

## **Bricklayers Arms Proposal for tables to be sited on the Village Green**

### **Background**

The Bricklayers pub has been run until this year by an extremely successful tenant, Andrew Hogg, who not only ran the pub to an incredible high standard but also as a genuine hub for the community.

In January of 2022 Andrew gave notice and the owner Harvey's of Lewes Ltd decided to take the pub into its' managed estate. We are absolutely aware that we not only have a difficult void to fill but also that we need to retain the pub as the centre for activity – further enhanced by the fact that the pub sits at the heart of the Village on the green. During lockdown the pub was granted permission to place tables on the Village Green by a Parish Council looking to support not only the pub, at risk due to Covid legislation, but also to allow for a focal point for continued contact amongst residents.

Utilising the Green during the pandemic most probably saved the pub from permanent harm and potentially from risk of closure and whilst restrictions have, to all intents and purposes, been lifted from the hospitality industry, the impact of two years of social restrictions has had a huge impact on the Licensed Trade in particular. Leaving aside the difficulty in recruiting and retention of catering and bar and waiting staff, the pub going public have changed in their attitudes significantly. Pubs that are landlocked and without the opportunity of trading outside (even in inclement weather) have seen turnover and profitability plummet. Harvey's as a brewer and pub owner have dramatically altered our plans to invest and are looking at our pub business model very closely to ensure that we invest more in outside areas than in pubs that have no external space to exploit.

We are fully aware that any proposal to host tables on the Green needs to be with the consent of the Parish Council, run responsibly and that we have a duty of care outside placing tables to ensure the upkeep of the Green, access for all and security for both customers, residents and staff. The proposal below is not intended to be exhaustive and is offered for the scrutiny of the Parish Council and subject to their agreement and change.

### **Harvey's Proposal**

#### **Table Numbers**

We would look to site 10 bench style tables on the Village Green. Location and layout to be agreed with the Council in order to minimise disruption to those not willing to eat/drink with us but still wanting to access the area. Each table to be exclusively for the use of customers of the Bricklayers Arms and signposted as such. Each table to have an umbrella to ensure some shade.

#### **Dates and Times of operation**

We would look to operate the tables from May through to September inclusive (clearly both shoulder months will be less likely to have good weather and may prevent operation) and between the hours of 12 Noon and 9pm when we would inform customers that the tables will be taken away at 9.30pm. Our ideal would be to agree an initial term of occupancy for 2 years subject to our running the area as specified and directed by the council.

#### **Operation and security**

The tables will NOT be able to be booked with the specific intention that this would favour local residents and those regular users of the pub rather than customers taking advantage of the tables and having no investment in the area. This is NOT to say that there will be any favour to residents

who do not manage to secure a table. Any advance bookings taken will be for tables interior to the pub or if space permits to the tables immediately outside the pub.

We will have a duty to ensure that customers using the tables behave and any unruly, excessively loud or abusive customers will of course be asked to leave as would be the case inside the pub.

We would also like to have one point of contact with the council to ensure that feedback can flow both ways and more regularly; this point of contact to be directed by the council.

#### **What happens outwith the occupation on the Green**

We would look to improve signage to the road (by liaison with Kent Council and Sevenoaks District Council) warning of people crossing and to ensure that temporary (café style) barriers are erected in order to ensure crossing is done safely and moreover to act as a barrier to younger customers to the street.

Any signage allowed would need to be with the strict consultation with the Parish Council to ensure we do not further compromise the look of or access to the Green and surrounding pavements and of course subject to planning restrictions.

Following the tables being sited on the Green we would ensure that we repair the surface immediately we cease trading (in September) and also ensure that during and after the trading “season” we maintain the green to its’ best, including cutting grass, litter picking and weeding and maintenance of the borders and surrounding greenery. We would seed or re-turf as appropriate under direction of the parish Council. We would also ensure that any paths immediately adjacent to the Green are maintained if usage of them increases.

#### **How else will the pub support the Village and Parish Council**

We have been made aware that there have been a number of issues with regard to car parking to the access to the Sailing Club and we would make available a camera point for CCTV to allow this area to be supervised at all times. We would not look for any contribution from the council for this.

We would offer the prospect of rent for the space used of £40 per table per month and whilst we have stated 10 tables this would mean a rental payable of £2000 for the period under consideration.

We would also be happy to look into the refurbishment of the village sign and if appropriate to having that sign illuminated running a power source from the pub. Any power new to the green might also be used to light the village Christmas Tree, but again this is subject to council approval. We would not use this potential new power source for the tables.

We shall, of course, continue to support the various groups that Andrew and Harvey’s always have in the village from the sports teams through to the Walking club.