

David Ashcroft

I have lived and farmed in Selborne since 1991 and remember the various tenants of the Queens when it was a failing hotel/pub. I used to occasionally use both the bar and the restaurant with my family and also when used by the wine society and other functions. All the time that I have known it, it was a failing operation despite new tenants trying to make it work. When David Paton had it, his other lets subsidised the enterprise. David on relinquishing the tenancy sold off the lets, the Limes which are now residential properties. The two gentleman who then took on the lease tried to make a go of it and again sadly failed. Yet another tenant took the lease just before the change of freehold ownership. He too tried but failed through lack of regular business. No business would fail if it has the trade to make it profitable. Although several in the village used the restaurant and bar it was not to the level sufficient to keep the business viable. I understand from others that a number of experience professionals in that industry looked at it when it was on the market and turned it down.

The rooms that were available in the Queens have been modernised to a high standard with a lot of insulation etc to bring them to the standards expected today, not papered over the cracks as was done by a previous tenant. As they are available to let that part of the original continues.

The Tap has provided an outlet for the micro brewery of the Wakes and with only limited opening times does not impact the Selborne Arms. It also gives a much needed revenue stream for the Wakes charity. The brewery also takes their output to beer festivals across a large area and as a result brings into the village customers wanting to enjoy more of the product. A major benefit to the village.

The need for refreshments is currently catered for at the Selborne Arms, Whites café and the La Luna coffee shop. There is a acknowledged need for a village shop which utilises a part of the ground floor of the building as cannot be shown the amount of floor space needed given a lot of residents use the delivery services of the major supermarkets weekly.

The use of the ground floor by the Wakes for education during the day potentially would still allow evenings and weekend use by others subject to the agreement of the tenant and owner.

The work that has been done on the Queens to date has been of a high standard and as any refurbishment the old fittings etc have to be removed to make way for the new. As a new kitchen or bathroom the old is removed then the new installed to the requirements of the owners.

As a long term resident I wish to see a speedy resolution to this saga once and for all. The first planning application was determined by Easthants District Council committee shortly before the council elections but were sadly influenced by politics. I cannot comment about the SDNPA committee of which I witnessed the deliberations other than saying several members appeared to read from a prepared script and opposed the recommendation of permission by their professionally trained officers.

We all in Selborne want this to move on, with many who opposed the development originally now in favour of it and wish to see it completed.

David Ashcroft. In a personal capacity only as I am a parish and district councillor for Selborne.