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Supporters urged to turn out in force at public inquiry to decide historic pub's future

Campaigners hoping to stop the 400-year-old Cabinet pub in Reed being turned permanently into a house are urging supporters to turn out in force when the planning appeal is heard in less than two weeks' time.

The current owner of the Grade II-listed pub, property developer Richard Newman, is seeking to overturn the decision of North Herts District Council last year to refuse retrospective planning permission for change of use.

The Planning Inspectorate announced the inquiry in April, and the appeal is set to be heard over a three-day hearing – from Tuesday to Thursday, November 6 to 8. It will take place at the council offices in Letchworth's Gernon Road, starting at 10am on the first day.

The Save the Cabinet Action Group, which formed in 2016 after the pub was purchased by Mr Newman, will be represented at

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the inquiry.

The group has long been campaigning for the pub to be restored – it has been closed since 2011 but villagers had always hoped it would reopen and were confident a buyer would come forward.

Mike Howes, chair of the action group, said: "Our campaign has enjoyed fantastic support since it has started, and we are very grateful to all contributors.

"We've had to raise a lot of money to pay for lawyers and experts and we've been very successful with our recent events."

A pop-up pub night this month raised more than £860, while a golf day in September raised £3,600.

"We're still a little short of our target, so we need more

contributions to our fighting fund even at this stage.

"Now we're in the final countdown to the appeal itself – the decisive moment in the case. If we get the right result, it's a major step towards reclaiming The Cabinet for the community.

"If the developer wins, Reed will have lost its lovely old pub forever.

"We have a good case and we are confident that good sense will prevail. But we need supporters to turn out if they possibly can, to show the planning inspector the level of community support for saving the last pub in Reed."

Mr Newman has previously been contacted by the Crow and has said that he was living in the property as his family home, and that he hadn't had offers from the community to buy the pub.

For more information about the Save the Cabinet Action group and its campaign, go to www.savethecabinet.uk.



Save the Cabinet campaigners, pictured at a previous pop-up event, are calling for the community's support ahead of a public inquiry. Picture: CLIVE PORTER



October's pop-up pub night at Reed Village Hall was held to raise money for the Save the Cabinet Action Group's fighting fund, with young grace among the supports. Pictures: CLIVE PORTER

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