

Recent history of The Bull

2008 - Following the purchase of The Bull at auction, the incumbent tenant leaves to buy another local pub leaving the owners with a need to find new tenants.

New tenants are appointed but prove totally inadequate and leave the premises in disarray. The owners close the pub whilst they review the situation.

In October 2008 the owners are persuaded to offer a short term arrangement with a local couple who had sold their tenancy of The Rose and Crown at Hawridge and who took The Bull on as a short term measure pending the owners plans to modernise and enlarge the facilities.

The owners of The Bull, Fortitude Investments, arrange meeting in village hall to display plans for development of the pub. Negative comments regarding the size and scope lead Fortitude to believe that the village is against these plans.

Fortitude present plans to local authority for planning permission

These plans are sent by the District Council to the Bellingdon and Asheridge Parish Council for comment. Plans returned: "no comment".

District Council assumes little interest from village since no letter or emails of support from villagers or the Parish Council received for these plans – principally because residents were not aware that plans had been submitted.

Due to legal problems arising from the terms of the sale of their previous tenancy, in June 2009 the temporary landlords of the Bull were forced to leave the pub which then closed.

The plans are rejected. Bucks Examiner reports that there is no support in village for plans.

Bucks Examiner informed by a village resident that the reason there were no comments of either support or otherwise from villagers was because no one was aware of them.

Bucks Examiner offered a photo-call at The Bull if the village could demonstrate support for a campaign to save The Bull

Approx. 130 residents attend photo-call at short notice to demonstrate support and Bucks Examiner makes it front page news.

A second, scaled down set of plans to develop the pub are submitted to the District Council.

On Jan. 15th. 2010 a public meeting is convened in the village hall with 'full-house' attendance. A show of hands results in 100% support for the campaign to save the pub. A spokesman is elected to represent the views of the village at the planning meeting. These plans also rejected although residents support them.

A further set of plans for a change of use to housing is also presented to District Council.

The 'Save The Bull' action group makes contact with the owner's representative making them aware of the support of the village for the development of the pub but not for the change of use to housing, but becomes aware that the owners mistakenly believe that there is a movement in the village against them.

Feb 28th 2010 Fortitude lodge 2 appeals with the Planning Inspectorate – 1 for the pub development and 1 for the housing plans.

There is a gratifying number of letters and emails to the planning Inspectorate from residents in support of the pub plans and against the Change of Use.

29thSept. 2010 both appeals rejected by Planning Inspectorate.

Save The Bull action group find a local contact who facilitates direct discussion with the owner of Fortitude and Fortitude are finally convinced that the village supports their efforts to develop the pub as a viable business.

Fortitude appoint a local architect and planning consultant with a new brief to try to accommodate the reasons for refusal into a further set of plans to enable the Pub to be developed sufficiently to allow feasible trading.

These plans are shown to a representative of the Save The Bull action group and the two parties work together to try to resolve the issues.

March 1st. 2011 The new plans are presented to the village at a public meeting for discussion and approval prior to presenting them to the Council.

Following the public meeting at which the owners representatives were able to answer questions and demonstrate their good intentions for the future of the pub, the residents voted 100% support for the new plans. The owners then prepared a new business plan to accompany the structural plans and amended the parking facilities as suggested at the meeting. These plans have now been submitted to the Council and await validation.

As soon as the plans have been validated, we will have an application number to give to the residents and hope that as many as possible write or e-mail their support to the planning authority.