

Raise a glass...

By Brian Kilbey

Covid-19, one year on...

March 21st is the anniversary of Lockdown 1.0 when all cafes, pubs and restaurants were closed, except for takeaway food. This brought the Chesham Royal British Legion's Beer & Cider Festival to an abrupt halt.

At the time, cumulative Covid deaths were around 4,000 but grew to almost 30,000 by the end of April. We are approaching 120,000 because Lockdown 2.0 fell victim to virus mutations.

Lockdown 3.0, with better treatments plus vaccinations and quarantine, has reversed the growth in daily deaths and, at the time of writing, they are below the April 2020 peak.

The government is under pressure to make decisions on the 'safe' reopening of some activities. I assume education is first, then shops, but the hospitality industry will need to wait until April (at least) for some hope – Easter may be too soon to risk it.

Saint David's Day

1st March 1st

The Feast Day of Saint David falls on a Monday this year.

He would be pleased that the pubs are shut because he preached against beer drinking.

Mothering Sunday

March 14th

Stand by for emotional campaigns because many will not have had close contact with their mums for a year.

Home 'bubble' lunches should be possible, especially for mothers who have had their first vaccination. A problem could be in care homes.

Getting closer contact with a vaccinated mum will be easier, except where caregivers have refused the job – I have no solution.

Saint Patrick's Day

Wednesday 17th

Saint Patrick's Day celebrations will be a good opportunity for the police to hand out fines for illegal gatherings, especially in Northern Ireland.

I assume they will not turn a blind eye.

Canned Guinness should enjoy record sales.

Enjoy food and drink locally

For information on CAMRA contact Jared Ward-Brickett: chairman@midchilternscamra.org.uk

To join CAMRA contact Richard Healey: membership@midchilternscamra.org.uk

For information on LocAle contact Roy Humphrey: locale@midchilternscamra.org.uk

well as the intended business model for the operation and management of the pub. A key part of this will be the additional and community-based services that we hope can be provided as part of the operation of the pub.

The Swan has been confirmed as an Asset of Community Value and the SOS group commissioned a Viability report which, crucially, confirmed that the pub can still be a viable business.

You may be thinking that pubs are failing generally so why do we want to save The Swan?

Well, it's been acknowledged (see Viability report on the Planning site) that with the correct offering, The Swan is viable.

We have been working with The Plunkett Foundation, CAMRA and Pub is the Hub and they have all agreed and stated that none of the pubs that were failing and have been saved by communities like us have failed – that is a powerful statistic

So far, The Save Our Swan group have been successful in repelling two planning applications (firstly to turn it into a nursery and a secondly to turn into two domestic dwellings).

Now there is another planning application to turn it into a single domestic dwelling which we hope will also be rejected. If the planning application is refused, we hope to be in a better position to make a fair and reasonable offer for both parties, so that the Swan can be kept alive for our community and generations to come!

Words: DAVE PETERSON



Giant Leap forward as Ley Hill Villagers continue their fight to save The Swan

The villagers of Ley Hill are fighting to save their historic 500-year-old Inn – The Swan.

Following the normal close scrutiny of the regulators, The Save Our Swan group have been approved by the FCA as a Community Benefit Society (CBS) - a legal entity chosen because it provides for The Swan to be a community asset which will be operated specifically for the benefit of the community.

More significantly, we now have a full prospectus for the purchase of the freehold detailing how the community can pledge funds to buy the Pub, as

THE SAVE OUR SWAN TEAM NEED YOUR HELP

There many people that have pledged funds.

If you want to help and to see the prospectus please visit: www.leyhillcommunitypub.co.uk/documents

The Swan has a lot going for it, not only a wonderful community that want a friendly pub, but also a brilliant location and a historically interesting building.