



Newsletter. Issue 4

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Welcome back after the summer holidays!

The Action Group has been working hard over the summer months. A meeting was held on 10th August, attended also by Nigel Pett and Wendy Elsbury of the Parish council who were thanked for their support.

Funding update

We have been laying the ground work for the anticipated funding round, which we believe will be launched towards the end of the year - driven either by a) South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) being successful in brokering an arrangement between us and the owner or b) a requirement to provide proof of funds to SCDC in order that they embark on the Compulsory Purchase Process (assuming a negotiated settlement is unsuccessful).

As part of this groundwork for a funding launch, we are asking the Plunkett Organisation to give us an agreement in principal for any grant and loan funding we would be eligible for - as well as seeking some more certainty around loan financing - with Triodos Bank currently our favourite for any mortgage financing.

So, a plea, if you haven't pledged yet, please do so - as we will need to get more concrete regarding our finances. We are so grateful for the number of pledges we have received, and the generosity of those pledges - 75% of our pledges are for £500 or more, and of those 25% are in excess of £2000. One interesting constraint we are facing is the maximum amount of government linked grant funding we can claim for - which is limited by an EU Regulation on De Minimus funding - and Plunkett funding, as well as any tax relief pledgers might be eligible for is included as government supported funding - that limit is EUR200,000. So, watch this space!!

Meanwhile, a decision has not been made on the planning application on the site of The Tree.



The Tree, August 2017





Case Studies

Gamlingay Eco Hub, Sandy, Bedfordshire

Two members of the Action Group visited Gamlingay Eco Hub, Community Centre, in July. They found it a very useful and interesting visit. Whilst there, the building had a creche going; a morning coffee drop-in centre; an RSPB Committee Meeting renting the meeting rooms; and various individuals making use of computer facilities. They had an intriguing library built into the walls of the main reception centre. Of note was that it was truly a full and diverse age range there. The building has also won several sustainability awards, making full use of solar and ground heat source systems for power and heating.

They also had a good discussion about funding and the importance of marketing such as the intensive use of social media.

George & Dragon, Hudswell, Yorkshire

A small village pub, which was saved by its local community after going bankrupt, has been named the best in the UK, 2017, by CAMRA.

The George & Dragon closed in 2008 after the owners went bust at the height of the recession, but regular customers formed a co-operative to buy and refurbish the premises. Within two years, the community banded together to form the Hudswell Community Pub group and raised £220,000 to buy the asset back. The pub reopened in 2010.

Today the George & Dragon provides a hub for community life, with a library in the corridor and a convenience shop selling milk, eggs and newspapers. It offers community allotments and free internet access for patrons.

The pub beat off competition from 52,200 others to clinch the award, and is one of only 70 community-run pubs. CAMRA's judges hailed its "warm and welcoming atmosphere and strong community ethos". James Alcock, general manager at the Plunkett Foundation, which provided support and funding for the pub, said: "Community-owned pubs such as the George & Dragon are an exceptional example of how a community can succeed in running an enterprise. "

Plunkett advise us that since the community pub scheme was launched, no community pub has failed or gone out of business - what a comforting statistic!

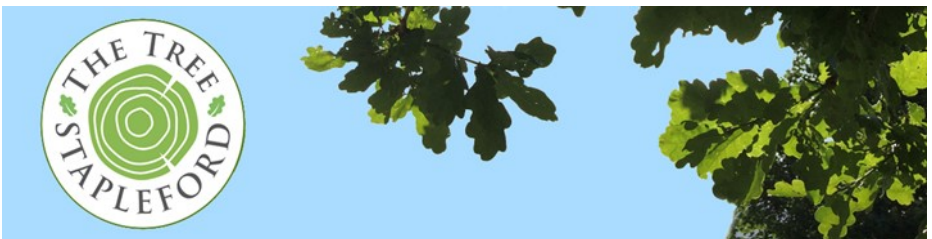




The Chair of the Action Group, Bill French, was on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire again on 22nd August in the Dotty McLeod Breakfast Show.

You can hear it here (1.21 and 1.53 hours into the programme):

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05bj1vs#play>



Social media

Are you following The Tree on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram? This is where you can keep up-to-date on a daily basis on the progress of the Save The Tree campaign and other local news and events.

Did you know that we currently have 81 people following us on Facebook, 287 on Twitter and 114 on Instagram?

The case for reopening The Tree needs a strong social media platform. Indeed this has been emphasised by the Plunkett Foundation and other community hubs such as the Gamlingay Eco Hub.

So please like and follow us and invite your friends to do the same! Thank you!

And, have you visited our website yet?

“The power of social media is it forces necessary change.”

Erik Qualman

<http://thetreestapleford.co.uk/>



Best wishes from the Save The Tree Action Group.

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