

Pub is the Hub Case Study

GEORGE AND DRAGON COMMUNITY-OWNED PUB WITH SHOP & LIBRARY, HUDSWELL, NORTH YORKSHIRE



APPLICANT AND BACKGROUND

The George and Dragon is the only pub in the North Yorkshire village of Hudswell, which has a population of 200 people, and no other facilities apart from the village hall. The pub closed in August 2008 following the bankruptcy of the then landlords. After a long campaign, Hudswell Community Pub Ltd (HCP Ltd) successfully acquired the freehold in February 2010, during which they received advice and support from Pub is the Hub. HCP Ltd is a Co-operative for Community Benefit, and most of the funds to purchase and renovate the pub were raised from the 180 members of the Co-operative and supplemented by grant aid. Tenants were appointed by the Co-operative to run the licensed business, based on their enthusiasm, the wealth of ideas that they had for promoting the business, driving up the food sales and developing a range of service for the village. The pub was officially re-opened in June 2010 by local MP and Foreign Secretary William Hague, who is also one of HCP Ltd's members. Since then trade has been healthy and the pub has been restored as the central focus of village life.

PROJECT SUMMARY

HCP Ltd were always determined that the George and Dragon would offer far more than a traditional pub. So, as well as acting as a meeting place, venue for village events, celebrations and regular cultural and sporting activities, the pub also hosts the village library, with books provided by the County Council Library service, and hosts a monthly book club. There are also ten allotments provided on land at the rear of the pub and these are all let to villagers and/or member of HCP Ltd, and have provided some produce for the pub kitchen. A village shop has also been constructed in part of the pub; this has its own door onto the street and is managed by HCP Ltd (rather than the tenants) and staffed by volunteers. The pub also provides free internet access for customers of the shop and the pub, and a laptop can be hired for a small fee.

OUTCOMES

This project has demonstrated how the co-operative model (an Industrial and Provident Society for Community Benefit) can be successfully used to raise the finance needed to purchase and re-open a village pub that is closed or threatened with closure. With this model there is no debt to service, the tenant's rent can be set at an affordable level and an enthusiastic membership, whom are owners of the enterprise are assist with practical tasks and are committed to using their pub and bringing their friends and family to it. In addition to this other services can be provided from the premises.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- Community Share offers provide a viable solution to village pub closures
- Most of the funds were raised from member investment, but grant aid was crucial to convincing investors of the viability of the enterprise and to developing particular aspects the project, such as the village shop.
- Community ownership helps to generate community spirit and voluntary effort.

PROJECT CAPITAL COSTS (EXCLUDING VAT)

Total project capital costs	£331,320.00
Investments from individual members	£240,000.00
Key Fund Yorkshire investment	£20,000.00
Rural Access to Opportunities Grant	£50,000.00
Cultivating Enterprise Grant	£5,000.00
Rural Bus Development Grant	£8,400.00
Comic Relief Grant	£4,600.00
NYCC small grants	£1,500.00
Co-operative and Mutual Solutions	£900.00
Awards for All (Big Lottery)	£5,150.00
Donations	£1,700.00

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