

# SuffolkNews

## A bid to protect a historic 17th Century village pub in Hesselton has failed

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A bid to protect a historic village pub as a community asset has failed.

Hesselton Parish Council applied to Mid Suffolk District Council for Asset of Community Value (ACV) status for the Five Bells pub, in The Street.

But in a letter to village residents, it said: "Despite the wonderful response we had from the residents of Hesselton and the substantial evidence submitted in support of the application, we regret to inform you that the application was unsuccessful. This is extremely disappointing."



“Whilst we cannot appeal this decision, a fresh application can be made, however, given that present owners started planning applications around June 2017, some six years ago, and the last tenancy was ended by Green King around 18 months prior to that when they started to wind down the business, the Five Bells has been unusable for around eight years.

Recommended by

“Given the reasons for refusal a fresh application would therefore be unlikely to succeed.”

The Five Bells building was constructed in the 16th and 17th centuries and is Grade II listed.



Five Bells, Hessest in 2011. Picture: Google maps

A record of landlords dates back to 1753.

ACV registration is a planning consideration, which gives the council planning authorities reasons to reject any proposal involving loss of the pub.

It also gives the community the opportunity to bid for the property if it is sold or leased for 25 years or more

It also allows councils powers of compulsory purchase if the community use of the asset is in danger of being lost.

It lasts for five years and can be renewed.

Hessest Parish Council continued: “The part of the test that we were unable to demonstrate was that the community was taking social or wellbeing benefit from the use of the Five Bells currently or in the recent past.

“According to Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC): “The recent past is not a defined period in the legislation, however a rough starting point of five years tallies with the consideration for future uses and can be varied to account for the circumstance of the nomination.

"With the Five Bells having been closed for a similarly long period, Hesselton PC would need to show strong evidence of community use and activity in the years prior to closure to give a sound listing.

"The most recent evidence in the nomination pack we submitted was pub and restaurant use on the BeLocal YouTube profile from 2012 and photos of Morris Dancing in 2013, darts team etc. These were somewhat limited in showing the community's benefit and too far back to pass the test on their own.

"The resident letters described a variety of qualifying activities in the history of the pub and the benefit residents took, however "none of those set them in a time period or often gave detail which would help assess their significance: frequency, time span, levels of participation, sections of the community taking benefit".

The council added: "MSDC also looked online for information about the Five Bells in the public domain.

"They state that qualifying information would have been reviews etc to say "people were still taking social benefit from the pub prior to the closure by Greene King, or events notices that would evidence social activities. MSDC were unable to find any beyond those already supplied by Hesselton Parish Council.

"MSDC did state that: "You'll see the survey responses did provide strong evidence that it was reasonable to think that the same or similar uses could return to the Five Bells in the next five years.

"There is clearly a good deal of support from villagers for the public house use in future, for social activities and for complementary uses such as a village shop. It also seems to be the current owner's intent to return the public house use".

"In conclusion, for Hesselton PC to make a fresh application and meet the criteria we would need to show recent use and support in the five years prior."

Mid Suffolk District Council has been approached for comment.