



Campaign launched to keep the White Lion in Aldershot as a pub



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Public houses in Aldershot are back in the spotlight with news that the White Lion is on the market. Once again we face the potential prospect of a part of Aldershot being left without a pub. Those in North Town and Heron Wood who use the White Lion, following the loss of their local pubs, potentially face yet more disruption and loss of a valuable facility.

Alarmed at the potential imminent loss of a fantastic pub and local asset, the **Aldershot Civic Society** and **Surrey Hampshire Borders (SHB) Branch of CAMRA** together with members of the local community have launched a campaign to keep the White Lion as a pub and guarantee its future.

The Groups need to find out if there is interest amongst the wider community to get together and fundraise to buy and run the pub. **To be successful, direct involvement from the community is essential.**

If this can be achieved it means that the pub would be both owned and controlled by a significant number of people from within the community. As a result, local folk would have a real stake in the pub and the opportunity to have a say in how it is run. The White Lion can then become a facility which truly reflects the wants and needs of the local area whilst still being a viable business – helped by the fact that people will naturally be more inclined to support and use ‘their’ pub.

The fundraising campaign will be launched at a **PUBLIC MEETING** in the White Lion on **Thursday 23rd January** at 8 pm to which all members of the local community are invited to show support, hear how the fundraising and pub might be organised and, importantly, ask questions. The meeting will be addressed by Mark Dodds, founder of the Fair Pint campaign, and pub protection expert, who has extensive experience in supporting similar campaigns to save local pubs.

Kevin Travers: Pubs Officer Surrey Hants Borders CAMRA said; “pubs continue to close at an alarming rate, but local communities have a real opportunity to take ownership of their locals and it's not as difficult as people think. There are at least 143 other pubs in the UK that have been bought by the local community, so there is a great deal of advice and help that we intend to use to make sure that this is a successful campaign.”

Justin Coll Chairman Aldershot Civic Society added; “community ownership of the White Lion is an exciting opportunity for local people to have real buy-in to their local public house and decide the future of this community asset. A well-run pub is a place that can help cement local communities, and pubs like the White Lion are so much more than just a place to drink. It is a place where friends and neighbours can meet for a chat, enjoy a quiz or watch a live band and all without having to get in a car and drive somewhere else. The Aldershot Civic Society sees our local pubs as important assets for the community, and with the loss of all the other pubs nearby the White Lion's future is even more essential to secure for now and future generations to come.”



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The campaign is early days, but the clock is ticking as we only have until the middle of May to submit a formal bid to the pub's owner. We don't yet know how much money needs to be raised but the intention will be to allow as many people as possible to invest a moderate amount.

The campaign group can be contacted on SAVETHEWHITELIONALDERSHOT@GMAIL.COM and more information is also available on the pub's Facebook page. www.facebook.com/WHITELIONGU124EA/

For more information please contact:

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Background

The White Lion was built shortly after the army arrived in Aldershot in 1854 and is one of the oldest surviving pubs in the town. In the eastern suburbs of Aldershot, this is a proper locals' pub with loads of 60's atmosphere, exactly the sort of pub that offers so much to its local community. The pub is well known to local Real Ale enthusiasts too for its 10+ years in the Good Beer Guide, during which time it has been leased to and run by Triple fff Brewery. The lease expired in January and Triple fff decided not to take on a new lease. The freehold is owned by a private individual, who has decided to sell up. The freehold of the pub is available for circa £275,000. The White Lion is listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV).

The White Lion, 20 Lower Farnham Road, Aldershot. GU12 4EA.