

- Cllr R Lewis (Chair of Policy and Resources Committee) is supportive of the application explaining that 'These premises do have a significant role to play within the local community in Titchmarsh and have been used to a good extent by the local community'.

Decision

Having considered all of the evidence and factors above, it is my view that the nominated asset falls within the category of an asset of community value as defined by the Localism Act and associated regulations and that it should be listed as such by this council.



Michelle Drewery

Head of Resources

08/10/19