

## PRESS RELEASE

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13th June 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Rural Pub services schemes: good for the economy, the environment *AND* your wallet!**

Not-for-profit organisation Pub is The Hub today published the results of an independent evaluation commissioned to establish the impact of pub rural services schemes on local society, the environment and the economy.

Established nearly ten years ago with encouragement from His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, Pub is The Hub has advised local communities, licensees and pub owners to work together to support, retain and locate local services, where possible within the pub. Pub is The Hub also assists licensees with guidance on the availability of local and regional project funding, and by having a thorough independent understanding of the pub business, is able to advise on and facilitate the best way to progress individual schemes to suit their communities.

Independent research group Ecorys surveyed 71 pubs that have delivered, or were in the process of delivering, a rural services scheme, plus 100 local residents that live near 6 existing Pub is The Hub schemes.

The report: ***Pub is The Hub: Evaluating the Impact of Initiatives 2011*** highlights that Pub is The Hub has evolved considerably over time, developing into an independent force for change at national policy level, as well as maintaining its key original objective of assisting rural communities and local pubs to address their service priorities.

The findings identified that Pub is The Hub schemes bring clear social, economic and environmental benefits. Key highlights include:

- 100% of respondents agreed that their local Pub is The Hub scheme is either 'very important' or else 'important' to the community.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents agreed that a Pub is The Hub scheme allowed them to meet more local people than they would have done otherwise.
- Over four fifths of respondents agreed that the Pub is The Hub scheme improved their access to a key service and helped overcome local deprivation issues.
- Almost all respondents agreed that Pub is The Hub schemes saved them time.
- Over four fifths agreed that Pub is The Hub schemes contribute to making the area they live in more attractive.
- Many schemes have recruited additional full time employees, as well as securing the retention of some employees, primarily benefiting people living in the local area.
- Customers saved time by travelling to a Pub is The Hub scheme, rather than the nearest alternative. This equates to a cost saving of approximately 81p per visit.
- Pub is The Hub schemes encourage less car use, with a clear environmental and cost benefit. Nearly three quarters of people agreed that projects save them money; the average travel cost saved per visit is over £1.50.
- Virtually all of the respondents believed that the Pub is The Hub scheme supported local suppliers and businesses. Licensees also frequently cited that they use a wide range of local suppliers to stock their scheme.
- The majority of schemes either break even or generate a small profit for the licensee but the real benefits are a sense of well being and community spirit.
- Over one half of licensees stated that their Pub is The Hub scheme had increased the number of customers to the pub.

John Longden, Chief Executive of Pub is The Hub, who commissioned the research, said:

“The report reveals that Pub is The Hub schemes are effective in building sustainable communities, supporting health and well-being, contributing to environmental priorities and encouraging a prosperous local economy. The findings will strengthen our work as we continue to engage with hard-working licensees and local communities and empower them to work together as well as take ownership of local issues. We now also have hard evidence of how good pub schemes can provide wider strategic objectives at a local and national level. This will encourage us to continue to seek and leverage in-kind and financial support

from a range of organisations and individuals and secure further new project investment with local and rural authorities and government departments.”

The Ecorys report concludes by saying:

“It is reasonable to suggest that Pub is The Hub has changed the perception of the rural pub in a positive way. The research team believe it is important to acknowledge that, in recognising the success of Pub is The Hub over the past nine years, a key element of this success may be credited to its informal, flexible approach that has allowed the organisation to offer creative and innovative support to rural communities. In many ways, Pub is The Hub is less an organisation, more a collective vocational shared vision of how rural services, communities and local pubs can be improved and enhanced.”

Founder Patron HRH The Prince of Wales, who helped establish Pub is The Hub in 2001, said in a foreword to the report:

“This report shows that rural pubs can bolster a rural economy, provide local jobs for local people, increase the sense of wellbeing in the area, and, ultimately, preserve the heart and soul of Britain’s rural communities. I hope that, as many more people learn about the excellent work of this initiative, even more pubs will be supported over the next 10 years and even more pubs will become the hub of their community.”

*Pub is The Hub is a not-for-profit advisory organisation that helps support the needs of licensees and communities by offering independent specialist advice on diversification or community ownership of pubs so that they can provide viable local services at the heart of the community. Such services might include a village shop, Post Office services, IT training, school meals, lunch clubs or allotments and community centres. Pub is The Hub was set up in 2001 by its Founder Patron HRH The Prince of Wales.*

A copy of the report can be downloaded at: [www.pubisthehub.org.uk](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk)

For more information go to: [www.pubisthehub.org.uk](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk)



John Longden, Chief Executive of Pub is The Hub, presenting the report to HRH The Prince of Wales.

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