



We care for the Chilterns

Planning Guidance Statement on Development affecting Public Houses

(Produced 2019)

The Society is very concerned about the steady loss of pubs, which for hundreds of years have been at the centre of British social life and a key part of our cultural heritage. The Save Our Pubs Group within the Society was set up to fight this trend, seeking via various means to protect pubs from the threats of closure and redevelopment.

The Planning Group should work with the Save Our Pubs Group in the following way:

- PFOs should alert the Save Our Pubs Group to any planning applications involving a pub, and request its views.
- Where the Save Our Pubs Group wishes to provide input, the wording of any proposed comments to the planning authority should be agreed between the Groups before they are submitted by the PFO.
- When submitting comments to Local Plan or other local policy documents, the Planning Group should press for the inclusion of robust policies to protect pubs from closure, making use of the NPPF provision that planning policies and decisions should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services [including pubs], particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs.

PFOs' local knowledge can also be very useful to the Save Our Pubs Group in alerting them in advance to any emerging or potential threats to a pub, for example as indicated by 'for sale' or 'to let' signs, short-notice closures, or other local information.

Contact details for the Save Our Pubs Group as of August 2019 are chilternheritage@aol.co.uk or by phone to Chris Allen 01494 776141, or check the website.

[For reference, the following criteria were agreed in September 2018, by which the Save Our Pubs Group on behalf of the Society will decide whether to support or stimulate a campaign to save a pub that is under threat of change of use or demolition. It is not necessary for all of them to be fulfilled.

1. *Within the Chiltern Society Area*

The pub must be within one of the Parishes in the area covered by the Chiltern Society, as defined by its Planning Group.

2. *Community Support*

A strong local group is important in convincing a planning committee that there is sufficient local support to sustain a pub and to reject an application for its change of use. Unfortunately, such a group may not arise spontaneously. In such situations, the Chiltern Society, acting in concert with the local CAMRA branch, may need to stimulate some local interest by financing the production of leaflets and / or hosting a village meeting.

3. *Only Pub in a Community*

Because of their social and economic importance, the Chiltern Society, CAMRA and many other organisations support the principle of keeping pubs in communities open. Many councils have policies to protect the last pub in a community from closure unless strict criteria are fulfilled. In larger villages and towns, the relevant "community" will often be smaller than the contiguous built-up area, reflecting both distance to the pub and the social structure of the settlement.

4. *Heritage or Historical Value*

As well as seeking to maintain vibrant rural communities in its area, the Chiltern Society also aims to preserve buildings of historic or architectural interest. Many of these are pubs or hotels. Such a building will not maintain its value in the townscape or landscape if converted into a private residence. Although the external appearance may be much the same as before, the public will often be able to view it only at a distance. They will also not be able to appreciate the interior. In many cases, this is the principal point of interest. Preserving a pub for its heritage or historic value is, therefore, of great interest to the Chiltern Society. A degree of flexibility may be necessary to ensure long-term economic viability, for instance by supporting extension of the premises, converting part of it to residential accommodation or selling off some of the land.

5. *Isolated Pubs*

Not all pubs are situated in villages or towns. The Chilterns has several pubs which appear to defy the odds of survival well away from any settlement. They are usually sustained by people participating in countryside pursuits, such as shooting, fishing, horse riding, walking or cycling as well as those travelling through the area. Trade is likely to be markedly seasonal. These pubs often have considerable heritage value, but, even where this is not the case, the Chiltern Society will support such establishments if they sustain tourism or leisure activities in the locality, for instance by being close to a well-used right of way.