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Share offer plan to buy the Red Lion

A GROUP fighting to save the Red Lion in Sidbury has unveiled plans to sell shares to help fund its purchase of the pub.

Campaigners from Save the Red Lion will make shares in the newly formed 'Sidbury Community Enterprises Limited' available for £50 each, which will go towards buying and refurbishing the Fore Street pub.

The group hopes to use the tavern as a place to provide community services, and have sent a questionnaire out to village residents asking their views on how they would like to see the pub used as a community asset.

Chair of the campaign Fred Burnett said that the creation of the new company was evidence of the group's determination to buy the

business.

He added: "We want it to not only be a successful local business, but also to be owned by and to support the local community."

"We think that the name of the company says it all. We are determined to get the Red Lion for the community".

The campaign was recently bolstered after it received a £10,000

government grant to fund the creation of the new company.

East Devon MP Hugo Swire, a patron of the campaign, said: "A community owned pub in Sidbury would be excellent news for all those in the area."

"I wish them good luck in their continuing endeavours to buy the Red Lion."

Tony is lucky to be alive

AN Otterton man cheated death by inches when a storm-damaged tree rolled on top of him.

Parish councillor Tony Bennett was cutting a damaged bough from a storm-damaged ash tree at his home on Saturday lunch-time when a large branch rolled down, trapping him against a steep embankment.

Tony, who suffered a punctured lung, eight broken ribs and a broken shoulder blade, would have died had the tree rolled three inches in either direction.

He was saved thanks to his fallen ladder which created a space between Tony and the three-ton, seven-metre-long branch.

Tony's wife, Jane, said: "He was trapped. If the tree had moved three inches in either direction it would have been curtains for him. He would have died."

"He was cutting a bit of the tree that had fallen in the storm that he thought would not affect its bal-

ance. The tree rolled down on top of him and he was saved by his ladder. It left a bit of space, so the ladder was between him and the tree."

Jane said she was grateful to neighbours Neil and Judith Constable for raising the alarm and gave special praise to the fire service for rescuing her husband.

Jane said: "Neil was in their front garden and heard it happen so Judith came up and got me quickly. Tony was trapped but he was speaking."

"There was nothing I could do. I just had to sit there. I was frantic."

"The fire service were absolutely brilliant - they stabilised the tree in all directions and had to use a trowel to dig because it could have destabilised the tree. It took just over two hours to get him out."

The fire service said Tony was pinned by his chest down a steep embankment.

Around 20 firefighters worked to stabilise the tree with winches



▲ It took just over two hours for rescuers to release Tony.

because it was in danger of sliding down the bank.

Watch commander Nigel Snowshall said: "If he was in a more critical condition it would have been a

much more difficult incident."

"We were very lucky we were able to take our time and get it spot-on for his safety and the safety of the crews there."

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PCSO 'honour' at switch-on

A POPULAR PCSO said it was an 'honour' to switch on Sidmouth's Christmas lights.

Jay Bowden, who has worked in the town for seven years, was asked to carry out the duty by the town council.

Chairman John Hollick chose her as he wanted 'someone from the community who works hard all year round'.

"It's such a privilege to be part of the community," said PCSO Bowden.

Hundreds of people attended the event.

● See photos on pages 26 and 27.

HIV figure for East Devon

THIRTY-NINE people in East Devon are living with HIV and a further 10 could be unaware they have the virus, according to Public Health England.

The body has revealed the figures ahead of National HIV Testing Week from November 22 to 29.

More than 100,000 people are now living with HIV in the UK - around a quarter of whom are unaware of their infection and need to test.

Early diagnosis and timely treatment can mean a near-normal lifespan for someone with HIV.

