

MORE CAN BE DONE BY LOCALS TO PREVENT PUB CLOSURES

Collusion tactics between breweries and property developers to shut pubs and then wait months or years before redeveloping has resulted in many avoidable closures because initial opposition to the closure has dissipated by the time planning applications are submitted.

According to the chairman of a committee to stop the closure of one north London pub the ploy often works because crucial arguments against redevelopment have dissipated when eventually proposals reach local planners for decision.

Richard Lewis, head of a group to save the Admiral Mann - a pub off Brecknock Road in N7 – has vowed no such a state of affairs will inflict their campaign, where activists are fundraising, holding public meetings and seeking planning advice some two months after the pub has closed.

“Far from waning, our campaign has gained impetus since the pub shut amid growing confidence that the site will after all remain a pub. The advice we would give anyone fighting to save a pub, even though it may have closed, is to keep up the pressure and not take your eye off the ball – and perhaps most important of all get to know the planning process,” said Mr Lewis.

“Even before a planning application has been made, we are in contact with planning officials about general policy, we have a growing fighting-fund to enable us to appoint professionals if necessary, we have a rota-system to check no illegal works are carried out on the site and we are enrolling cross-party political support both in Parliament and amongst local authorities.

“The whole process is extremely invigorating. It has brought people together in a spirit of fellowship and common cause. There is a zealous enthusiasm that when the planning application comes – whether next, week, next month or next year – we are ready for it whatever its intricacies and slant,” he added.

Mr Lewis went on to say that all pubs should contact their local authority to seek registration as an Asset of Community Value. He said such a move was potentially of great assistance in fighting future closure plans.

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