

Rose & Crown Aston – support of Planning application v1

Aston Parish Council are writing in support of the latest planning application from Annakut Limited.

The Rose & Crown was closed by MacMullan's Brewery in 2015 and sold to property developers. Since then, there have been over 6 planning applications. The Parish Council have objected to all of them on the grounds that they failed to recognise the importance of the village pub to a small community like Aston. The Rose & Crown is located in the heart of the conservation area and any new development needed to try and restore the pub, build new houses sympathetic to the surroundings and provide some smaller houses that are needed by the village.

Annakut submitted a planning application in 2021 which was opposed by the council and a number of villagers. In June 2021 East Herts gave approval for the construction of 4 X 3 and 4 bedroom houses and imposed a number of conditions, one of which was retention of the pub for a minimum period of 7 Years.

We understand that Annakut were unable to find a buyer for the pub or for the development site and in January 2022 approached the village to see if a compromise could be found. Annakut had previously refused to have any discussions with the village about selling them the pub. After several months of discussions and negotiations a compromise was arrived at.

This involved the sale of the pub, car park and a small part of the garden to a Village Investment Group in return for wider village support for a housing development that included more smaller houses. This was discussed extensively by the Parish Council and at the Annual Parish Meeting (attended by 72 villagers). Following an article in the Parish News, on the village social media page and on the Parish Council website, there was also a follow up "Rose & Crown" public meeting (attended by 44 people). All but 4 attendees voted in support of the latest plans on condition that the Pub could be purchased by the village.

The village investment group has now raised funds from over 85 villagers to buy and renovate the Rose & Crown and a contract has been exchanged for the purchase of the pub, contingent on the approval of planning permission.

In the 2021 planning approval, one of the conditions was that a listed barn that is behind the pub was retained as part of the pub. Whilst the Village Investment Group would have liked to retain ownership of the barn, an appraisal of the likely costs of renovation showed clearly that it was beyond the scope of village fund raising. Annakut have agreed to retain and restore the barn for residential occupation.

This has the support of the village and the Parish Council.

There are number of other conditions set out in the 2021 planning approval and the Parish Council would like to see them restated in any new decision notice.

Condition number

9. 2m footways across the frontage of the site, including bus layby

10. Cleaning of vehicles leaving the site

12. Landscaping of the site to be in accordance with the artists impressions

19. All existing trees and hedges to be retained unless shown on the plans as being removed. The tree causing obstruction to the footpath to be removed

24. Plant and machinery hours of use to be restricted

26 Local Authority control over external lighting

In addition, Annakut signed a section 106 Deed of Planning obligation that included a £5,000 payment to the County Council towards improvements to the public footpath running alongside the site. This needs to remain in place