

Our ref: 034472 EH

3rd July 2014

Tim Bradley FRICS
City of York Council
Customer & Business Support Services/APM
West Offices Station Rise
York
YO1 6GA

Dear Mr Bradley

Re: Community Right to Bid – Mitre, York YO30 5XF

Thank you for email dated 13th June 2014. We have reviewed the nomination form that has been prepared by Rawcliffe Parish Council. We **object** to the listing of our property on the register of assets of community value.

We have carefully read the statements made by the Parish Council and we think they have overlooked the importance of other existing community assets that are available in the vicinity of the Mitre.

Before I address our concerns with the nomination made by the Parish Council, I thought it may help if I share with you some economic information that has impacted on our pub estate over the past 7 years.

Economic factors

I expect that you are very familiar with just how challenging the last few years have been. The last seven years have been very difficult for Publicans. The smoking ban, introduced in July 2007, whilst welcome in the long term, has impacted the sustainability of many smaller local community pubs.

There have also been significant increases in taxes that have been imposed on pubs. Beer duty in the UK is over 12 times that of our German counterparts and in spite of UK beer drinkers consuming just 13% of European Union beer volumes, the UK government takes 40% of all excise duty levied in the European Union, which is an extraordinary strategy for a Government which claims to support pubs at the heart of local communities.

The challenges to pubs have not been limited to dealing with the impact of the smoking ban, and beer duty. During the last seven years utility costs have increased by an average of 50% and business rates have increased by 19%. Our pubs have also dealt with the increased costs associated with employment and the increased regulatory burden.

The grave economic condition of the last seven years has only exacerbated the pub specific challenges that I have outlined above. Consumers have been very cautious with their diminishing discretionary spend, and the banking crisis has made it more difficult for local businesses to access funding and grow.

Supporting Publicans

We have worked tirelessly in the last five years to support our committed Publicans. As we seek to support Publicans through these tough times of weakening consumer expenditure and rising costs, rent that we charge to Publicans, on a like-for-like basis, has declined year on year since 2008.

During the height of the recession we provided non-contractual rent concessions and special beer discounts totalling £21m in 2009 to help our Publicans move onto a more secure footing and drive their businesses forward, and we provided a further £15m in 2010.

Working with Communities

We believe that pubs play an important role in the local community. In 2012 we launched our Community Hero Awards where we committed in excess of £1m over 10 years for worthy community causes, in honour of those Publicans who make an inspiring contribution to their community.

The Mitre

The Mitre has not escaped this economic decline. Since 2007 the beer sales at the Mitre have reduced by a 52%. The longstanding publican has recently surrendered their agreement us, despite our efforts to support the business, which has included capital investment in recent years.

There are three other pubs within half a mile of the Mitre, providing much competition

- The Lysander, offering bar with live sports and a dining room serving good quality food <http://www.lysanderarms.co.uk/>
- The Dormouse, a food-oriented Vintage Inn <http://www.vintageinn.co.uk/thedormouseyork/>
- Riverside Farm, a Greene King "Hungry Horse" serving high volumes of value food <http://www.hungryhorse.co.uk/pubs/riverside-farm-york>.

We respect the observations made by the Parish Council but we do not believe they have properly reflected upon the alternative facilities that are available in the local community, nor have they reflected on how tough trade is for a pub when there is nearby competition.

Rawcliffe Parish Council Nomination Form

With direct reference to the Nomination form prepared by the Parish Council, I would comment as follows:

"The Mitre is only pub in parish to offer 'community' facilities, as such is a valued amenity to the local people."

This is incorrect. There are three other pubs within a half mile radius; The Lysander, The Dormouse and the Riverside Farm. These pubs provide superb local community facilities and are mainly food and family oriented. The Lysander offers additional community facilities that cannot be overlooked when considering the validity of this nomination.

"It hosts a full and varied range of community functions from wedding breakfasts to wakes."

The nearby public houses can also serve the community in this manner.

"Focal point in the community."

The three nearby pubs we have identified provide a focal point in the community. Unfortunately the beers sales have reduced by 50% at the Mitre over the past 7 years which indicates a steep decline in the demand for this facility by the local community.

"Young at Heart Luncheon Club, for the over 50's; meeting twice monthly."

There is no particular reason why the Mitre alone should provide this facility given the food focus of the other public houses.

"Several sports teams including football, dominoes, darts and pool."

The pubican has worked hard to support this type of activity, but despite a lot of hard work there has been a continual decline in demand. This activity could also be supported by other local amenities.

“Offering social inclusion to wide range of age groups and diverse sectors of the community and providing a wealth of activities for all to enjoy and partake.”

The need is also met by the other three pubs within a 0.5 mile radius of the Mitre.

“Centrally based, accessible on foot and well served by public transport routes.”

This is also true of the other three pubs within a 0.5 mile radius of the Mitre.

Our response to the nomination form

In summary it is apparent that the local community already benefit from an ample number of alternative community facilities in close proximity to the Mitre. We therefore believe that the addition of the Mitre to the register is inappropriate.

Can you please also confirm that you regard Rawcliffe Parish Council as being qualified to make a community nomination under s 89 (2) Localism Act 2011, and that the Parish Council have satisfied you that their application is properly representative of the majority view of their members.

We respectfully request that you reject the application for the Mitre to be added to the List of Community Assets. We would be very grateful if you would consider our comments, and advise us if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely
Enterprise Inns plc



Emma Hurst
Asset Manager

