



pub is the hub

THE hub

News from the heart
of Pub is The Hub

Wild things

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AUTUMN 2021

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Pubs are hubs of local services, social value and community connection

So much has happened both in the world, with the Covid-19 pandemic, and here at Pub is The Hub since our last issue of The Hub.

Pubs key to social cohesion

There is growing recognition by both central and local government of the key role pubs and publicans can and do play in social cohesion, including community wellbeing. The great news is that the government has recognised the unique role that Pub is The Hub has in helping to support local people, including assisting publicans to help combat the social isolation felt by so many during this difficult time, with publicans providing hospitality in so many different ways.



Recent research by the Campaign to End Loneliness highlights that 71% of people believe loneliness will continue to be a serious issue post pandemic, and our 'Join Inn - Last Orders for Loneliness' campaign continues to help publicans tackle

this other pandemic, (see pages 13-16), with pubs continuing to offer a key place for people to connect and publicans having an invaluable role to play as community connectors.

Publicans who have 'Joined Inn' share how it has helped bring not only significant benefits to those experiencing feelings of loneliness, but also to their business and to them personally.

"The pandemic has shown once more how key pubs and publicans are in supporting people in their local areas"

Expert support on hand for publicans

We are so lucky as an organisation to have a team of highly experienced and dedicated regional advisors, along with a wonderful management team, who help publicans all over the country. This amazing team have now supported over 175 projects through our Community Services Fund, including 50 during Covid-19 lockdowns. They are on hand to support, not only on projects funded through our excellent Community Services Fund, but also to offer free advice tailored to a publican's business and their local needs, including collaborating with or signposting to other organisations who can help.



Pubs are key in our society's recovery

Like many resilient publicans and organisations, Pub is The Hub is planning for the future and we believe our work has never been so vital. The pandemic has shown once more how key pubs and publicans are in supporting people in their local areas. And as we hopefully move out of these challenging times, we know there are so many more pubs that can help with the recovery of our society in the future, if only they can be encouraged and supported.

We are already inundated with requests from publicans looking to help people in their local areas with additional services and activities and we will continue to support them with their community's priorities. But this is subject to having available funding in place - a really tough challenge in these unprecedented times.

We would like to thank our current sponsors and all supporters, both large and small, who have enabled us to help so many pubs, publicans and people in their local areas during this past tough 18 months for us all. We couldn't have done it without you and this work has had such a beneficial impact on so many people.

Cheers to a more positive rest of 2021 for us all.



Simon Theakston
Simon Theakston DL
Chairman of Pub is The Hub and
Executive Director of T&R Theakston Ltd

Pub is The Hub has supported over 175 projects through our Community Services Fund and 50 projects were completed during Covid-19 lockdowns

"Like many resilient publicans and organisations, Pub is The Hub is planning for the future and we believe our work has never been so vital"

To make an enquiry, find out more about our work or to chat through an idea please contact **Nicky Harris** in the Pub is The Hub office on:
T: 01423 546165 or
E: support@pubisthehub.org.uk

Thanks to our sponsors and supporters



When the pandemic hit there was a big need for village stores to help support local residents with essential supplies, with many publicans initially setting up pop-up shops. Pub is The Hub has supported numerous village store developments since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, with free advice and grants that have helped both local residents and publicans.

THE PRINCE OF SALES: HRH VISITS WELSH PUB'S NEW STORE



HRH The Prince of Wales, who inspired the formation of PiTH in 2001, celebrated the finale of his regular tour of Wales in July by pulling a pint and checking out the shop at Pub is The Hub project pub The Ponthir House Inn in Ponthir, South Wales.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns publican Barrie Walden opened a pop-up village store in the dining

area of the Star Pubs & Bars' pub, offering a range of essentials.

It became obvious that a permanent service was needed, especially by elderly locals, as there is limited public transport, so Barrie opened a log cabin shop in the pub's car park selling essentials such as milk, bread, fruit and vegetables.

He said: "It was great for my local and loyal customers of both the shop

and pub to meet His Royal Highness. I have to thank Pub is The Hub for all its help to open the village store and for helping to organise a visit from HRH The Prince of Wales."

Pub is The Hub chief executive John Longden said: "It was entirely fitting that His Royal Highness, who inspired the formation of Pub is The Hub, should pop in and witness the real community spirit of enterprising publican Barrie Walden."

Historic Kent pub's village shop is born in a barn



The FitzWalter Arms in Goodnestone near Canterbury transformed a disused barn into a village shop to support the local community.

Publican Lynn Fisher took over the historic Shepherd Neame pub, which dates back to 1589, last July. She decided to convert the barn after reading that grants were available from Pub is The Hub.

She said: "I spotted the grant initiative on offer from Pub is The Hub back in December 2020. Our pub has a large barn in the grounds, which we haven't been using, and

as Goodnestone doesn't have a village shop, we thought it was a great opportunity to create one in that space."

The shop is open every day and offers a range of locally sourced meat, fruit and vegetables, along with a selection of fresh bread and other essentials. It also sells products made by local residents including wooden gifts, chocolate bouquets and wreaths, along with takeaway snacks and drinks.

Speedy set-up of village store helped locked down locals

Enterprising husband and wife team Emma and John Hitchins created a village store in only two weeks, opening in time for England's second national lockdown.

The publicans, who took over The Bell Inn, in Leigh-on-Mendip, Somerset, in September 2020 soon realised the village, that has around 500 houses and limited public transport, was in need of a shop as the nearest was at least two miles away.

The Bell Inn opened the store with the help of a grant from the Pub is The Hub Community Services Fund, which enabled a laundry room to be transformed into this essential amenity.

Emma said: "I have been aware of Pub is The Hub and its great work for a number of years. When we took over the pub I asked local residents if they wanted a shop and the response was overwhelmingly positive."



Pub is The Hub has 12 expert regional advisors on hand to support publicans

NEW SHOP PROVES A CUNNING PLAN AT THE FOX & HOUNDS



Publicans Bianca and James Rix opened The Fox Shop at The Fox & Hounds in Hunsdon, Hertfordshire, to help local residents and those living in surrounding villages. The couple, who have run the pub for 15 years, initially opened an area outside the pub as a shop offering products such as pies, pastries and bread.

It proved so popular that it has now become a long-term fixture inside an area of the pub. The village has a local shop for basics so the publicans were careful to offer different items such as fresh bread, homemade ready meals, seasonal produce and local ice cream.

Bianca said: "It started off with a few items to help out in the first lockdown but grew as the locals loved it. When we reopened they asked us to continue with the service and we decided to take out a designated area inside the pub."

By George! New shop is a hit with locals

Publicans Martin Steele and Laura Cook opened a village shop at The George Inn at Tiffield, Northamptonshire, after taking on the pub in July 2020.



By the second Covid-19 lockdown the enterprising publicans realised that there was demand for a village store.

Villagers supported by giving up their time to help get the shop up and running too. The shop, which opens daily between 12pm-2pm, offers essentials such as bread, milk, eggs, cheese and toilet rolls.

In support of other local businesses the publicans sourced from producers including a local butcher to sell warm sausage rolls, pasties and pork pies at lunchtime. A new coffee machine was also installed so the shop can offer takeaway hot drinks.

The Red Lion's new shop is roaring success



The Red Lion Inn in Shobrooke, Devon, supported its local community during the pandemic by opening a new village shop.

During lockdown in March 2020 the pub, which has been run by wife and husband Jane and Steve Johnson and daughter Natalie Dyson for the last nine years, decided to set up a telephone and online food ordering service.

Publican Jane said: "We had previously considered opening a village shop and lockdown gave us the time to think more about it. After talking to local people we decided that the village needed a local shop as the nearest supermarket is a few miles away."

The Shobrooke Village Shop and pub has the backing of local Central Devon MP Mel Stride who visited the premises in August 2020 in support of the plan.

Dorset publicans on course for success with shop in converted shipping container

A shipping container converted into a village shop at a Dorset pub came to the rescue of its locals.

The Rose & Crown in Longburton opened a village shop called The Larder, in the pub's car park. It offers a range of essentials such as bread, meat, organic milk, fresh fruit, vegetables as well as takeaway coffee.

Publicans Becky and John Gibbons, took over the running of the pub four years ago. The first lockdown spurred the family to finish the shop project, which became increasingly important during the pandemic.

Becky said: "The village has an ageing population as well as a lot of young families who need the support of a local shop."



Pub is The Hub has helped to open over 65 village stores since it launched its Community Services Fund in 2013

It has never been so important for people to be able to connect following the social isolation that the Covid-19 pandemic has inflicted. Pub is The Hub has supported many community cafés, which help create accessible social hubs to bring local residents together for a coffee and a chat.

Northants pub's community café serves up smiles

Publican Jen Rees opened a new community café at The Knightley Arms in Yelvertoft, to help create a social hub for local residents.

The publican took over the closed pub in October 2020, with the aim to re-establish it as the heart of the village.

The Knightley Arms had previously focused on a drinking clientele and Jen was keen to encourage more women, families and elderly customers to come to the pub to socialise. The pub now serves local families, cyclists, ramblers, passing boaters and also loves to welcome dog visitors.

As the village has no other services Jen also sees the pub as an important place for people to get together to help overcome feelings of isolation and loneliness.

She said: "The community café has really helped to make The Knightley Arms the place for everyone to come and connect. It is so nice to see a range of different people including families and the elderly from the village now using the pub."



Suffolk pub's café offers locals slice of happiness



Publicans Chris Nilsson and Beverley Cooper have opened a new community café at the White Horse in Corton, Suffolk.

The publicans, who have run the pub for five years, rallied to help people in the local area during lockdown by delivering essential supplies and collecting prescriptions for the vulnerable.

With many elderly local residents and a lack of services in the immediate vicinity, there was a need for a community café and takeaway food service. The publicans launched a takeaway in January that has been a roaring success.

A renovated area of the pub has also been transformed into a community café, which offers a range of coffees and teas, sandwiches, sausage rolls as well as cakes, brownies and cookies, homemade by a local baker.

Publican Chris said: "We have been overwhelmed by the support we have received from our customers since reopening our outside area in April.

"The community café will provide a lifeline to many in the area who found lockdowns a challenge."

HELPING PERC UP LOCALS AT NEW KENT FARM SHOP AND COMMUNITY CAFÉ



Publican Lance Culver took over traditional Shepherd Neame pub the King's Head, in the village of Shadoxhurst in September 2020, but he managed just seven weeks of trading before he was forced to close the doors due to November's second lockdown.

This setback, however, inspired Lance to look at diversifying - setting up a village store and coffee shop in a disused storage space attached to the pub.

Lance said: "The space is now half coffee shop and half farm shop. We have produce supplied by a local bakery, and we also stock milk, cheese, smoked salmon and meats. Fresh vegetables, fruit and salad too. People can also buy coffee to drink in the courtyard or take away."

**Pub is The Hub
has helped to open
37 community cafés
since it launched its
Community Services
Fund in 2013**

Feeding stomachs and souls at new farm shop/café



Devon publicans Selena and Steve Porter opened a new farm shop and café at Shipwrights Arms in Shaldon near Teignmouth, to help residents stay local for shopping.

The couple took on the pub in December 2019, just months before the first lockdown, and with many elderly local residents and a lack of services in the immediate vicinity, they soon realised there was a need for a farm shop and café in the area.

They were able to renovate and transform a side room within the pub to create the shop, which offers a range of essentials along with fresh and local produce including fish from Brixham, freshly baked bread, cheeses, free-range eggs,

locally sourced meat and handmade burgers. The new development also includes a small coffee area, which will allow local residents to meet and help reduce the risk of social isolation.

Selena said: "The farm shop and coffee area is really important in providing not just food but company to many of our customers who were isolated in lockdown and were desperate to meet and connect with others."

Coffee, chat and quality produce on offer at The Pear & Olive



The Pear & Olive in Hildersham near Cambridge opened a purpose-built farm shop and café adjacent to the pub.

Gael and Cathryn Lecolley extended their farm to fork philosophy of fresh, local and seasonal ingredients to open a shop, 'The Pantry' as well as a café.

The shop provides essential items, alongside a rainbow of fresh fruit and vegetables, locally sourced meat and fish and a delicatessen service where customers can order speciality foods. A pretty, outside seating area also allows some customers to enjoy drinks and snacks in socially distanced surroundings.

Gael said: "We are enormously grateful to Pub is The Hub for believing in our project so that we can broaden our support for local suppliers, the local economy and local people. While many pubs have created temporary shops during the Covid crisis, The Pantry is now a permanent fixture at The Pear & Olive."

Our Community Services Fund also helps with a range of projects including libraries, IT hubs, craft spaces, community gardens and allotments.

Wild things: childrens' play area and wildlife zone opens at Cornwall pub

Publicans Martin and Natalie Watts at The Travellers Rest in Trevarrian Hill are helping local children learn more about the environment with the opening of a wildlife zone and eco-friendly play area.

The wildlife zone has a pond, chickens and ducks and hedgehog shelters that have been built to allow for their hibernation. A camera with video link also means the garden and pond can be live streamed so everyone can see the wildlife in action.

An eco-friendly play area, which uses recyclable materials including tyres, has also been opened at the pub to help ensure that children can exercise and stay active.

Both the wildlife zone and play area are part of a larger development at the 17th century St Austell pub, which also includes luxury glamping pods, a horsebox transformed into a coffee shop and a sheltered barn with log burner for wildlife watching in the winter months. An allotment is also in development.



CRAFTY IDEA TO HELP LOCALS WINS DEVON PUB A COMMUNITY AWARD



The Lord-Lieutenant of Devon David Fursdon has officially opened a creative cabin at The Stoke Canon Inn in Stoke Canon, Devon.

During the opening ceremony the Lord-Lieutenant also awarded its volunteers with a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The cabin is to be home to a raft of local groups including arts and crafts, learn a language, history lessons, knit and natter, folk singing, a book club and bingo club.

The creative cabin was set up to bring people together to help combat social isolation.

Director of the Stoke Canon Inn community group Peter Mitchell said: "We are calling our new craft area 'The Hub' as a mark of our gratitude for the help we received from Pub is The Hub in making it happen."

LOCALS GO SURFING AT OXFORDSHIRE PUB'S NEW IT HUB



Publican Dan Redfern opened an IT hub and library at his pub The Cherry Tree Inn in Stoke Row to help support local residents following the pandemic lockdowns.

Dan, who runs the Brakspear pub with his partner Natalie Redfern, stepped in to host the library at the pub after a number of local residents asked if it could be moved from the village hall to allow for greater access

and longer opening hours. The library and IT hub has over 300 books, including around 60 specialist cookery and gardening books donated by Dan and his chef Matthew Allen.

Dan said: "This room provides a great environment for our regulars to come in and have a coffee and get a book to read. The library and IT hub is really important in helping many local residents to socialise."

Shrew's activities help boost confidence post-lockdowns

Community-owned pub, The Shrewsbury Arms in Kingstone, Staffordshire, re-opened with some new confidence-boosting initiatives supported by the Community Services Fund.

Kingstone Community Society has created a workshop space for crafts and hobbies; added some bicycle racks to attract passing cyclists through the village and purchased wheelchair-friendly picnic benches.

Kingstone Community Society member Alison Grocott said: "Before the Covid-19 closure the pub had become really busy with a regular Monday quiz night and 'A crafty coffee' each Friday morning for those who wanted to turn up and share their hobbies or just turn up for a chat and some company. It was great to see men attending this event and was very inclusive of all ages and sexes. Many new friendships were formed due to the project and it is wonderful to see."



Pub is The Hub was first inspired nearly 20 years ago by HRH The Prince of Wales

New research shows true social value of pubs and publicans

For every £1 spent on a Pub is The Hub Community Services Fund project, in the first Covid-19 lockdown, between £8.98 and £9.24 of social value was created



Earlier this year Pub is The Hub published the first ever social value report measuring the impact of pub services.

The social value that pubs and publicans created by providing local services during the first Covid-19 lockdown was highlighted in 'The Social Value of Pubs and Publicans providing Services in their Communities Report'.

Social value looks at the broad effects that an organisation is achieving with its work and takes into account the wider social, economic and environmental wellbeing benefits that a service or project can bring to an area.

The evaluation encouraged by the National Lottery Fund and undertaken by Cornwall Rural Community Charity, which is experienced in measuring social value, found that for every £1 spent on a project through the Pub is The Hub Community Services Fund, in the first lockdown, between £8.98 and £9.24 of social value was created.

This illustrated that one suitable pub diversification project with a grant of £3,000 from the Community Services Fund could potentially create over £27,000 in social value to a local area.

The 25 Covid-19 response pub projects analysed in the evaluation included village stores, community cafés, takeaways and food delivery services, IT and information hubs, a bakery, a workshop and community gardens.

The evaluation analysed various outcomes such as the impact that the projects had on helping support older, disabled and vulnerable people and how publicans worked collectively with local organisations to help reduce isolation and tackle social needs.

The Importance of Pubs

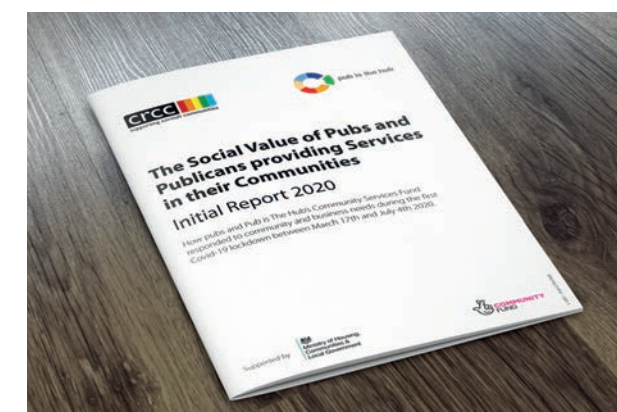
John Longden, Pub is The Hub's chief executive, said: "It proves how vital these services have been during the pandemic. Covid-19 has reinforced the importance of pubs and good publicans in helping local people."

He added: "Publicans were often the first in their community to rise to the challenges and recognise the issues local residents were facing. The important social impact of publicans' responses to local needs has often been essential to get people through the pandemic.

"With the market reopening publicans and pubs are going to be crucial in helping local areas rebuild as well as aiding government priorities for economic recovery."

Gemma Finnegan, Cornwall Rural Community Charity's development and evaluation manager, who independently conducted the first of its kind research in this area, said: "What is interesting is the major impact that Pub is The Hub projects have had in local areas and communities with only a small grant."

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the Social Value Report please email support@pubisthehub.co.uk



Adding Social Value: Covid-19 Heroes

Invaluable service - The Green Man

The Green Man in Scamblesby near Louth, Lincolnshire, opened a permanent village shop with the support of Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund.



Pub owner Richard Bradley explains: "While we were closed during lockdown, I realised that the villagers and people in surrounding areas would benefit from having a village shop. I came

across Pub is The Hub's work following a search online for support available for village pubs. We had amazing support from PiTH's regional advisor and, following our application, our grant was approved within days. From enquiring to the point of opening the shop, it only took six weeks."

The village shop is situated in an old storeroom next to the pub with its own entrance and sells newspapers, fresh bread and a wide range of locally sourced produce including Myers Farm Eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables from Shaws in Louth, meat from Wards Butchers in Sleaford, Saints and Sinners Preserves as well as a full range of grocery essentials.

Richard added: "The Green Man had not been fully open for three years by the time we purchased the pub and it had lost its place at the heart of the village. When we re-opened at Christmas, we hosted the village choir and Christmas carol concert in a packed-out pub with many smiling faces. The addition of a shop has helped us be the hub of the village once again."

Pop-up shop goes permanent after huge demand - The Brewery Tap, Furneux Pelham

A Hertfordshire pub that set up a pop-up shop when Covid-19 hit in March 2020 successfully went onto open a permanent shop three months later, thanks to local support and Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund.



The Brewery Tap, owned and run by Elizabeth (Ebe) Bonner and her daughter Lucy, transferred the temporary pop-up shop they had established in the dining room of the pub to the permanent

outbuilding adjacent to the pub at the end of June.

Ebe and Lucy came up with the idea of turning the dining area into a pop-up shop filled with essential goods from local suppliers. The success of the shop, combined with the planned closure (not Covid-related) of the nearest village store, meant that Ebe and Lucy soon realised that a permanent village shop was a much needed service.

Ebe said: "When we opened the pop-up shop, customers were delighted to have somewhere they could go that provided a safe environment that was friendly and accessible. We attracted custom from not only all the local villages but towns too."

Comment: John Longden, Chief Executive of Pub is The Hub, shares PiTH's vision for pub diversification projects



Over the last 20 years Pub is The Hub has helped over 600 pubs diversify, with over 175 receiving both advisory

and financial support through our Community Services Fund. The social value impact of these projects has made such a positive difference to so many local communities.

We strongly believe that there are many more pubs, publicans and communities that could benefit from this help

and support. An extension of the local services diversification fund - which can provide funding over a longer term, such as three years, would help inspire and plan the permanent repositioning of rural services, particularly in, deprived areas, potentially helping over 1,000 pubs and local areas on the uneven road of post pandemic recovery.

With the challenges faced as the country tries to move forward after reopening, pubs and publicans are going to be crucial in helping local areas rebuild, and will be able to aid a variety of government priorities for economic recovery. It is also important to get this message across to local and national policy makers

who should understand that social and enterprise policies can be very closely related, particularly in remote rural community areas, with projects often reliant on the involvement of an inspired publican to make it happen.

Good and viable pubs will remain at the heart of their communities moving forward and many publicans will continue to rise to the challenges. And we truly believe that Pub is The Hub can help 1,000 more pubs and local areas benefit from services if they are supported in the future.

As John Bonham from Led Zeppelin once said: "Today we have another chance to do something that's never been done before!" Lets do it.



'Join Inn' Campaign News



A range of resources are now available through our 'Join Inn - Last Orders for Loneliness' campaign to help support publicans wanting to support community wellbeing and tackle loneliness in their local areas.

Among resources to help publicans motivated to 'Join Inn' are informative guides about how to help tackle loneliness in your community and create connections, inspirational case studies on how publicans are encouraging people to join in at their pubs, as well as a list of useful organisations who can help support publicans to host activities or identify and connect them with people who would benefit from joining in with others through their pub.

A campaign poster is also available to download which publicans can use to highlight forthcoming groups and events to its customers, so they can help encourage people they know would benefit from connecting with others along to the pub's activities.

Deborah Kemp, PiTH's ambassador for loneliness, said: "Hundreds of publicans have already downloaded our helpful guides and said how useful they are in offering simple ways and ideas they can help

tackle loneliness, which is the other pandemic of the past 18 months."

She adds: "We appreciate how much publicans have on their plates in these challenging times and we aren't looking to add to their tasks list, but just simple actions and behaviours really can make such a difference to someone who is feeling lonely."

Resources can be found at: www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness

CALL TO ACTION POEM

Pub is The Hub teamed up with arts project INN CROWD, the national arts project funded by Arts Council England, and poet David Attree, a regular on BBC Radio's Upload, to launch a call to action poem about the 'Join Inn' campaign for Loneliness Awareness Week 2021.

Titled 'Call Last Orders for Loneliness' this rousing poem aimed to raise awareness of the campaign and why publicans should look to get involved.

Among the thought-provoking lines in David's poem are: "There is an opportunity for your pub to become a community hub."

To become known as the place where friendships and so much more can grow. And there are local organisations that already know the people who will come, can join forces, help you with resources to get things done.



You just need to make a call, get in touch. There is so much potential for you, right now, to provide the setting to boost lives in your local community."

The poem also highlights how helping to tackle loneliness benefits not just people experiencing feelings of loneliness, but also has positive benefits to the pub itself.

As Mick Dore publican of The Alexandra in London's Wimbledon,

who runs a weekly 'MeetUp Mondays' group, says: "Things like our 'MeetUpMondays' say to people that 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."

Watch David's thought-provoking 'Call Last Orders for Loneliness' poem at www.pubisthehub.co.uk

CREATING CONNECTIONS: INSPIRATION FROM PUBLICANS ON HOW TO 'JOIN INN'

Community Connector

At Star Pubs & Bars' The Crown at Capel, Surrey, publican Vanda Pera links with others in her community, including the local mayor, vicar and councillors, to help identify people who may be in need of support. Vanda says: "I get to hear about what is going on locally and tell them what we are doing at the pub so they are able to highlight activities to those they feel may benefit from coming along."

When she first took over the pub, to help create connections with locals, Vanda went to church and other local events and got to know the people behind different community organisations and groups. She is also the secretary of Capel Village Memorial Hall which has also helped

to connect her with a wide range of villagers. She also ensures she chats to people walking past the pub and always smiles, says hello and talks to parents who use the pub's car park for school drop offs.

A monthly 'Café Church' service is also hosted at the pub, outside in the summer and inside in the winter, which also helps encourage new faces to come along and connect with others.

Vanda says: "Some publicans just look at people as £££s and it shouldn't be like that. I'm a passionate, old school publican who makes introductions, chats to people and connects people. Connecting people just happens organically, as

through my conversations and local connections I'm alive to people who may need to connect with others."



Research in Heineken's 'The Open Arms Report' by Loughborough University (Feb 21) says **64% feel their pub was one of the main places that people living in the local area can socialise**

Read the full inspirational stories of how these publicans and others are helping people to 'Join Inn' at www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness

Happy Mondays

Publican Mick Dore launched 'MeetUpMondays' at Young's The Alexandra in London's Wimbledon nearly four years ago, bringing sometimes up to 100 people together every Monday for fun and friendship.

The weekly get-togethers run from 11am to 2pm, with everything put on for the attendees for free, including bottomless tea and coffee, sandwiches, a short quiz, bingo and raffle.

Mick says: "You get to realise how events like our 'MeetUpMondays' make a difference to people. People get dressed up for it and it gets them out of the house to have a laugh and natter. We have had people who connected at them that



now go on holidays together and have started romances. We really enjoy hosting them too."

Jackie, a regular at The Alexandra's 'MeetUpMondays' said: "We missed it so much in lockdown. There is a great atmosphere, it gives a lovely focus to your week and I have made some great friends through this group."

Margaret, another longstanding attendee, said: "It is always so friendly, welcoming and interesting with the different activities. I didn't go into pubs on my own before 'MeetUpMondays' but I do now. I have made friends that I now see outside this group too. It is brilliant and has given me a spring in my step."

GROWING FRIENDSHIPS



At the Eagle & Child in Ramsbottom, Greater Manchester, which is run as a social enterprise, a men's shed helps to tackle social isolation among men living in the local area.

Publican Glen Duckett partnered with Rammy Men, (www.RammyMen.org) a local charity set up to help combat suicide, to establish the group at the pub which offers a community space for men to come together to connect with others. It is run very informally to allow those attending to build up relationships and create a culture where people feel they can just turn up when they want to. The weekly sessions see around six men meeting up to learn about gardening.

Glen says: "For many individuals the Men's Shed has been a lifeline and part of their community recovery."

The publican has found that simple gestures have proved effective in helping people at risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness, such as popping around with a pint to one of his regulars who had been grieving the loss of his wife.

"I went and knocked on his door and told him that we were all thinking of him and all here when he needs us," Glen says. He adds: "He was back in the pub the next Friday night with all the guys. It just took something simple like that. You have just got to be compassionate and considerate."

Ambassador for Loneliness



Pub is The Hub has our own ambassador for loneliness Deborah Kemp, who had a 25 year career in the pub industry, and who together with our team of expert regional advisors,

offers simple ideas to publicans on ways they can help combat loneliness in their local areas.

Deborah said "Our campaign just wants everyone to think about doing small acts of kindness, which cumulatively will make a big difference, especially to someone who may feel that no one cares

about them." She adds: "Like Covid-19 loneliness spreads until someone steps in to break the chain and creates an inclusive space for people to thrive in."

Read more of Deborah's thoughts on tackling loneliness at www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness

Hampshire pub's 'Join Inn' approach highlighted by government

The Snow Goose in Farnborough, Hampshire, has been cited in the government's Hospitality Strategy Report, published in July, for its positive role in helping to tackle loneliness in its local area.

The Star Pubs & Bars' pub, which is run by publican Kate Hayden and partner Paul Warriner, was highlighted in the report by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy for its great initiatives which include making the pub open and accessible to all, including through the pub's layout, hosting regular conversations with their staff about the impact of loneliness, which has created a culture of staff automatically checking the wellbeing of their customers, and launching a helpline during Covid-19 lockdowns to support anyone feeling lonely or in need of practical support.

Kate says: "The biggest way to combat loneliness is to just talk to people."

The pub also hosts a monthly knitting club, book club and mums' coffee group and also has some pet pigs which local families enjoy coming to see and which give people another reason to visit the pub.

Since being at the pub Kate and Paul have also put on an annual complimentary 'Seniors Christmas Lunch',



with attendees including members of local care homes, elderly neighbours to the pub and local people living alone.

Kate believes her role as a publican and of the pub is to connect with people in the local area and make the pub a hub that is attractive for all types of people.

She says the personal benefits of helping to tackle loneliness are significant and "it costs nothing."

Canny approach to creating connections by London brewery

London's Brixton Brewery ran a brilliant campaign encouraging intergenerational connection.



The inspired 'Bring Your Gran for a Can' initiative by the brewery, saw them invite people to bring someone over the age of 60 along to its brewery taproom to both enjoy a chat and music over a free can of its Generation Pale Ale.

The initiative ran in July from a Thursday night to a Sunday, with the brewery teaming up for one night during the campaign with Age UK Lambeth to match up its friendly Baby Boomer generation members with younger guests.

As part of the campaign the brewery, which is owned by Heineken, also highlighted the wonderful stories of some of the amazing over 60s living in its local area on its social media channels.

Deborah Kemp, Pub is The Hub's ambassador for loneliness, believes more publicans could get involved in this type of initiative, by connecting with a local group or organisation to help encourage more people who live on their own to come along and 'Join Inn' with others at their pubs. She says: "This wonderful initiative is the type of simple and fun event that might encourage people who don't normally go to the pub to go along. An event doesn't just have to focus on beer, it could be a quiz, bingo or cuppa that pubs offer. What matters is the opportunity to connect and bring cheer to the benefit of people of all generations."

The Campaign to End Loneliness highlights in its Loneliness Beyond Covid-19 report that **71% of adults think loneliness will continue to be a serious issue beyond Covid-19**

'Join Inn' now!

If you are an organisation who would like to get involved in our 'Join Inn - Last Orders for Loneliness' campaign please email enquiries@pubisthehub.org.uk

Volunteer voices: the benefits of joining in

As well as the big benefits volunteers bring to local people and pubs, helping out can also have lots of positives for volunteers themselves. Here a range of PiTH project volunteers share what they get out of joining in at their local pub...

Making new connections

Kathy Wells, a volunteer at Upton Community Shop at The White Horse in Upton, Norfolk, which is staffed 80% of the time by volunteers, became a volunteer to connect with more people in her village. She said: "I love working in the shop and get so much out of it myself by joining in, as you get to know customers and other volunteers and I have made new friends. Helping in the shop really uplifts me. It has taken me out of my comfort zone and makes me think. I have learnt new skills too."

Kathy adds: "I would really miss it if I couldn't do it. If you are feeling lonely it is a great way to meet new people. It is so fulfilling. It gives you a focus to your day. When my sons ring me, they always ask if I have been working in the shop and it makes them feel better knowing that I am getting out and meeting people."

Jenni Cresswell, a meals on wheels driver at The Bevy in Sussex, enjoys the wide spectrum of people volunteering helps you to meet. She said: "It offers you opportunity to do something you have not tried before and connects you with a wide mix of people."

She adds: "Volunteering is good for the soul. It helps gives you a sense of purpose and is good for your wellbeing."

Julie Jenner, a shop and bar volunteer at The Ploughshare at Beeston, Norfolk, and a former publican, has found after moving to a new area that volunteering has provided a great way of meeting people.

She said: "I'm retired, live on my own, my partner works lots and I moved to a new area, so volunteering at the pub has been a great way to meet others. 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."

Diane Fallon, a volunteer at The Dog Inn at Belthorn, Lancashire, said: "Working in the coffee shop gives me an interest and gets me out of the house. I enjoy the interaction with people of all ages, including young children, that working in the shop provides. I'm a widow and getting involved has helped me connect with more people in the village."



Projects set up by our Community Services Fund have created over 130 volunteer roles so far



“Volunteering is good for the soul. It helps gives you a sense of purpose and is good for your wellbeing.”

New skills

Diane also enjoys the opportunity to learn new skills that working in the shop gives her.

She says: “Volunteers are given training and lots of support to learn new things. It gives you a lovely sense of achievement to learn something new.”

Hilary Hanbury, a shop volunteer at The White Horse in Upton, also relishes the chance to learn something new that volunteering delivers. She said: “I hadn’t worked in a shop since I was school age and it is great learning new skills. I really enjoy delivering goods to locals and seeing people come into the shop and walking out with a smile on their face.”

Not just for retirees

Rebecca Grimshaw, who has been a volunteer at the community café and shop at The Dog Inn at Belthorn for over four years, says: “I am unable to work due to the amount of time I need off for medical reasons, so helping at The Dog Inn makes me feel like I’m doing something positive with my time and gets me out of the house.”

She adds: “I have made a few friends of different ages through working in the café/shop. I would definitely recommend it to younger people who are unable to work.”

Chris Bootes, another café volunteer at The Dog Inn at Belthorn, who works full-time in engineering, started volunteering at the shop to help support people in the village during the pandemic lockdowns and continues to help out on Saturdays for a few hours.

He said: “Working in the shop/café is a very different atmosphere and pace to my day job, which I really enjoy and it has given me new skills, like making a great cappuccino. I would recommend volunteering to those working. It helps you appreciate your community more and I have got to know lots of different people.”

Making a difference

Russell Harkin, also part of The Bevy’s volunteer team in Brighton, adds: “Volunteering gives you a positive focus, is not a huge demand on time and is rewarding as you are helping with a service that is clearly needed.”



Volunteers Week, which takes place annually at the start of June, is the ideal time to thank and recruit volunteers.



Poetry campaign: warming hearts



Pub is The Hub and arts project INN CROWD (www.inncrowd.org.uk) joined forces at the beginning of 2021 to launch ‘Winter Warmers’, a campaign aimed to bring cheer and hope to publicans, their staff and their local communities during what were very challenging times.

The ‘Winter Warmers’ campaign was conceived from a desire to bring together two sectors, which make an invaluable contribution to our society and have been so adversely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, to do something positive for the publicans and artists working in them.

The campaign saw seven talented poets from across the country writing poems celebrating pubs which were shared by many publicans with their locals on social media and through postcards of positivity featuring the poem written by the poet from their region.



Spreading cheer!

Publicans shared the poem postcards in a number of ways, including putting them in takeaway bags and food boxes, writing a cheery note on them to put through the doors of people at risk of experiencing feelings of loneliness and creating poem window displays for people to enjoy reading when walking past their pub. Some publicans framed the poems and have them displayed in their pubs for customers to enjoy now they are reopen or were inspired by the initiative to run pub poetry competitions* with their customers.

*Thanks to our Kate Thomas and Jo Bruce for coordinating the campaign over the festivities.



Nigel Smith, publican of The Fleece at Bretforton, Worcestershire, shared poem postcards in with the pub’s takeaways. He said: “We delivered hot meals and some mental stimulation with the poems.

We had some nice comments back from customers about the postcards. They were a good way of helping to remind

people what pubs are, and the solace and connection they offer people. Pubs will provide that respite going forward and these poems help remind people of that.”

Food for thought



in with the pub’s takeaway meals and posted them through residents’ doors.

At The White Lion in Selling, Kent, publicans Karen Johnson and Dave Thompson, who featured videos of the poems weekly on the pub’s Facebook page, also included poem postcards



Karen said: “We wrote on the cards that we hope they are ok, or some banter with some of our regulars. People were really pleased to receive the poem. Recipients went on to listen to the poem and all the ‘Winter Warmers’ poems online. As a pub team we have really appreciated listening to the poems too.”

At The Dog Inn at Belthorn, Lancashire, poem postcards, featuring a lovely note to villagers, were delivered by a team of volunteers to all 230 homes in the village.

Yvonne Brown, committee member at the community-owned pub, said: “The postcards were a really lovely idea to help pubs keep in touch with their locals, which is really difficult to do when you are closed. People really appreciated receiving them.”

Enjoy the Winter Warmers collection now

Enjoy all the wonderful ‘Winter Warmers’ poems and the campaign poets’ thoughts on pubs at: www.pubisthehub.org.uk/winter-warmers



PRAISE FOR RESILIENT PUBLICANS



As part of the initiative a 'National Poem of Thanks to Our Nation's Publicans' was released alongside the six regional poems.

This thank you poem, entitled 'The Public House Rumbles', was written and performed by Suffolk based poet Alexandra Ewing, the daughter of former publican. The aim of this poem was to say a huge thank you to publicans, who, despite the immense and ever-changing challenges to their own businesses, continued to demonstrate ongoing resilience, tenacity and innovation throughout the unprecedented times, with

many at the centre of helping support people during in their local areas during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Publican Victoria MacDonald, of the Cellar House in Eaton, near Norwich, said: "After such a tough 2020 for the pub industry and such a challenging start to 2021 it was wonderful that Pub is The Hub and INN CROWD thanked publicans in this way."

Winter Warmers' poets thoughts on pubs

Alexandra Ewing: "No matter where they are, pubs are the heart of the community. Whatever your mood is, pubs are there for you. They have a 'whatever the weather' feel to them and that has been pubs for thousands of years. That has never changed and will never change."

Madelaine Kinsella: "I think it's important to remind ourselves just how much heart and soul lives in pubs. It's something a Zoom party or at-home-draft kit can't replicate."

Charley Genever: "I love how the same buildings can serve so many different people and their purposes – a couple on a date, family meal out, a craft group, stag do, work party, a solo person typing away on their laptop... all under one roof."

Gavin Roberts: "If I'm in a pickle or lost somewhere, there is nothing finer than finding the nearest good honest boozer to take stock of the situation."

