



pub is the hub



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# Creating Connections

Tips on how publicans can reach out and promote connection within their communities



## Call Last Orders for Loneliness

Helping others to 'Join Inn', as a publican or local volunteer, is commonly acknowledged to be rewarding whether you are involved in the giving or receiving of support. Here are a few examples of why publicans are reaching out to help tackle loneliness in their communities with the help of others...

*"It makes me feel good when I lay in bed at night that I have helped make a difference to someone's day. Just little things can have such a big impact on someone who is feeling lonely or sad."*

Sharon Heron, publican at Stonegate's The Keel Row, in Seaton Delaval, Northumberland

*"Volunteering is really rewarding and a good way of getting you involved in your community. I think the chats volunteers have with the people we deliver meals to are as good for us as they are for them."*

Russell Harkin, a meals on wheels delivery volunteer in Sussex

*"Most of our volunteers do it for the social aspect, enjoying the opportunity to chat and connect with other people. Many of the volunteers who helped to refurbish the pub before we opened developed friendships through it and their involvement in the pub makes people want to go there and support the pub too."*

Bill Pearson, treasurer of community owned The Shrewsbury Arms, Kingstone, Staffordshire

*"I'm retired, live on my own and moved to a new area, so volunteering at the pub has been a great way to meet others. I started last October and after the first lockdown volunteering gave me a positive focus to get out and about. I really enjoy meeting and interacting with lots of different people through the pub and it has made me feel less lonely."*

Julie Jenner, a shop and bar volunteer at The Ploughshare at Beeston, Norfolk

*"Things like our 'MeetUpMondays' say to people this is a friendly pub, and we care about others. People make a value judgement on the things you promote and get a feel for the business. Consumers like using feel-good businesses."*

Mick Dore, landlord of The Alexandra in Wimbledon, London

*"One year I received a call from a daughter who wanted to help her mother meet new people at the pub's Christmas lunch after the death of her father. I had a table of ladies, who had known each other for a long time but are the craziest and funniest people you have ever met. I made a space for her on that table. The best thing to come out of that day was that they had given her their phone number and they were going to catch up in the New Year."*

Kate Hayden, publican of The Snow Goose in Farnborough (Star Pubs & Bars)

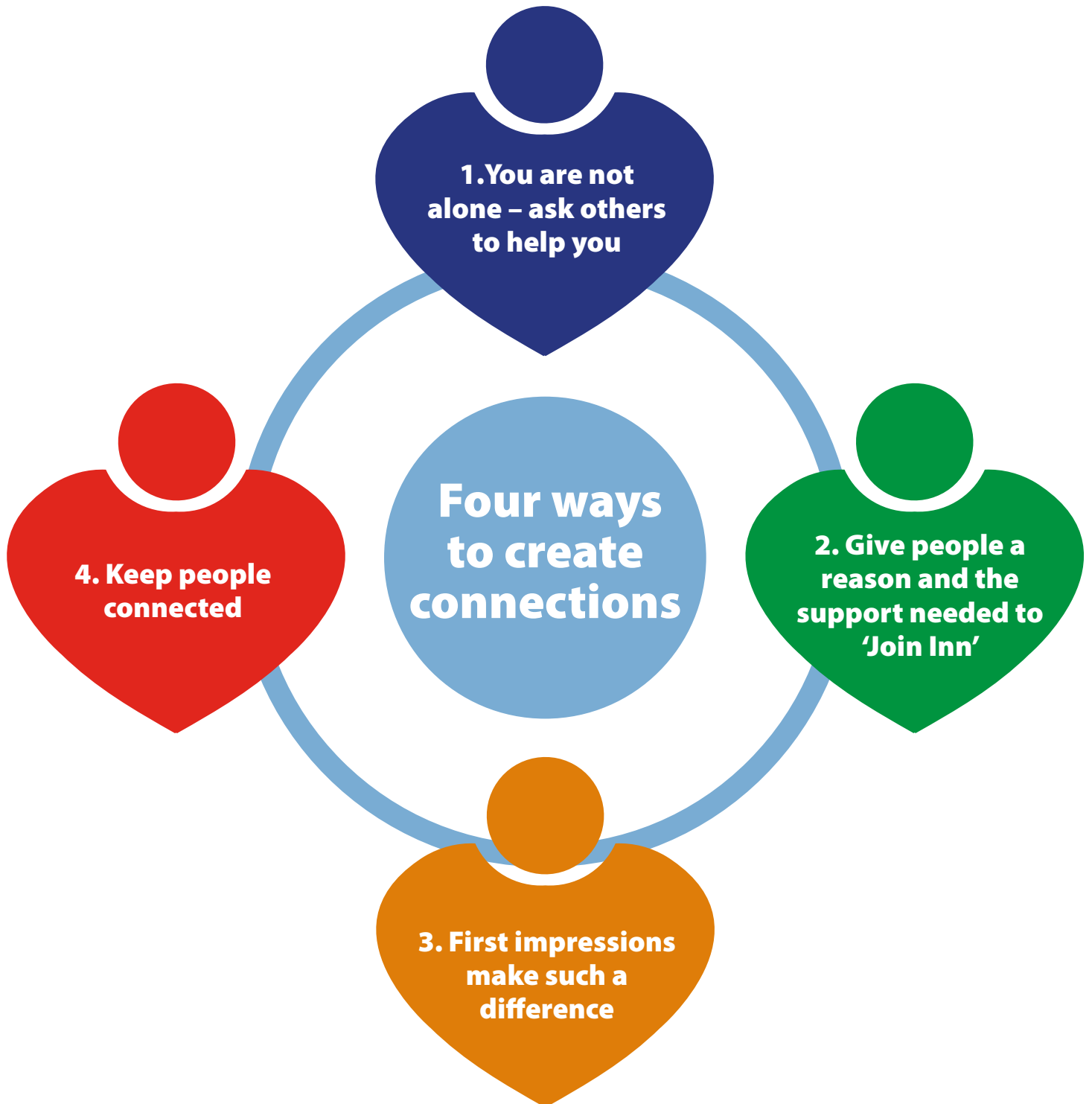
*"Connections enable us to get people here. We have linked with the local community worker and social care and make connections with local community groups to let them know we exist and what we do."*

Helen Jones, manager of The Bevy, Brighton

*"I blush when people praise me for helping support others and I just say to people I don't need any thanks, just make sure you support the pub."*

Vanda Pera, publican of The Crown Inn at Capel, Surrey, (Star Pubs & Bars)

# How to create connections



# Step 1. Joined up action: who can you ask to help bring people together in your local community?



## ✓ The Connect Four Challenge

Set up an informal 'community connector group', bringing together at least four people/organisations who may already be trying to tackle loneliness in your community.

These people, through their connections, can help identify individuals who with help and support may benefit from a few meaningful social interactions on a regular basis, e.g.

- Charities and volunteering groups and other community connectors such as faith groups, estate agents, hairdressers, gardeners and taxi drivers.
- Your local GP/health practitioners and visitors.
- Education, such as head teachers, playgroups and nursery managers and groups offering skills initiatives.
- Other groups addressing societal loneliness - especially amongst the young who are often forgotten.

**Discover some useful groups here:**  
[www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness/helping-make-connections/](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness/helping-make-connections/)

## ✓ Raise awareness with your existing customers to reach out to others

Challenge them to connect people they know who might benefit from improved social interaction with others – young, old, married, separated, bereaved – when it comes to feeling lonely or isolated this isn't just the preserve of the elderly. To help you do this you will find a downloadable A3 poster on our website [HERE](#).

## ✓ Most of us have experienced some form of isolation or loneliness during the recent 'lockdowns' and that includes publicans

This is an opportunity for you to reach out as well and reconnect and re-establish relationships that need reigniting.

Help us call 'Last Orders for Loneliness'

The most important things in life are the connections you make with others.

Upcoming events to 'Join Inn' are:

Help make a difference to someone's day by encouraging them to get out and join in one of the regular groups/ events that are hosted at our friendly pub.

A warm welcome is guaranteed!

pub is the hub  
[www.pubisthehub.org.uk](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk)

## Step 2. Give people a reason, and the support needed, to 'Join Inn' events and activities and be part of their community

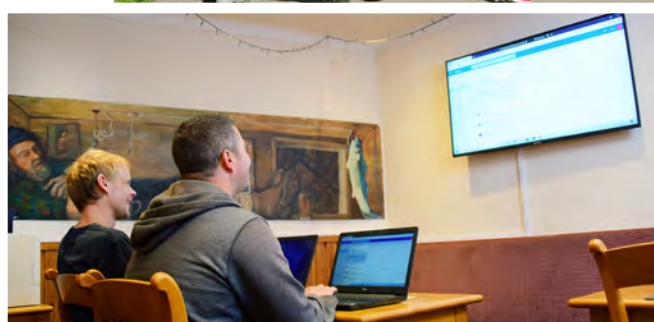
There are many different reasons why specific groups of people may long for more social interaction and companionship especially following the Covid-19 restrictions. These may include:

- Working or studying from home and missing the after-work/study drink and social interaction.
- Young parents feeling out of their depth and alone without their family support network.
- People on furlough, recently made redundant or recently out of education.
- Those recently bereaved or caring for someone isolating at home.
- People who may have recently moved into the area.

**How can you create events or activities that help them come together, give them a purpose in life or just feel human again?**

Targeting people in similar circumstances, with shared interests and hobbies helps connect individuals, even when they don't know each other. Suggested ideas include:

- 'Lunch hour' walks with a sandwich and drink or breakfast and afterwork networking events.
- Gardening/allotment group, maybe linked with community foodbanks or workshops.
- Parent and baby/toddler groups, such as comedy sessions, inviting older, experienced mums/dads to help first timers/childcare.
- Book, art, games, poetry, baking or skills groups, such as digital or craft skills.
- Intergenerational aimed at bringing young and old together to share skills and spend time together.
- Environmental or community events starting and finishing at the pub – such as litter picks or beach cleans, park runs or walks or scavenger and treasure hunts.
- 'Community' moments – get people involved in helping organise or contribute to community events such as festivals, celebrations or projects around maintaining traditions. Ideas include a window wonderland trail around your area or making community bunting for a festival.
- Fundraising events, such as a Macmillan or Dementia UK coffee morning.
- Ask people what they would like and give them permission to use your pub as a community hub.



***"I was taken by the power that savouring a simple cup of coffee can have to connect people and create community."***

**Howard Schultz, Starbucks founder**



Eagle & Child, Ram-bottom



The Bevy, Brighton

✓ Hunt out lesser-known events to bring people together at quieter trading sessions

Here are just a few that can be used to create a community get-together and reach out to a wider audience.

- **The Great Get Together (18-20 June)**  
[www.greatgettogether.org](http://www.greatgettogether.org)
- **International Friendship Day (30 July)**
- **National Afternoon Tea Week (9-15 August)**  
[www.afternoontea.co.uk](http://www.afternoontea.co.uk)
- **National Allotments Week 2021 (9-15 August)**  
The National Allotment Society – National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners Ltd  
[www.nsalg.org.uk](http://www.nsalg.org.uk)
- **Macmillan ‘World’s Biggest Coffee Morning’ (24 September)** -  
[www.coffee.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.coffee.macmillan.org.uk)
- **National Neighbour Day (28 September)**
- **National Roast Dinner Day (4 Nov)**
- **Loneliest Day of the Year for Parents (27 November)**



*“In a world of algorithms, hash tags and followers, know the true importance of human connection.”*

Simi Fromen, writer



## Step 3. Open Arms - first impressions make such a difference

We can all relate to an event or experience that made us feel anxious, awkward or excluded, where we just wanted to go home. Imagine these powerful emotions in someone wary of social situations entering your pub on their own. Remember, first impressions are so important.

Think about how you create the right atmosphere, with well briefed colleagues so individuals feel welcome, are put at ease and become more confidence over a period of time to come back and enjoy regular and meaningful social interactions.

### Tips include:

- Ideally through your community connector group, get buddies to bring and introduce less confident individuals to events, activities and groups.
- Start small, so individuals don't become overwhelmed when first attending an event or activity. Always have a host/designated team member who can welcome and engage new people, introducing them to like-minded people and looking after them.
- Simple things like an open door and clear external signage for events helps reduce anxiety, guiding people to the right place where they can be met, welcomed, and settled in.
- Clear communication about table service, location of toilets and other essential information, such as transport home again, avoids feelings of anxiety or worry over the unknown.
- Does your space accommodate people on their own, especially if you would rather, they don't sit at the bar blocking the server. A morning paper, plugs for laptops, or a daily quiz sheet can all be a reason for someone on their own to get out and enjoy the social space of your pub for a few hours.
- Community café with their own entrance can really help non pub people, both young and old, feel comfortable about coming to meet others over coffee and cake.
- As we come out of lockdown don't forget to replicate what you might do indoors, outdoors as this is a great opportunity to get potential non pub people to experience your offer.
- Volunteering is a great way of people connecting with others too. Encourage people to volunteer to help support services, such as meals on wheels or lunch clubs, or activities offered at your pub.
- Oh, and NEVER tag an event as a 'loneliness' event. For many this would be a badge of shame or pity. It's just about creating opportunities for people to get together whatever your reason.



## Step 4. Keep people connected

**What is so important in tackling societal loneliness is the quality of the connections we make, not the number.**

A one-off event is great at breaking the ice, but they have to lead to meaningful and regular social interactions to improve peoples' wellbeing and long-term outlook on life.

### ✓ How do you make sure people know what is going on and that they are welcome?

- Different people will use different mediums to find out 'what's on' - noticeboards, pub Facebook sites, WhatsApp groups, posters in local shops, flyers through the door, GPs surgery, parish magazines – think about your audience and how you stay connected with them on a regular basis
- Establish a community connector group where local people and customers help to connect with neighbours and residents who might need transport, moral support or just a friend to help get them out.

### ✓ Think about simple prompts in your pub to help make connections and build relationships

- Community tables, especially linked into initiatives like 'MeetUp Mondays' or Chatty Café schemes.
- Think about how your team can help connect people, through informal chats and conversations that finds common interests and circumstances to unite them. Run a session with your team on conversation starters/ prompts to help them engage with people. There is a useful guide [HERE](#).
- Does the layout of your tables help spontaneous conversations and friendships. For example, putting tables of one together or near to chatty customers. Features larger sharing tables with Join Me cards, create board game nights and mixed quiz teams.
- Remember though some people are simply happy being on their own in a social space, so never force unwanted interactions.



If this guide helps raise awareness of how we can all do something, no matter how small, to help the 'Join Inn - Last Orders for Loneliness campaign' we have made a difference. As we come out of lockdown it's never been more important to reconnect people feeling isolated, lonely and disconnected. Walking past a busy pub garden where friends and family are being reunited is incredibly painful if you just want to experience some good old hospitality with someone down the pub.

For more information on the 'Join Inn' campaign visit

[www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness](http://www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness)



***“The most important thing  
in life are the connections  
you make with others.”***

**Tom Ford, designer**

***“Feeling connected to each  
other is a basic human  
need.”***

**Anon**



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