

# MP Swire backs fight to save pub

A CAMPAIGN to save the last pub in Sidbury has a new patron in the guise of an old regular – the East Devon MP.

Hugo Swire has given his backing to the move to save the Red Lion, as part of his commitment to keeping a pub, a shop and a church in the village.

Heavily indebted owners Punch Taverns have put the establishment on the market for £295,000 – but campaigners worry a quick sale will see the resource turned into a restaurant or house.

Mr Swire said: "The pub is part of the community, it's a wonderful asset for the village – it would be a very sad day when it closed."

As well as it being in his constituency, the MP used to visit the Red Lion when he lived in one of Sir John Cave's houses and still feels a strong connection to it.

"If there isn't a pub, there's nowhere for visitors to stop off – it's terribly important to have a church,

Report by **STEPHEN SUMNER**  
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a pub and a shop," said Mr Swire, when he visited the Red Lion last Friday.

"I've always been insistent that Sidbury should be distinct from Sidford and Sidmouth, rather than just an extension."

The campaigners are looking at applying for funding from central government and the Big Lottery fund, and Mr Swire said he would use his position to investigate other avenues.

They are also considering having the pub owned by the users through a shareholder system, or getting input from local breweries.

Campaign chairman Fred Burnett said: "Having such a high profile and well connected MP as a patron of the campaign is important as it reinforces the importance that the village attaches to retaining the Red Lion as a pub for the local community."



▲ Save the Red Lion campaign chairman Fred Burnett, secretary John Loudoun, East Devon MP Hugo Swire, and pub landlord Neil Anthony

"All of us involved in the campaign look forward to working with Hugo in our fight to retain the Red Lion."

Secretary John Loudoun said: "It's important for galvanising people to know that we have the support of the likes of Hugo Swire and Sir John Cave.

"We need to think long term – it's no good being in the same situation in five years' time."

"This can be made to be a really thriving business."

More than 50 people attended the campaign's inaugural meeting in May, hoping to retain a pub in the village.

## and briefly...

NEWSDESK: 01392 888500

**RIB RESCUE:** Five people on board a broken-down vessel were left stranded between Sidmouth and Beer three-and-a-half nautical miles out at sea on Saturday.

Rescuers were scrambled when the seven-and-a-half-metre, Blue Cobra rigid inflatable boat (RIB) ran out of fuel at around 7.30pm.

Lyme Regis RNLI Inshore Lifeboat went out to the vessel, provided it with some fuel and got it started again.

They then escorted the boat back to Lyme Regis.

**FREE FUN:** The Sidmouth Family Mission is again putting on a week of free fun for children and families next month.

The Scripture Union organised event will take place from August 19 to 23.

There will be a free barbecue, barn dance and the 'SidFM' show will once more take place in Blackmore Gardens.

The event is back for a second year after it proved a hit in 2012.

For more information visit [www.sidmouthfamilymission.com](http://www.sidmouthfamilymission.com) or pick up a leaflet from Sidmouth Methodist Church.

www.sidmouthherald.co.uk

## Assault horror plea

AN INNOCENT assault victim needed eight stitches when a couple were attacked by a group of youths while walking home from the pub in Sidmouth.

Detectives have appealed for help catching the culprits responsible for the unprovoked incident which happened near the town's Conservative Club at around 12.15am on Saturday, July 6.

The woman was struck from behind with a crutch and had to be taken to the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital.

Police believe the incident involved a group of teenagers and are reviewing CCTV footage.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or with information has been urged to call 101 and quote crime reference: KS/13/350.

## Burglary warning

SIZZLING summer weather has seen police ask homeowners to be aware that trying to keep their homes cool presents an increased risk of being targeted by opportunist thieves.

Simple tips such as closing and locking windows and doors when residents are away from their property, as well as being careful

about the windows that are left open while still inside, could prevent them from becoming a victim of crime.

Bob Bunney, Devon and Cornwall Police's crime reduction lead said: "During the summer months we do see a marked increase in house burglary reports with entry gained through windows left open in warmer weather."

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