

CASE STUDY

pub is the hub



Chris Bryant, MP for Rhondda and Ogmore visited the pub to celebrate the opening of the village store and café.

Pentre Comrades Club in Pentre, Rhondda

Community Hub: Rhondda pub focuses on sustainability with new village store and café to help support local community.

The Pentre Comrades Club in Pentre, Rhondda, is supporting people in its local community by opening a sustainability-focused village store and community café to provide important local services.

Many facilities within the former coal-mining village have closed down in the last 20 years including schools, shops, day centres and libraries.

Publicans Denise Roberts and Helen Roderick have run Pentre Comrades Club for 30 years. They get paid for running the club at weekends but during the rest of the week, when concentrating on community events and activities, they give their time for free as volunteers.

The former British Legion Club, had an extensive refurbishment during the Covid-19 lockdowns, with the help of 12 volunteers and support of various grants and fundraising.

The venue has evolved from its club roots. It now has a full pub licence and is open to the general public. And it has been developed into a community space that is used for far more than social drinking.

Volunteering opportunities

There are volunteering opportunities for people locally, including six volunteers aged between 10 to 15 years-old, who help out in the school holidays especially with its warm hub activities and craft lessons.

The Pentre Comrades Club, which has become the hub of this isolated rural community, is now focused on tackling this lack of local services while helping to bring back those community connections.

Expert help and two Community Services Fund grant from Pub is The Hub were provided to help with the opening of both a community shop and café.

The community shop provides local essentials at an affordable price, enabling people to make their money go further and tackle food poverty with the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a major ethos of the business with the village store enabling people to refill their own containers through buying products by weight, cutting down the use of plastic and helping the environment. The shop also offers eggs from a local farmer and there are plans to extend its locally sourced offer further.

“We know that people want to feel like they belong and we know that our community is still very close knit and connected, so we want to provide a resource for them which can replace those missing amenities in our local area and provide a place for that community engagement. This pub is for everyone and anyone is welcome to use it. We have had great support from people living in the local community and we want to help educate them on the benefits of sustainable living as well as providing a space for them to socialise.”

“The Pentre Comrades Club is an example of great licensees focusing on what their local rural community needs. This is really the hub of its local area.”

Pub is The Hub regional advisor Roger Belle

Publican and club secretary Denise Roberts

Safe Environment

By introducing a café, the Pentre Comrades Club provides a safe environment for customers to come together, to help tackle social isolation and engage with a range of different people across the community.

As part of its strategy to engage with people locally the community shop and café also provide volunteering opportunities to empower people and provide them with skills, experience and knowledge which can help build confidence and employability as well as improve their social interactions, well-being and sense of belonging with their local community.

The Pentre Comrades Club recently reopened its kitchen after a refurbishment and is now offering sustainability cookery classes, such as how to cook vegetarian dishes, to people in the local community.

The Pentre Comrades Club is a registered community benefit society which is supported with a committee but run on a day-to-day basis by Helen and Denise.

The venue opens as a pub on Friday, Saturday and Sunday but is open seven days a week offering the village store, café and community space.

