

held much wider appeal to people living in Easington, Seaham, Murton and beyond. It has been a focal point of this small rural village and provided good food and drink for residents and tourists alike.

Members feel that the argument that the Stapylton Arms is a business which has not been profitable in the recent past is solely the owner's decision to either sell or convert it into a residence and who has subsequently engineered the downturn in trade.

Examples include:-

- Sporadic opening times
- Being closed when it was expected a pub should be open i.e. Saturday evenings, Sunday lunchtimes and during those times when community events are being held such as the switch on of the Christmas lights. (In previous years the pub has been 'crowded out' at this time.)
- There is also much first hand evidence that the pub staff have been rebuked for trying to attract customers

Moreover marketing of the Stapylton Arms on the open market has not been sufficiently vigorous and it is suggested that if this is undertaken properly then it would in all likelihood attract a new owner who wishes to run the pub as it has been up until recent times and which would result in a successful and thriving pub once again.

#### **4. There is no significant demand for the facility within that locality;**

Public houses are not only businesses providing local employment, they are important community assets where people meet and socialise.

The recent council meeting attracted approximately 14% of local Hawthorn residents. This was held during the day and at very short notice in order to meet planning consultation deadlines but demonstrated the strength of feeling of local residents to safeguard their own local pub.

As a result of this meeting a village community group is being established to look into the purchase of the pub if and when proper marketing fails to attract a new owner who would be able to ensure proper management in order the pub becomes viable again. This in itself demonstrates the great demand for the Stapylton Arms to remain as the one and only pub in Hawthorn.

#### **5. Equivalent facilities in terms of their nature and accessibility are available or would be made available nearby. '**

The nearest similar facilities is the Pemberton Arms which is well over a mile away from the centre of Hawthorn and further from other areas of the village. It should be noted that many residents of the village are elderly and walking to this alternative pub is by an unlit and uneven footpath, and simply not viable or acceptable.

**In summary Hawthorn Parish Council feel very strongly that the Stapylton Arms is a local amenity and its loss will deprive the community of a place to meet and socialize and with the proper management the pub could be a viable business once again.**

**We would strongly urge that this application is rejected.**

Yours sincerely,  
*Lesley Swinbank*  
Parish Clerk

# Hawthorn Parish Council

*Chairman: Cllr. A. Askew*

*Clerk to the Council: Lesley Swinbank MBA, FILCM  
Springwell House, Spring Lane, Sedgefield Co. Durham. TS21 2HS  
Tel. 01740 622429*

*Email: [lesley.swinbank@btinternet.com](mailto:lesley.swinbank@btinternet.com)*

**Mr. Barry Gavillet  
Planning Dept.  
DCC  
County Hall  
Durham**

26<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Dear Mr. Gavillet

**Change of use to of public house to dwelling house including demolition of outbuildings.  
Stapylton Arms , The Village, Hawthorn, Seaham SR7 8SD  
Ref. No: DM/17/01410/FPA |**

Hawthorn Parish Council wish to object to the above planning application. Before reaching this decision a special meeting of the council was held and included a time when local residents were able to give their views and comments. The council then discussed the application in detail and were unanimous in their decision to oppose this application and thereby allow the Stapylton Arms to continue in its present role as a declared 'Asset to Hawthorn'.

The objection is made on the following grounds:-

## **1. National Policy**

The application is contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to prevent the loss of community assets such as pubs.

## **2. DCC Policy**

It is also contrary to the Planning Authority's Policy 96 ( Easington District Policy as saved) which states under Protection of Community Facilities:-

'Outside of the towns of Seaham and Peterlee proposals which, through conversion or redevelopment, would result in the loss of a community facility (village shops, post offices, public houses, doctors/dentists surgeries and village halls) will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that:

- a. The facility is no longer financially viable or**
- b. There is no significant demand for the facility within that locality; or**
- c. Equivalent facilities in terms of their nature and accessibility are available or would be made available nearby. '**

The Parish Council would suggest that the Stapylton Arms does not meet any of these criteria for the following reasons.

## **3. The facility is no longer financially viable**

There is little doubt that the Stapylton Arms has been a very valuable community asset over many, many years and one which has attracted customers from not only the local community and its hinterland but has