**Thwing & Octon Community Benefit Society**

**Chairman’s Report for AGM 8th July 2019**

There has been little movement over the last 12 months, despite many and varied dialogue with Barry Crux, who is acting as selling agent for The Falling Stone.

The dialogue started with the confirmation of our offer made both directly to Derek Gray and also through the legal channel of Lundys Solicitors, prior to the pub being placed in the hands of Barry Crux. The purchase offer was for £125,000 and was based on a valuation done by Barry Crux shortly after the pub closed and our own valuation done through the Plunkett Foundation.

The offer was ignored by Mr Gray and dismissed by Barry Crux as unrealistic.

Further dialogue ensued to explore the possibility of leasing the premises and land, but came to no avail.

A second planning application for change of use and conversion to a private dwelling was refused by ERYC on similar grounds to the first planning application refusal, that change of use did not meet the ER Local Plan nor the NPPF.

Following the hearing for the second planning application, we met with the Grays over coffee. Mr Gray clearly stated that they had no intention of selling the premises unless their full asking price was offered, and that they were in ‘no hurry’ and will just ‘bide their time’.

In November last year the CBS organised the celebrations for the Armistice and Centenary Weekend. This was a great success and was made possible by the support of the Armed Forces Fund who enabled us to obtain 5 silhouettes and also the ERYC who granted funding support of £500, without this help the weekend would have been a loss. Rays Singers who performed for us asked us, along with others may I add, that we organise another event in 2019. With this in mind we had planned a Last Night of the Proms event on 7th September and a Christmas Songs event on the 13th December.

The Proms event required considerable amount of upfront expenditure, and an application for assistance by way of funding has been refused. Despite, most of the organisation having been done, with Buckrose Band and Rays Singers having been booked together with a venue, bar and hog roast, the event has now been cancelled.

The Christmas event has also been cancelled, however if the church are able to drop there request for £100 booking fee we may possibly go ahead with what we envisage to be a basically non profit event for the benefit of the parish.

We now face the difficult decision as to the future and this is to be discussed under the agenda items.