

Formal offer made to save village pub

THE Red Lion in Sidbury has moved closer to becoming the first community-owned pub in East Devon, after campaign group Save the Red Lion made a formal offer to purchase it.

The pub was put up for sale by Punch Taverns in April last year, and the campaign to save it was launched in May.

In September the Red Lion was listed as an Asset of Community Value by East Devon District Council, meaning it could only be bought by the group behind the campaign, for a period of six months.

The campaign has since formalised itself as Sidbury Community Enterprises Limited, and has developed its business plan.

A vision statement for the future of the pub has now been distributed to Sidbury residents, which details plans to turn the Red Lion into a multi-functional community hub.

Fred Burnett, chairman of both the Save the Red Lion campaign and Sidbury Community Enterprises Limited, said: "We want The Red Lion to be far more than just the pub in the village."

"Sidbury Community Enterprises Limited will create it as a

key social hub for the local community, at the heart of the village. "The Red Lion will be owned by many local people who will have invested in it as a business."

"We intend to make it live up to its listing as an Asset of Community Value, by inviting our community to use the Red Lion as a base for many community activities."

There are plans to redesign the bar area and refurbish the bed and breakfast accommodation, and the side entrance to the pub will also be opened out to allow direct access to the courtyard area.

Company secretary John Loudon said: "The offer we have made is a credible and realistic one."

"We have spent three months or more obtaining professional advice as to what the property is really worth, how much work is

needed to upgrade it, how much that work will cost and whether we can create a viable business on that basis."

"We urge Punch Taverns to accept our offer and allow the Red Lion to get its roar back."

"Sidbury's community needs to secure the future of The Red Lion - the company is determined to do that."

If a sale can be agreed, the company will need to raise the capital to fund the purchase, upgrading works and start-up costs, and it is looking to offer shares in E50 denominations, up to E20,000.

The campaign's website has had over 8,000 hits and its Twitter account has more than 300 followers. Further information about the campaign can be found at www.thepubinthevillage.blogspot.com

Telegraph pole blocks road

BT WORK crews were called to Sidbury on Wednesday morning (February 5th) after a telegraph pole blocked the road.

Strong winds and heavy rain battered parts of the Devon coast during the early part of the morning,

and powerful gusts caused power lines and trees to blow over on Fore Street at around 6:30am.

Police closed the road while BT crews removed the telegraph pole and delays were persistent throughout the day.

Plans for new cycling route to go on display

PROPOSALS for a new walking and cycling route between Sidbury and Sidford will go on public display at a two-day exhibition later this month.

Devon County Council announced the exhibition last week and is inviting members of the public to come and view the plans.

The scheme, which has been in the pipeline for a number of years, will provide a more direct route for pedestrians and cyclists between the two communities.

It could also improve safety and access for people with disabilities.

Councillor Stuart Hughes, Devon County Council Cabinet Member for Highway Management, said: "This excellent scheme has been a long-held ambition for the county council and will greatly improve safety for anyone walking or cycling between Sidford and Sidbury."

"Providing this route would provide a realistic alternative to the car for anyone making the journey between the two communities and hopefully it would encourage more people to do so."

The proposals include new off-road shared use footways and cycleways as well as improvements at existing on-road sections, to further improve safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

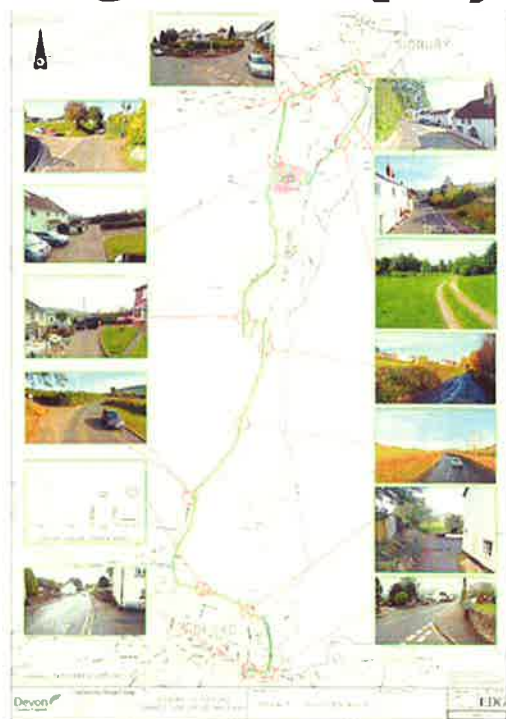
Councillor Claire Wright, Devon County Council for Ottery St Mary Rural, said: "It is wonderful to be involved in the creation of a brand new walking and cycle path which will take people through beautiful countryside that they do not have access to at the moment."

"Importantly, it will be a safe route to school once finished. I look forward to meeting lots of residents at the exhibition."

Two separate exhibitions will take place over two days later this month.

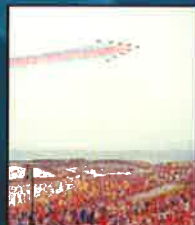
The first will be held at Sidbury Village Hall from 10am to 7pm on Wednesday, February 19th, and the second at St Peter's Church Hall in Sidford from 10am to 7pm on Thursday, February 20th.

Staff and councillors from Devon County Council will be attending both exhibitions, where members of the public will have the opportunity to view and comment on the proposals.



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Mill Street chimney fire call out

FIREFIGHTERS dealt with a chimney fire at a property in Mill Street, Sidmouth, on the evening of February 5th.

The alarm was raised just after 6pm and a spokesperson for the fire and res-

cue service said: "Two fire appliances from Sidmouth were mobilised."

"Crews used a thermal imaging camera to check for hot areas and chimney gear to extinguish the fire."



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