

Grants Boost 'Save the Drovers' Campaign

Momentum is gathering in the fight to Save the Drovers Inn, Gussage All Saints thanks to fantastic grant support from the Cranborne Chase Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Sustainable Development Fund, The Plunkett Foundation Bursary and generous donations from the community.

The Sustainable Development Fund is administered by the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB providing grants for innovative projects that conserve and enhance the landscape and contribute to sustainable development in protected areas. An annual award is made by Natural England, a government body responsible for the natural environment, to all 40 AONBs in England and Wales. Each AONB has its own grants review panel which oversees the fund.

The Plunkett Foundation has been helping rural communities through co-operatives and community-ownership to take control of the issues affecting them since 1919. Helping predominantly rural communities to set up and run community-owned enterprises.

With this support the 'Save the Drovers' action group have successfully applied for and registered the Gussage Community Benefit Society Limited in record time and this provides the incorporated structure to finalise the details of the Community Share Offer to be released in May.

The big challenge for the 'Save the Drovers' campaign remains the change of use application which is understood to be heard by East Dorset District Council on 26th May 2015 and is subject to confirmation. The EDDC granted Asset of Community Value status to The Drovers Inn on 16th February 2015 and this gives the local community six months to raise the funds and bid for the pub. It would go against the spirit of the 'Community Right to Bid' legislation for the Council to take away a huge chunk of this time by granting an irreversible change of use before the end of the ACV moratorium.

The community are seeking to connect with as many supporters as possible over the next few weeks leading up to the launch of their Community Share Offer. The support of the local media, word of mouth and the support of friends, family and colleagues is invaluable.

Supporters can find out more and sign-up for the 'Save the Drovers' newsletter at www.droversinngussage.com