



COLD ASHBY PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Parish Council: Mr. G Jones, 3 Park Spinney Close,
Cold Ashby, Northamptonshire NN6 6ER - Tel 07966 - 086735
E-mail: clerk@coldashbypc.com

Application WND/2022/0437: Black Horse Public House.

Observations from Cold Ashby Parish Council 08/07/2022

Source: these observations are based on statements made by residents of the village and the Parish Councillors at a Parish Council meeting on 6th July 2022. The meeting was attended by 16 residents, including the applicant, 6 Parish Councillors, a Unitary Councillor and a PCSO. The main item on the agenda was a discussion of planning application WND/2022/0437 for a temporary change of use from a public house to a residential dwelling.

The Parish Council endorses these observations as an accurate record of their views on the application.

1. The alleged purpose of the application.

The stated purpose of the temporary change of use is to provide accommodation for Ukrainian refugees during the current crisis in their country. Cold Ashby PC has passed motions of support to the people of Ukraine and written to the local MP and the Ukrainian ambassador to the UK.

That support notwithstanding, the PC is firmly of the opinion that Cold Ashby village is not a suitable location to accommodate people arriving in the country in need of just about every kind of support and facility.

The village has no shop, no school, no medical centre and no public transport infrastructure. It would not be an act of kindness to house people needing all kinds of external help so far from any place they might find it, and with no means of travelling to it.

The obvious mismatch between the stated purpose of the application and its suitability to achieve it has led to much speculation that the published reason is intended only to give a charitable gloss to a project which has less praiseworthy motives.

Finally, we are aware that you have received a letter from Mrs Joanne Dewsnap, a Cold Ashby resident. We urge you especially to read the section beginning 'the unfortunate suitability of the accommodation and its location for a Ukrainian family'. The Parish Council's position is identical to that of Mrs Dewsnap and we offer her well-researched and lucid objection as evidence of the strength of feeling in the village.

2. The Current Status of the Black Horse

The Black Horse closed its doors in March 2020, remained closed through the pandemic and has not opened since. A successful application to have the pub listed as an asset of community value (ACV) was made by a local community group made up largely of Cold Ashby residents, more than a hundred of whom signed the petition.

The pub was sold without the application of the grace period so that the village did not have the opportunities which should have been available under the ACV legislation. The new owner, after some initial confusion, has made it clear that he does not intend to open it as a pub. It appears to be used as a residence only, and CAMRA specialists have indicated that

this use, which should be ancillary to the running of a public house, breaches planning regulations if the pub is deliberately kept closed. The village has made several attempts to have the regulations enforced and the pub either opened, or left empty until it can be opened, or marketed to seek a new owner who will open it as a pub.

We understand that the pub has been visited by enforcement officers but no action has been taken and the promises made by the owner have been taken at face value.

For the Parish Council, the question remains: what is the status of the building for which the change of use is sought? If it is a pub, then the application runs counter to just about every local and national planning policy against which this application must be judged. And if it is a pub, why is the continued occupancy being tolerated?

If it is a dwelling house, then should not this application be retrospectively seeking to change the use accordingly?

3. Planning Policy

The Parish Council is not a body of philosophers but this application has caused us to reflect on the purpose of planning regulations. Why is there not a simple free-for-all in planning, so that each owner can build whatever and wherever they wish to suit their own needs? There will be many answers, but one must surely be that planning regulations exist to protect the innocent interests of the many against the unscrupulous interests of the few. Places where planning fails to be enforced are often very unpleasant places to live.

So the Parish Council would like to see planning policy put into vigorous action in Cold Ashby.

We are not experts in planning, but we are aware of two documents which dovetail their aims neatly at a national and at a local level. They are the National Planning Policy Framework, paragraphs 84, 91, 93. These emphasise the purpose of policy and the duty of policy makers to enhance and safeguard the provision of facilities, including public houses, which maintain and enhance the cohesion and sustainability of local communities, by promoting social interaction and providing meeting spaces for people who might otherwise not come into contact with each other. Paragraph 84 contains the telling phrase that planning policies and decisions should enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities such as public houses.

At a more local level the 'Settlements and Countryside Local Plan part 2 for Daventry, 2011-2029, is also very clear, and this is a document considered and endorsed by the CAPC when it was recommended to us by one of its principal backers and authors, Councillor Alan Chantler. We endorsed it then because we hoped for its protection in the situation we find ourselves in now. Section 10.2.01 is the relevant section on the protection of public houses and I know this will have been quoted to you by others in the village, so I will go no further than to say we urge you to implement the policy to which you put your names and ours.

4. Community Need

It is our view that an application should be judged largely against the criterion of how far, if at all, it meets an identified community need. There is no need for additional residential accommodation in Cold Ashby.

There is a need for a public house. It is true that there are two other licensed premises in the village, the memorial hall and the sports pavilion. These are staffed and funded by volunteers and can be opened only sporadically. They are not pubs and cannot replace the function and service provided by a professionally managed public house.

It is also true that the community is fracturing since the pub closed and the main communal meeting place closed with it. New residents now have no place where they can quickly meet many of the other members of the village, find themselves welcomed and start to fit in. Many older people relied on the pub for their only change of scene from their living room wallpaper

and attempts to maintain enthusiasm for skittles and pool teams is an uphill task in centres staffed by volunteers.

This application runs directly counter to community need. Perhaps that is why it roused so many normally placid people to oppose it. They are not xenophobic, as they are being less than subtly painted; they simply miss their pub and feel that they are being conned out of it whilst the planning authority which has evolved policies to protect them fails to implement those policies for reasons which have never been satisfactorily explained.

Graham Jones

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'G. Jones', written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

CAPC Clerk
08.07.22