

CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE PARISH COUNCIL AND PUNCH PRIOR TO THE SETTING-UP OF THE
SAVE THE BULL ACTION GROUP

Email to Much Hadham Parish Council – 18 February 2022

Please see the attached letter from a group of local residents urging the Parish Council to request East Herts District Council to withdraw the present draft of the Neighbourhood Plan from examination in the light of the purchase by Hill Residential Ltd of land to the rear of Hill House. We consider that full consideration must now be given to the allocation of this site in the Neighbourhood Plan and to the removal of The Bull site, the development of which, we and others believe, would seriously endanger the viability of this vital community asset.

Kind regards

Brian Caffarey

Attachment to Email of 18 February 2022

17 February 2022

MUCH HADHAM DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: HILL HOUSE (AND LAND TO THE REAR);
AND THE BULL

We are local residents who are concerned that the draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as submitted to the Independent Examiner does not take account of a crucially important change in the availability of land to the rear of Hill House (previously the Barn School) as a site for potential development. As a result there is a grave danger, in our view, that the NP, if approved in its present form, will lead to development in the village which is far from being in the best interests of its residents and may be deeply regretted in years to come. In particular, we believe that there is strong, and growing, opposition in the village to the inclusion of the land behind The Bull as a site for development. We urge the Parish Council and the District Council to withdraw the present draft so that further consideration can be given to the possible allocation of the Hill House site and the removal of The Bull site.

We understand that Hill House itself has now been sold with one acre to a family who propose to refurbish it for their own occupation, but there remains a very substantial area available for development behind Hill House.

The NP Steering Group proceeded on the basis that, although, in public consultation, the Hill House site was the most popular site for development, it could not properly be included as one of the sites contributing to the village's housing allocation, mainly because it was in private ownership and the owner's intentions were unclear. It was therefore identified as a reserve site for possible future development. That situation has changed. The land behind Hill House is now owned by a housebuilding company, Hill Residential Ltd, who have indicated that they intend to apply to build about 30 homes on part of the site, 40% of which would be affordable, as well as making other changes of benefit to the local community. We recognise that these proposals would need to be examined in detail and would be subject to negotiation and the usual planning requirements. But their significance

is clear from the fact that, if approved, they would represent over half of the quota of houses which the village is required to identify.

We appreciate that the drawing-up of the draft NP has involved a huge amount of work over some five years and can fully understand any reluctance, at this late stage in the process, to re-open any of the present draft. But it simply does not make sense, in our view, to proceed with the present examination, and then on to a possibly contentious referendum, as if nothing has changed. The overriding priority must surely be to produce the best possible outcome for the village, irrespective of any awkwardness or additional expense involved in taking time for further reflection. It might be different if what was at

stake was merely a small plot of land which would have a minor impact on future development of the village but the land behind Hill House is far and away the biggest potential site and therefore an extremely important part of the overall equation. We recognise that a number of possible difficulties have been identified in regard to the development of the site but it does not seem to us that they are obviously insuperable – and indeed if they were, we assume that the site would not have been included as a reserve site.

We are aware that Hill Residential Ltd have made representations to the Independent Examiner, arguing that the Hill House site should be an allocated site in the NP. While the Independent Examiner will no doubt consider these representations carefully, we are also aware that his principal role is to ensure that the NP meets the “basic conditions” regarding the drawing-up of neighbourhood plans and not to second guess the Parish Council’s views on the merits or otherwise of particular sites.

We have indicated that part of our motivation in making this request is our concern over the future of The Bull. It is probably not necessary in this letter to set out our concerns in detail since they have been articulated very clearly by a number of residents in commenting on the present planning application. In brief, though, we believe that development of The Bull site would endanger the viability of this vital community asset and might well lead to its closure. While, for this reason, we are keen to see its inclusion in the NP reconsidered, we are convinced that, notwithstanding these particular concerns, the changed circumstances relating to the land behind Hill House site are so critical that it is incumbent on the Parish Council to think again about the allocation of sites in the NP. We therefore urge the Parish Council to request East Herts District Council to withdraw the present draft from the Independent Examiner.

In view of the urgency of this matter, we are copying this letter direct to Laura Guy, East Herts District Council, for the attention of Timothy Jones (Independent Examiner), Richard Cassidy (Chief Executive, East Herts District Council), Cllr Ian Devonshire (East Herts District Council), Cllr Penny Taylor (Chair of Much Hadham Parish Council) and to Cllr Ian Hunt (Much Hadham Parish Council and Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group).

(Signed)

Keith Birch

Brian Caffarey and Jackie Westlake

Martin Dillon

Graham Newton

Jamie Snary

Reply from Cllr Hunt, Much Hadham Parish Council to residents' letter of 17 February 2022

Good afternoon Mr Caffarey

Further to the recent email from the Clerk acknowledging yours, I have to advise that the neighbourhood plan (NP) will not be withdrawn from its examination, which is well under way.

I understand that the primary issue for you is that ownership of the land at Barn School has changed and, therefore, it may now be possible for it to be developed in preference to The Bull Inn site.

Land at Barn School

Whilst the NP was being prepared, the steering group was well aware of the options that might become available for the land at Barn School. However, neither the landowner nor, subsequently, her executors made the land available for consideration as a site allocation, so it had to be excluded. Moreover, it was not possible to identify with any certainty a suitable highway access to the site, should it ever become available. There seems to be no feasible way through to Ash Meadow (which has enough traffic problems already); Oudle Lane floods and an exit on to Tower Hill by Hill House would be within the curtilage of a Grade II listed property.

Nevertheless, given the *possibility* (and it was no more than that) that a future owner might make it available and that a safe, sustainable access could be found, we identified it as a reserve site for its potential contribution to meeting future housing needs if all the other environmental considerations affecting the site, such as those identified in the Strategic Environmental Assessment, could be satisfactorily addressed. A set of policies MH H10 was included in the NP for application should that prove to be the case.

This was the status of the site at the time the NP was submitted to EHC under Regulation 15. Since then, ownership of the site has passed to a developer which, in its own submission under Regulation 16, included a proposal for approximately 30 houses in the rural area beyond the green belt. This has not been submitted as a planning application and it is not at all clear that, should it be, it would overcome the considerations mentioned above.

Simply because a developer now owns the land at Barn School is not sufficient reason to pull the NP.

The Bull Inn

The Bull Inn site was made available for consideration as a housing site allocation by the owner and assessed for suitability in the same way as all other sites. It featured in public consultations from that point on. As with all such sites, some residents objected to its inclusion but if we withdrew every site that attracted an objection, there would be none left with which to meet the minimum housing target imposed by EHC in its 2018 District Plan.

You and your co-signatories have concerns about the viability of The Bull if development of the unused field behind it proceeds. Having reviewed the summary of responses to the Regulation 16 consultation prepared by EHC, I can find only one respondent who objected to the inclusion of The Bull site. The landowners in their Regulation 16 submission stated that development would not harm the operation of the pub. This week, the planning agent wrote to me:

I was left in no doubt at your meeting that the current scheme design isn't acceptable to local residents. I can confirm that we are continuing our dialogue with East Herts Council, and the conservation officer is aware that we are willing to review all aspects of the design, within the parameters set by the Neighbourhood Plan allocation, to arrive at a scheme that both the planning authority and the local community can support. I would be happy, as per your suggestion, to include you in that dialogue. Our case officer at East Herts has recently left the Council, so I anticipate a short hiatus while our new case officer gets up to speed.

I have consulted Punch about their investment plans for the Bull Inn, who have confirmed that it is their intention to prepare an investment plan for the pub. This investment plan is dependent on the outcome of the planning application, as this will dictate how the external areas are laid out, which in turn impacts on the plans for the interior. There also need to be discussions with the tenant, again dependent on the outcome of the planning application. I will be happy to update the Parish Council on Punch's investment plans going forward.

There is nothing in this statement that would justify pulling the NP.

Other Considerations

It should be remembered that the PC had to submit its NP by the deadline of 31 March 2021, as required in the District Plan policy VILL1, or otherwise run the risk that EHC would instead identify sites for development. This would be done without any public consultation. You only have to look at large scale development imposed on other villages such as Standon and Watton to see what happens when these decisions are taken away from the affected neighbourhoods. Who is to say that EHC would not allocate the entire field for development, given the opportunity? Or, if it were found not to be developable, that building sites at each end of the village might be preferred, leading to ribbon development with its consequences for increased car usage and a blurring of the separation between villages. There is no reason to suppose that EHC would, in such circumstances, feel obliged to limit development to the minimum target of 54 units. Withdrawing the Plan now would be unacceptably risky.

If the Bull Inn site were to be released, the windfall requirement would increase to 13. Development of the land at Barn School for 30 units, even if it were possible, would see the minimum target for housing exceeded by 31% (71 units v 54 units) or even more if other windfall development came forward before 2033. I don't recall any resident asking us to target more than the minimum.

Whilst I recognise the sincerity with which you and the other co-signatories have presented your views, the PC cannot simply set aside the hundreds of other opinions that were considered in creating the plan and consulting on it. The examination, after incorporating any modifications arising, will provide residents with a large degree of certainty as to the sites and scale of development in the village through to 2033. Withdrawing the plan would do the exact opposite and lead to uncertainty and doubt.

Regards

Cllr Ian Hunt

Chair, Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Email to Penny Taylor, Chair, Much Hadham Parish Council

5 March 2022

DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

I was grateful for your indulgence in letting me speak at some length at the Parish Council meeting on 1 March about the request made by several residents to temporarily withdraw the draft NP from examination so that proper consideration could be given to the possible allocation of the site to the rear of Hill House.

I was surprised and disappointed to find that, in his brief update report before I spoke, Cllr Hunt made no mention of the correspondence which had taken place. The tenor of his remarks was very much that everything was proceeding very smoothly and that the Independent Examiner could be expected to give his seal of approval shortly.

My impression, when I spoke, was that other councillors were unaware of this correspondence and were perhaps also not entirely up to speed with the developments which had occurred surrounding Hill House and land to the rear. I hope you would accept that the points which we raised in our letter of 17 February (which was copied to you, amongst others) addressed some serious issues regarding the NP, in particular whether an opportunity was being lost to achieve a more acceptable housing allocation. At the very least, I would have expected some acknowledgement that this correspondence had taken place.

My concern was increased by Cllr Hunt's repetition of what seem to me to be some unpersuasive arguments against our proposal:

1. He stated that the fact that the access proposed by Hill Residential Ltd was through the curtilage of a Grade-2 listed building was a major potential obstacle to development of the site. But, as I pointed out at the meeting, Hill House and about an acre of land have been sold on, with Hill Residential excluding from the sale an area of land to the south of Hill House for the purpose of gaining access to and from Hill Residential's retained land. The area of land so excluded is no longer therefore within the curtilage of Hill House.
2. He also made much of the fact that only one person commented on The Bull site in the Reg 16 consultation, ignoring the 35 or so objections made to the planning application submitted by Punch Taverns, virtually all of which were opposed in principle to development of the site, and to the deep concern expressed at the Parish Council's meeting on 7 December 2021.

3. Cllr Hunt argued that no-one had sought the allocation of more houses than the 54 which the Parish Council was required to find. I think that this is a specious argument since the Hill House site was the most popular site during public consultations; and it might well be the *most acceptable* site to residents, in spite of the number of houses, especially if, as Hill Residential Ltd propose, development is accompanied by significant community benefits and it enabled the Parish Council to remove The Bull Inn site.

4. Cllr Hunt, in his letter, seemed to place considerable weight on the danger of East Herts Council acting in an almost malevolent manner as regards development in Much Hadham. I wonder if East Herts Council would accept the remarks he made in his letter about the way they might act? I would point out, too, that we are not proposing that the NP should be abandoned, but simply paused so that this particular aspect can be reconsidered. Furthermore, why would East Herts Council not be interested in examining a proposal which might lead to a larger contribution to their housing target?

5. Cllr Hunt sought to argue that we needed to wait to see what the Independent Examiner might have to say about the issue. But this is misleading, in my view, since, as the draft NP makes clear, the Independent Examiner's role is essentially to check that the "basic conditions" have been met regarding the drawing-up of the NP. Moreover, I understand that it is not possible to make substantive changes to a draft NP once an Independent Examiner has reported. So, if as I suspect, he has nothing of substance to say on this issue, given the nature of his remit, the opportunity of making any change is lost. I was not reassured by Cllr Hunt's comment that the matter could be reconsidered in 2033.

I appreciate that it must be very vexing to have these points raised so late in the process, but I contend again that getting the best result is more important than 'getting the NP done' by some essentially artificial deadline. What I find particularly concerning is that the NPSG and the Parish Council had plenty of opportunity in the spring of last year to have another look at this issue. As you know, the draft NP was submitted on 17 March 2021, whilst the Parish Council were notified of the sale of the site to Hill Residential Ltd only a few weeks later, on 13 April. I still believe, too, that the NPSG and the Parish Council must have been aware – or certainly *ought* to have been aware – that the site was for sale and that it would undoubtedly be of interest to a developer. The Independent Examiner did not begin work before October 2021, so no interruption to his work would have occurred had the Parish Council taken the opportunity to have a re-think on this issue.

One interpretation of all this – which I hope is not unfair – is that there was an overriding desire not to re-open anything when the finishing line was in sight. It seems absurd, though, to press on as though nothing had changed. As I asked at the meeting, what if Hill Residential Ltd had notified the Parish Council of the purchase in advance of the 31 March deadline? Would this still have been ignored? Given that the preparation of the draft NP started in 2015 and that its currency was supposed to run from 2019 and to last till 2033, surely the fact that the formal notification of the sale of the site occurred only a few weeks after submission should not have meant that the NP process just carried on even though the information in it regarding this site was out of date?

You will be well aware that even if the Independent Examiner approves the draft NP it still has to be approved in a referendum by 50% of those who vote. It would be a great pity, in my view, if that referendum proved to be contentious because the Council was not willing to look again at this matter.

I urge the Parish Council as a whole, even at this very late stage, to take a genuine interest in the points we have raised and not to simply accept the advice that nothing can or should be done now.

In the meantime a group of residents will be setting up an action group to campaign to ensure the long-term viability of The Bull.

I am copying this letter to Cllr Hunt and to the Clerk to the Parish Council. I hope you will think fit to share it with other councillors.

Brian Caffarey

Reply from Penny Taylor, Chair, Much Hadham Parish Council – 22 March 2022

Dear Brian

DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

22nd March 2022

Further to your letter of 5th March and my acknowledgement of 6th March, I have now had the opportunity to discuss the details with Cllr I Hunt. I am sorry this has taken longer than envisaged, which is partly due to the recent fast-moving events regarding the NP. Thank you for your patience in the meantime.

Since I received your letter, the Examiner has issued his final report to EHC and this will be uploaded to public websites by EHC and the PC shortly, if it has not already happened by the time you receive this.

When it is made publicly available you will see among the conclusions he draws, that no modifications are required to either The Bull Inn site or the land at Hill House. He specifically states that he can see no reason why the viability of the pub should be harmed. Indeed, the modifications he suggests for the Plan as a whole are, unusually for an examination, very limited. There is no doubt in my mind that this is due to the thoroughness with which the Plan has been prepared over several years.

EHC will now make the examiner's recommended modifications to the Plan and these will be made available on their website. Once EHC has formally agreed the modified Plan meets the basic conditions, then they will arrange for the referendum to take place.

Bearing all this in mind, I can see no reasons for the PC to withdraw the Plan at this very late stage. The benefits of the Plan and its integration into district planning decision-making could be just a few weeks away. The Plan has been exhaustively prepared, consulted on and examined and is very fit for

purpose. The parish electorate deserve the chance to vote on it and it would not be appropriate for the opinions of some to prevent everyone having this opportunity.

I know that you have also written to the Clerk with a Freedom of Information request on related issues. To avoid any confusion and so that you have a single response on such issues, I will not address here any matter that overlaps with the responses to the FoI request.

Turning to your final point first, I can confirm that your letter of 5th March was copied to all other councillors.

Responding to your points 1-5:

1. Your letter seems to confuse “curtilage” with a property title’s boundary. As a matter of planning law and practice, that is incorrect. Curtilage can extend beyond a property boundary, as is frequently demonstrated when planning applications relating to Moor Place and Moor Place Park are considered, for example. In the case of properties with substantial land, curtilage may be less than the entire estate. It is a complicated area and Historic England has more guidance on this: [Listed Buildings and Curtilage \(historicengland.org.uk\)](https://historicengland.org.uk)

2. With respect to the recent planning application for development at The Bull, it is not only the 35 individuals who objected to it, but the PC also. Whilst some of the objections were to the principle of the development, it seems to me that most raised specific concerns e.g. the potential impact on the pub’s trade, the proposed access to the highway, the risk of flooding etc. It would be for the applicant to address these concerns and for EHC to balance them against the benefits of additional housing. I should stress that the PC will only support an application that provides for the continuing successful operation of the pub.

3. The popularity of the land at Hill House was expressed in the absence of any proposal as to the number of houses that might be built there. Whilst you consider it possible that residents may tolerate more housing than provided for in the Plan, it is a supposition for which no evidence has been shown over the 6 years the Plan has been in preparation. Besides, the simple fact is that the land was not available before the submission deadline of 31 March 2021. We had to proceed without it.

4. It is not that we fear EHC might act malevolently were it to be forced to allocate housing sites but that it might act otherwise than in accordance with residents’ preferences. When EHC did not have a 5-year supply of housing land, before the District Plan was adopted, it was powerless to stop applications on sites which would not otherwise have been approved. An example of this, is the extension to Millers View, which destroyed a woodland, and we fought, to no avail. Many developments across the district were similarly approved. It was therefore very important to submit a Plan by 31 March 2021, to give certainty to residents as to where development would take place over the next few years.

5. I have commented above about the current position vis à vis the examination.

May I make a few corrections to your following paragraph. Firstly, the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to EHC on 9 February 2021, not 17 March 2021. The Regulation 16 consultation by EHC commenced on 11 March 2021, concluding on 6 May 2021. These dates are taken from EHC’s website. The call from Hill Residential to Cllr I Hunt advising they had bought the site and requesting a meeting was on 14 April 2021, as shown in the copy correspondence provided to you on 25 February 2022.

I cannot agree that there was a missed opportunity to review the Plan in Spring 2021. As you would expect, details of sales negotiations for Hill House, whether with Hill Residential or any other party, were not in the public domain. The selling agents had no reason to keep the PC informed of its commercial negotiations, nor should the PC reasonably have expected them to do so. The purchase by Hill Residential of Hill House was not known of until after EHC had commenced its statutory Regulation 16 consultation.

With reference to the examination, an Examiner was nominated the day after the Regulation 16 consultation ended and we had no reason to believe work was not underway. However, the nominated individual advised in July 2021 that they would not be able to undertake the work due to ill health. The process of selecting a new Examiner then had to be restarted and a selection was agreed in August 2021. Again, we expected work to commence that month. It was disappointing to learn, after some chasing, that the contract with Tim Jones was only completed in early October 2021, when work commenced. It is wrong to imply that the PC had a window of opportunity to review the Plan (even if it wanted to) prior to its examination beginning in earnest. As far as the PC was concerned at the time, the examination period had commenced immediately following the Regulation 16 consultation.

Even had it been possible to make the Regulation 16 submission by Hill Residential the basis for a re-consideration of the Plan, the process would have had to restart with a re-run of the Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation of Autumn 2019, with all the time and costs associated with that. You may or may not be right that the Plan would be better with Hill House in it but the Plan we have is a good one as it is – indeed the best that could be prepared within the time available, and it would be encouraging to have your recognition and support on that basis.

In consultation with Cllr Hunt, I have tried my best to address your concerns, and we understand this is not entirely the reply you might have hoped for. We have undertaken a huge task in developing a Neighbourhood Plan for Much Hadham, and there have been many hurdles that may have stymied other parishes. We try to have the best interests of residents at the heart of what we do and why, but as you will be aware, it is not always possible to satisfy all the competing expectations. We welcome feed-back and questioning by residents, as without it, how can we best serve them.

Finally, I note that you are setting up a group to ensure the continuing viability of The Bull, which I am sure many residents will support, and may I take this opportunity to thank you for helping prepare the nomination papers for it be designated as an asset of community value.

Penny Taylor

Email from Keith Birch to Punch Pubs – 21 April 2022

Thank you for the slides and the briefing you gave us yesterday on Punch's plans for The Bull. We were grateful for the information you provided and for the frank discussion which we were able to have with you.

You pointed to the improvements which Punch planned to make to the exterior of the pub, while making it clear that these would be conditional upon gaining planning permission for the site. In our view, these exterior changes would, at best, offer only marginal improvements and, arguably,

actually make the pub a less attractive venue due to accommodating an access road running through the car park and the outside seating areas.

As you know, we will be hosting our first 'Save The Bull' public meeting next week and anticipate highlighting Punch's initial proposal. I must stress that Brian Caffarey and myself were underwhelmed by the level and nature of the investment proposed by Punch should planning be approved. We were hoping to hear something significantly more substantive than just an improved outdoor area. I can't really comment on whether members of the Much Hadham Parish Council on the call felt similarly and have cc'd this note to Ian Hunt, Michael Byrne and Ken Twort.

It seems that Punch will gain a very substantial sum as a result of the 'green light' which the draft Neighbourhood Plan, if approved, would give to development of the site at The Bull. Meanwhile, the community would gain little if anything in terms of any firm assurances about the long-term future of Much Hadham's last remaining pub. It would therefore be hard to imagine that the wider community will be mollified by Punch's initial proposals for The Bull and may be sufficiently exercised to consider a vigorous campaign of objection.

My personal conclusion is that this could be avoided. However, in order to ensure greater community support, something does need to change. Perhaps the following options should now be considered:

- A. As part of the planning gain from developing the Bull site, Punch to consider making a significant investment to the internal fabric of The Bull in addition to any proposed outside area improvements. Such investments being excluded from normal tenant rent review and repayment regimes.
- B. That Punch consider selling The Bull at an appropriate valuation and for it to then become a Community Pub.

Option B may actually be seen by the community as being the preferred option. Anyway, in advance of next week's meeting, it would helpful if you and your colleagues could consider the above comments and provide any relevant feedback.

Keith Birch

Email from Much Hadham Parish Council to Punch Pubs – 22 April 2022

On behalf of the parish council, thank you for your time on Wednesday and for the copies of the slides. It was a useful discussion and helped us to better understand, in general terms, Punch's modus operandi in relation to its estate management. We also note the subsequent correspondence with Keith Birch.

The parish council has prepared its neighbourhood plan and, as a consequence, Punch could benefit from a significant planning gain - minimum £1m it is suggested.

The gain would be a windfall for Punch and it is fair to ask this be shared to some extent with the community from which the pub draws its customers.

For sound business reasons Punch could choose to share benefits with the community / parish in one form or another to the value of, say, 15% of the windfall gain. The lifespan of a pub is measured in decades if not centuries in a village such as ours – plenty of time to harvest an investment return.

Given the critical value placed by residents on having a thriving pub, this sharing of benefits could partly be by way of investment to improve the customer experience. Precisely what form this investment would take is, of course, a matter for discussion between Punch and the landlord and, should you choose, community representatives. [NB we consider the exterior work proposed as part of the housing scheme would be no more than necessary remediation to cover the loss of existing facilities.]

In addition, there may be opportunities to support the parish in other ways: improving the facilities at the village hall opposite the pub would provide a community benefit, for example, and could be voluntarily conditioned by Punch within a s106 agreement.

We look forward to your thoughts on the above and the parish council would be happy to take part in a further conversation if that would help.

Kind regards

Cllr Ian Hunt

Vice-Chair, Much Hadham Parish Council

Chair, Much Hadham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Email from Punch Pubs to Keith Birch – 28 April 2022

Hi Keith

To follow up on our correspondence of last week, I can confirm that Punch is committed to keeping the pub as a pub and have no plans to see it redeveloped into a dwelling, we would be supportive of an ACV to ensure this was the case going forward. I can also confirm the disposal of the Bull is not currently part of our thinking.

In response to your question regarding additional development I confirm that all options are being explored in order to support the pub and we will engage with local residents, parish council and most importantly for us our Publican who operates the pub.

During our call you asked me a couple of questions which I needed to check and come back to you on:

Q: Previous development scheme presented had more car parking spaces shown than the current application:

A: The previous very high-level sketch included in the local plan had 16 spaces, however this did not benefit from having a topographical survey or any detailed highways work on visibility splays or tracking. The application before the planners has now had this work undertaken. It is important to note that because of the new use of part of the car park by our Publican in to external trading space the number of parking spaces on site has been reduced to circa 8 spaces currently.

Q: You asked if we had comparator between how many tables we have outside now v proposed plan:

A: The current garden layout has 14 picnic tables, the current plan we have illustrated 12 however this is just an indicative layout, and our Publican will be able to put as many tables as they require, the assumption is they will want to locate the current number of picnic tables into the new garden area.

I hope the above answers your questions and will provide the residents group confidence we see the Bull Inn as a continuing thriving pub centred in the heart of the Much Hadham community. Should you have any further questions please forward them in due course.

Email from Punch Pubs to Cllr Hunt, Much Hadham Parish Council – 28 April 2022

Good afternoon Ian

Apologies for my delayed reply I've been away from the office for a few days this week.

With regards to the future of the Bull Inn, Punch is committed to keeping the pub as a pub and have no plans to see it redeveloped into a dwelling, we would be supportive of an ACV to ensure this was the case.

All options are being explored in order to support the pub and we will engage with local residents, parish council and most importantly for us our Publican who operates the pub.

With regards to the other points you have made, we will reflect on these in line with planners are our application progresses.

Kind regards