

Hessett Parish Council

Clerk: Michelle Fisher

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Dear Resident,

As you are aware the Parish Council (PC) applied for an ACV for the 5 Bells Public House. Despite the wonderful response we had from the residents of Hessett 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 6 years ago, and the last tenancy was ended by Green King around 18 months prior to that (December 2015) when they started to wind down the business, the 5 Bells has been unusable for around 8 years. Given the reasons for refusal listed below a fresh application would therefore be unlikely to succeed.

Reasons for Refusal

To be successful with an application for an ACV various tests need to be passed/demonstrated, 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**”*. This is a specific requirement in the legislation (the clauses are in the letter). According to Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC), *“The ‘recent past’ is not a defined period in the legislation, however a rough starting point of 5 years tallies with the consideration for future uses and can be varied to account for the circumstance of the nomination”*.

Further, MSDC explained that *“their legal team recently removed at review (owner’s appeal) an ACV listing that they did approve because the pub in that nomination had closed in 2016 and they determined that the uses were not in the recent past”*. With the Five Bells having been closed for a similarly long period, Hessett PC would need to show strong evidence of community use & activity in the years prior to closure to give a sound listing.

The most recent evidence in the nomination pack we submitted was pub & 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)”*.

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 Hessett PC.

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 5 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 Hessett PC to make a fresh application and meet the criteria we would need to show recent use and support in the five years prior.

Yours Faithfully,

Michelle Fisher
Clerk to Hessett Parish Council