

The White Horse

Background

- Adnams is selling the White Horse (WH)
- Adnams had previously reassured the Parish Council (PC) that its intent is to sell to an organisation which plans to maintain the WH as a pub
- We understand that the Chestnut Group (CG) wants to buy the White Horse
- Contact with CG: they will not comment – saying that only Adnams can speak about the WH as it is the owner

Concerns

- Adnams have now told us that:

“...Adnams is close to completing the sale of The Westleton White Horse. It is regretful for everyone that this has taken much longer than expected, and especially for the people of Westleton. Whilst Adnams cannot know the full extent to which the new owner will choose to operate the pub, we have sold it with every indication that it will operate as a pub. The sale has been structured as a going concern (albeit temporality closed) and with the benefit of cellar dispensing equipment and the premises licence for the sale of alcohol.”

- But, we have heard that CG want to use it as accommodation only - i.e. no public bar
- We will not know CG's plan until after a sale is complete

Options if “Accommodation only”

1. Before sale: Register WH as an Asset of Community Value and express an interest to bid
2. Before/after sale: Encourage CG/buyer to maintain a public bar (and avoid a planning application)
3. After sale: Oppose the Planning Application for *Change of Use*

Registering the WH as an Asset of Community Value

- Establish Community Group (21 members)
- Register the property as an Asset of Community Value with ESDC
- Express an interest to bid on the property
- A six-month moratorium/freeze is imposed on the sale = time to develop bid
- This is not a right to buy – it is only a right to bid
- Adnams can still sell to another party but only after the 6 month moratorium
- Adnams can negotiate a sale with another party during the moratorium period
- Law change expected:
 - Right to buy
 - 12 month moratorium
 - Expected to be retrospective (but not confirmed)

Action

- PC will carefully scrutinise any *change of use* application
- PC will not register ACV /submit bid – the PC has no funds and will not run a pub
- PC has encouraged CG to maintain a public bar

Community Group – do you want to form one? If so, you need to find the funds to buy the WH and be prepared to manage it – it is a business which will need to be profitable and it is a building which will need to be maintained...