

# NO HALF MEASURES.

IF WE SUPPORT THE OWNERS' PLANS,  
WHAT COULD WE REALLY BE SWALLOWING?

# SAVE THE DYKE PUB



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*Community Newsletter*

JULY 2017

## NO HALF MEASURES (OR TROJAN HORSES)

Ten months since closing the pub, the Dyke's owners have applied for planning permission to convert the building into a combination of retail, flats and a bar or small pub (ref. BH2017/01917 on the Council website).

On the face of it, this might seem like success for the Save The Dyke Pub campaign. So why aren't we jumping for joy?

Firstly, the size of the pub is troubling us. To make money in the pub game these days, you need to get bums on seats between Thursday and Sunday, eating and drinking. The smoking ban, a marked trend towards drinking at home midweek (the real cost of that cheap cava: fewer pubs in the community) and the changing demographic of pub-goers from the drinking men (and some women) of the 80s and 90s to more food-oriented families and millennials mean the Monday - Wednesday trade is very quiet. Pubs make their money at weekends, and to do that they need to cram the punters in. The smaller the pub, the fewer punters you can fit in, and the quicker you need to get them out of the door to make room for more food and drink orders.

### SET UP TO FAIL

The current plan locates a bar in the back section of the pub on a much, much smaller footprint than the original, and smaller too than the retail space. We are worried this pub isn't big enough to turn a long-term profit, and will fail... leaving the door open for another shop or flat. This tactic - the 'trojan horse' - has been deployed quite deliberately by some developers around the country who, realising their initial development plans are too ambitious for a local community, have offered what seems like a friendly compromise, only to either never open the half-pub they have permission for, or to allow it to fail.

Secondly, the location of the pub: the rear section of the old Dyke is dark and dingy. Although it leads to the garden, the current plans include no garden access and the owners say they won't rule out developing the garden space in future (initial plans for two townhouses in the Dyke garden were printed in the Argus in March). Proximity to the new flats may cause a noise nuisance



(something that has shut down several historic pubs in recent years, including Brighton's Blind Tiger). No garden means smokers huddling on the narrow pavement outside, too. Not an inviting place for a pint.

### COMMUNITY RESOURCE NEEDED

Thirdly, the community: Prestonville, Porthall and beyond are thriving, affluent communities. There are multiple development projects and planning permissions within a few yards of the Dyke. The park has a new outdoor theatre, and there are many schools (PTFA drinks, anyone?) and businesses nearby. Growing communities need more services like shops, cafes and pubs, not less of them - and we need a large area for family and friends to meet (and eat!). Places like pubs, halls, theatres and other leisure facilities help to build trust, inclusion and 'social capital', that elusive community resource that shows itself in our bonds, networks and willingness to get involved.

Most of all, though, we see the pub as a community asset, one worth safeguarding. There are lots of ways a smaller or different pub could work on the site, combined with other enterprise or residential space, but with the location, size and woeful lack of outdoor space we're not convinced by the current plans. We want a thriving, sustainable pub on the site - one that friends, families, older people and groups will want to visit time and time again. We don't want a half-hearted half-measure, doomed to failure and guaranteed development.

*Do you share our concerns for the future of The Dyke? See overleaf for how to submit your objection and comments to the council. Please display the poster on the reverse of this newsletter in your window - thanks!*

*\*accurate at time of going to press*

# HAVE YOUR SAY ON THE PLANS

If you feel strongly about the plans to develop the Dyke Pub and Garden, you can register an objection online with Brighton & Hove City Council. See the plans and supporting documents on the Council website at <http://bit.ly/BH201701917> (click **Comments** to leave an objection or comment).

Writing an objection to a planning proposal might seem daunting but it doesn't have to be. Firstly you can register general comments with the council if you want to make an overall point about the impact on the community (or your home!) of the proposed development. For specific objections, there are lots of websites out there that can help, but the things planners will listen to will be objections that relate to local planning law.

Areas that are relevant to the current plans include:

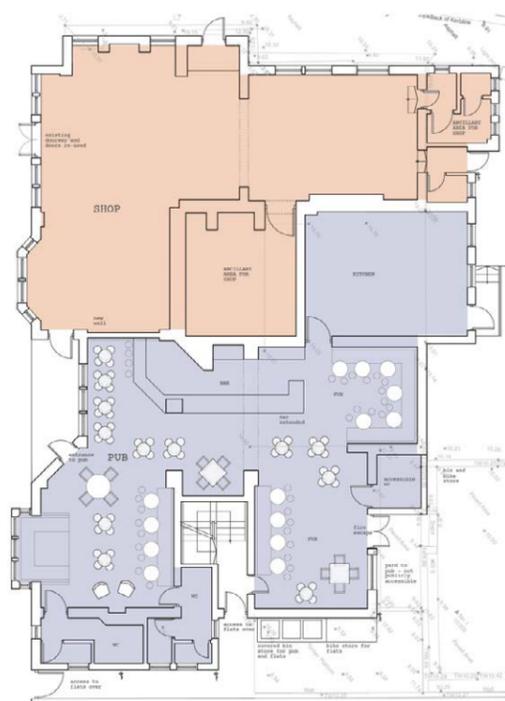
- reduced size of the pub (seating arrangement shown on plan is cramped, in reality there are fewer places to sit)
- lack of daylight in the bar area
- the smaller kitchen limits the range of food available
- lack of outside space in the plans

- visual and heritage impact of new windows and loss of chimney
- the loss of a community asset for families and large groups
- long term viability of pub due to noise issues with residents of new accommodation

We are happy to help with individual questions. Pub Planning Consultant Dale Ingram has been instructed by the Save The Dyke Group to give a detailed response to the plans, which will include a number of robust planning reasons to object - this will be published on the Planning website shortly if you would like to refer to it.

**Submit your objections and comments on the Council website at <http://bit.ly/BH201701917> by Monday 10th July 2017**

For information or help using the Planning website, send us an e-mail on: [savethedyke@gmail.com](mailto:savethedyke@gmail.com) or come along to our **Objection Surgery** at Dyke Road Park Café on Saturday 8th July between 6 and 7.30pm, where we can offer advice.



Proposed layout of the ground floor pub and shop (accurate at time of going to press)



Pub Planning Consultant Dale Ingram (centre), with Councillors and campaign supporters Kevin Allen and Nick Taylor

**PLEASE SUBMIT OBJECTIONS AND COMMENTS BY MONDAY 10 JULY**

## A local resident writes...

*“Everyone has their own ideas about what constitutes a ‘good’ and ‘bad’ pub. The pub as a construct is sound and well-proven. Under poor management, any hospitality-based business can deteriorate and disenfranchise customers. There could be a variety of reasons why a pub is perceived to have gone “downhill”. If an owner is looking to achieve permission for a change of use, it is in his interests to present the business to decision-makers as ‘failing’. There are many cases of pubs being deliberately run into the ground.*

*The crucial point is that past performance should have no bearing on future potential. In the right pair of hands, with a caring and motivated publican, previously unpopular pubs can and indeed have been dramatically transformed. A poor pub often just needs a new landlord/owner with fresh ideas. The answer is to let somebody else see if they can make a go of it, not to sacrifice it for housing or shops. The pub is bigger than its present owner/publican.”*

Toby Statham, posted in the Save The Dyke Pub Facebook Group

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### Objection Surgery

Need help submitting your objection? Come to Dyke Road Park Café on Saturday 8th July 2017 from 6pm-7.30pm - we can help!

### Save The Dyke Pub Quiz Night

Returning to Exeter Street Hall soon - date TBC!

## What happens if the application is rejected?

Without planning permission, the value of the Dyke Pub and Garden would be much less than the £1.6million the owners want for the site as a development opportunity. We know there *are* local businesses who are interested in running the Dyke as a (full sized) pub and restaurant, but want to buy it at the fair market value, so this could be an option.

Of course, the owners could still sell to the community - if the £965k bid (an independent valuation) was accepted then the Dyke Pub Preservation Society could prepare a business plan and share application packs for local residents interested in investing in the pub (if the community bought the pub it could be leased to an experienced pub landlord).

**Do you know someone who wants to buy the pub? Get in touch at [savethedyke@gmail.com](mailto:savethedyke@gmail.com)**

## About the SAVE THE DYKE PUB Group

Since forming 10 months ago, the Save The Dyke Pub Group has worked hard to organise:

- a petition to register the Dyke as an Asset of Community Value (ACV), with more than 1500 signatures
- a successful groundbreaking application for ACV status
- demonstrations outside the Dyke Pub and Town Hall
- an independent valuation
- five community meetings
- a sold out quiz night at Exeter Street Hall

Our campaign has featured on TV, on Caroline Lucas' blog, in the Brighton Argus and in Planning Magazine.

Most importantly, the 'Save The Dyke Pub' campaign played a part in getting the law changed, so that developers can no longer change from a public house to shop with no warning - **thank you for your amazing support!**

For more information visit [www.savethedykepub.org.uk](http://www.savethedykepub.org.uk), [@savethedyke](https://twitter.com/savethedyke) on Twitter or [facebook.com/savethedyke](https://facebook.com/savethedyke) Email us at [savethedyke@gmail.com](mailto:savethedyke@gmail.com)

1895  
Dyke Road  
Hotel built



1905  
Stanwix family  
take over the  
running of the  
Dyke Road Hotel



2010  
Martin Webb & Warrick  
Armsby-Ward agree to  
lease the Dyke Tavern  
from Enterprise Inns



Oct 2013  
Webb & Armsby-Ward  
buy the freehold from  
Enterprise Inns for  
£900K

Mar 2015  
Coffee shop  
opened

Feb 2016  
Manager of four years  
leaves. Pub refurbished  
with octopus mural  
and giant screen



May 2016  
Webb applies for  
change of use from  
A4 (public house)  
to A1 (retail)



Sept 2016  
Pub closes overnight,  
reopening as Emporium  
Treasure & Trash -  
locals protest outside

Oct 2016  
Save The Dyke  
Pub Group  
submit ACV  
Nomination



Dec 2016  
Asset of Community  
Value status  
awarded to The  
Dyke Pub & Garden

March 2017  
Webb publishes  
plans for  
townhouses in  
the Dyke garden

March 2017  
Owners turn down a  
£965K offer to buy the  
pub from Dyke Pub  
Preservation Society

June 2017  
Planning  
application  
submitted  
to Council