

Sandwell

Express & Star

Talks over future historic site back

By Chris Howes

Sandwell's development boss has moved quickly to defend talks over the future of a historic Great Barr house following concerns it could be sold off.

Sandwell Council is consulting over plans for the Red House in Redhouse Park. Angry park users have gathered a 700-name petition calling on the council not to sell the Grade II listed house. They want to keep it for community use. But today Councillor Bob Badham, cabinet member for regeneration and transport, was quick to defend the council's study

on the park.

"Officers are looking at the options and a report will come to me in due course.

"No decisions have been taken," Councillor Badham said.

The Grade II listed house dates back to 1845.

The current tenants British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) are planning to quit the building after years of attacks from vandals.

The community is desperate to find an alternative use for the building which could include housing the library, setting up community rooms and even a cafe or restaurant. Sandwell Council has launched a consultation programme to look at the future of the building

Fight

A petition was set up last month during a fun day, and has already had a whopping 700 people sign in support of saving the house, following the latest threat to the building.

Sarah Carter, chairman of the Friends of Redhouse Park, which is spearheading the fight to save the house, said: "There is no reason to sell this off, there has to be an alternative use for it.

"It is one of the few historic buildings in Great Barr and one we could possibly keep for community use."

Former Liberal Democrat group leader Martyn Smith said he supported the campaign to keep the house.

He said: "This is probably the most historic and best known building in Great Barr.

"It is very important that this building is kept so that it is a place for the people of Great Barr to go and see.

"I fully back the campaign that has been launched and I hope that Sandwell Council sees sense in the end," he added.