

**From:** Graham Price <[graham.price@brunningandprice.co.uk](mailto:graham.price@brunningandprice.co.uk)>  
**Date:** Thursday, 1 September 2016 16:36  
**To:** jackie wren <[jackiewren13@gmail.com](mailto:jackiewren13@gmail.com)>  
**Cc:** haycutter campaign <[haycuttercampaign@hotmail.com](mailto:haycuttercampaign@hotmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: The Haycutter, Oxted

Dear Jackie, if I may

First off apologies for the slight delay in replying; I've been away and then wanted to gather the facts from some of the team.

I'm not sure how up to speed you are with the situation, so forgive me if I lay out our story from the beginning.

The Haycutter had lain unoccupied for a few months because the brewery had decided that with a "revolving door" tenant situation it wasn't worth continuing to rent it out anymore. This is not untypical with small rural pubs where it is difficult to maintain a living without a quality food operation. This of course requires operational expertise and sufficient scale and investment to make it all viable.

We were made aware that it was up for sale and thought that this area may suit our traditional, high quality, style of pub. However, it was instantly clear that although it had some land, the pub was way too small and was also in Green Belt. We have come across other pubs like this and have found that where the community and local authority are pro preserving a village pub and creating some rural jobs, that "very special circumstances" have been accepted by the planners and that a sensitive but substantial redevelopment has been permitted. In these instances, before purchasing, we naturally met with the Parish Council, locals and interested parties, laid out our sketch plans, told them about our company and our style of pub, and then literally asked them whether they would be happy to have us join their community. On all past occasions they have said yes, so we proceeded to purchase and I like to think everyone has been happy with the end result. Had they said no we would have walked away.

Although not a formal Parish Council meeting, on the same basis as above we met with a host of locals and parish councillors at the village hall on 28th November last year. The gathering was put together by a number of people but in particular we were helped by the Haycutter Campaign team (copied in) that had quite recently got support to have an "Asset of Community Value" status granted for the pub. At the end of the meeting, which had about 70 attendees and a very positive tone, we asked people to fill in some anonymous slips with the following result:

1. 86% expressed either excitement or support for our proposals.
2. 11% were satisfied but not that excited.
3. 3% expressed some concern.
4. 0% were against

I also received quite a number of emails directly from the attendees, and some from those that couldn't attend, offering their support along with some constructive comments (I can supply them if you'd like). Probably the biggest issue was landscaping and making sure that the rural aspect wasn't severely spoilt as one passed across the green. Something we were already keen to ensure if for no other reason than a lovely setting for a country pub.

On this basis we bought the pub, took the feedback on board and proceeded to work up full plans whilst also engaging with the planning officer. We took on board all pre-application advice from the planning department. We submitted the planning application, accompanied by a host of supporting information, during early 2016. This included, if I may say so, very compelling grounds for "very special circumstances" to allow this scale of development in the Green Belt. During the course of the application there have been a few objections raised by some adjacent residents regarding roof heights, noise and fire-escape issues, which we have successfully addressed. The local highway officer also raised some concerns regarding highway safety and through further amendments these have also been successfully addressed. Surprisingly, given my earlier presentation, The Parish Council

raised some concerns about the size of the car park and its impact on the Green Belt but we have indicated we are happy to reduce its physical scale. However, the main obstacle has been the planning case officer who has remained concerned about the size of the pub extensions in Green Belt terms. Accordingly, we have worked very hard to consider ways of reducing the visible footprint/volume of the extensions whilst still ensuring the pub (as extended) will be commercially viable. We feel strongly that our latest proposal achieves a significant reduction in footprint/volume and that any alleged impact on the Green Belt is now more limited and even more clearly outweighed by the "very special circumstances" we have put forward. We are now at a point where the planning case officer (Robin Evans) is continuing to ponder on whether our "very special circumstances" are sufficient to recommend that the latest plans are approved. Put simply, we cannot reduce the size of the extensions any further or commercially the scheme simply won't be worth doing.

From our perspective, we have laid out very clear reasons that why we would need a certain scale for it to warrant us spending probably north of £2m on this pub and that we simply cannot make it viable if it we make it any smaller. In all honesty, as I said at the meeting last year, we also don't want to try and elbow our way into a community that doesn't want us; that would be madness. So if our latest submission, possibly with one or two minor adjustments, still isn't good enough then we will probably walk away and sell the property on.

If the Parish Council and the bulk of the local community really would like us to continue with this project I can't help but think that more vocal support might turn the planner's head. If you agree then I'd happily come down and talk through any remaining issues with the Parish Council and local attendees and try to get them to email/write to the planner to express their support directly.

Your thoughts and help would be much appreciated.

All the best

Graham Price

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**From:** jackie wren <[jackiewren13@gmail.com](mailto:jackiewren13@gmail.com)>  
**Date:** Sunday, 28 August 2016 20:21  
**To:** Graham Price <[graham.price@brunningandprice.co.uk](mailto:graham.price@brunningandprice.co.uk)>  
**Subject:** The Haycutter, Oxted

Dear Mr Price

I am a Tandridge District Councillor for Oxted and have been asked by residents if I can discover why the planning application for The Haycutter in Tanhouse Road seems to have been held up. Any information you can give me on the latest position that I can pass on them would be very much appreciated.

Thank you

Councillor Jackie Wren