

### **Comments of Parish Council Chairman in support of application for listing**

Members of the community have successfully fought off attempts by the owners to close the pub. On the first occasion the owners simply closed it down boarded up the premises and subsequently sought planning approval for a change of use to a residential unit with a view to selling it.

- A 'Save the Dodford' Campaign was launched and members of the community raised their own private funds to retain specialist consultants to prepare objections to the application. The owners were claiming that the pub did not constitute a viable business and that this was borne out by the absence of interest from prospective purchasers. Both of these claims were successfully refuted in the campaign organisers' objections submitted to the Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) planning committee who unanimously turned it down. A subsequent appeal was lodged, was opposed by both BDC and the local community, and was withdrawn shortly before the Inspector was due to pronounce on it.
- Prior to the change of use application being considered the Parish Council were made aware of local interest in purchasing the pub as a going concern and a valuation was given by a specialist licensed premises valuer. The owners however turned down the subsequent offer, apparently showed no interest in negotiating and proceeded with the change of use application.
- The Parish Council, reflecting the strong community interest in retaining the pub as a valuable local amenity, have submitted the application for it to be listed as a community asset to avoid a repetition of the previous unsatisfactory sequence of events. Such listing will ensure that the community is given early notice of any impending intention to place the pub on the market affording the opportunity for local interested parties to organise their bid. We fully respect the owners' right to dispose of the property at any time should they be so minded. However there is sufficient local desire to retain it as 'our pub' to justify the listing application. The Parish Council's involvement in any future sale of the premises would be for them to determine as and when the situation arises but they are seeking the assurance that listing will give ie that the local community will be guaranteed the opportunity to bid for its retention.