

Statement from Parish Council reference the Royal Oak Inn, Meavy.

The Parish Council are owners of the Royal Oak Inn and are very proud of its history and standing in the community.

The current tenant has held a lease for the property for seventeen years. With the last renewal of the lease there was a clause inserted that gave the tenant an option to renew the lease for a further 6 years.

The tenant did not inform the council that he wished to extend his tenancy by the deadline stated in the lease. He was invited to a meeting but was nonchalant about whether he wished to extend his tenancy.

There was also concern about the decision of the tenant to close the pub early several days a week, at 6pm, including Sundays up to the end of May.

Throughout the Covid lockdowns the council provided rent relief to the tenant and facilitated additional outside seating, whilst he was still able to access the relevant government grants.

Additionally, a rent review that was due in 2020 was put on hold to assist the tenant as it was appreciated the hospitality industry were going through a difficult time.

The council decided after careful consideration to market the tenancy and the current tenant was invited to apply if he wished. The correct tender process was followed, and a professional agent chosen. The council received a number of applications, and the current tenant withdrew his proposal last minute and did not take part in the interviews.

The council have always been mindful of the short handover timescale and were hoping that there could be a smooth handover. Unfortunately, there have been difficulties on both sides and the council are seeking professional and legal advice with regard to a number of matters including staffing, the inventory and stock. These matters are not the responsibility of the council, but are a matter for the in and out going tenants to agree, but the council are trying to be proactive and assist where they can.

The change in tenancy is currently an evolving process and it is a difficult time for all involved and appreciate the strain it is putting on the staff at the Royal Oak Inn. The parish council are trying to facilitate a smooth transition that is proving tricky at this current moment, not helped by the tenant stirring up resentment in the community through social media.

The terms of the lease are still open to negotiation. The council are looking at available options moving forward.

Some of the information put in the public domain by the current tenant is factually incorrect and is proving detrimental to the handover process and the ongoing success of the Royal Oak Inn.

It is the policy of the Council to administer The Royal Oak Inn in such a way as to maintain its traditional character and its value as a local amenity.