

The Bowgie reaches the finals of The Great British Pub Awards 2020

The Bowgie Inn has been announced as a finalist in not one but two categories in The Great British Pub Awards 2020, with up to £10,000 available to the winner of each category

The focus of this year's awards is around 'selflessness and community spirit', celebrating the nation's pub heroes who have supported their communities throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the start of the lockdown, Sally Pickles, Owner of The Bowgie Inn, Crantock, worked tirelessly to give back to the community, with various activities designed to make people smile during challenging times.

The Bowgie Inn has been nominated in both 'Staff Welfare' and 'Community Mindfulness' categories.

"We really can't believe we have been shortlisted for not only one award, but two! It's a great privilege to run a pub which is at the heart of the community and it has always been our mission to do all we can to help people during such stressful circumstances. We just wanted to do our bit at a time when the whole country was pulling together to support each other," commented Sally. "When I first started broadcasting my daily live streams from Crantock on The Bowgie's Facebook page, it was just about keeping people connected at a time when everyone was in lockdown. I never thought they would be so popular or see us shortlisted for an award. We had viewers from all over the world including China, Mexico, America and Australia!"

This year's Great British Pub Awards celebrate establishments that have adapted their businesses to come out the other side of the pandemic as community champions.

During the pandemic, Sally streamed live video from Crantock every day, taking viewers on various different walks in the area including the beach and the Gannel. In addition, The Bowgie hosted free weekly live yoga sessions, hosted virtual live music gigs for charity, donated food items to the local community, and supported furloughed staff in a variety of ways to ensure their health and wellbeing.

"Pubs act as hubs for the community and the coronavirus crisis put that at risk – but we used innovative ways to ensure we all stayed connected and looked after each other. Despite having to close and not being able to welcome customers for months, we found new ways to be there for our community."

There were more than 600 entries to The Great British Pub Awards this year which has now been whittled down to 15 categories, with The Bowgie shortlisted in 'Staff Welfare' and 'Community Mindfulness'. The winners are chosen through a public vote.

"As well as The Bowgie's live videos, I established a number of unique ways to protect our team during the pandemic. This included using a Facebook group to share photos and updates from Crantock, government information and fun social media posts. We kept in touch every day to see how we were all doing and support each other" commented Sally. "Socialising is a huge aspect of life at The Bowgie so I did everything I could to recreate our culture online during the lockdown. It was all about supporting our team, keeping morale and energy levels high and staying in touch during what was a very unpredictable time."

The 'Staff Welfare' category was open to all pubs who 'ensured the people that keep the business going day in, day out, were being supported and looked after' during the pandemic.

Sally added, "While furlough provided some financial support and safety, it was still a very unsettling time for everyone in the industry. Our team are absolutely vital, and their wellbeing is the most important thing to us. The work we put in to support our staff was reflective of how special they all are and how much The Bowgie values the team we have here."

Each award winner will be offered the opportunity to submit an application for up to £10,000 each to fund a business improvement or upgrade or to put towards a community project. Additionally, Coca-Cola will fund a further £1,000 donation to a local charity or good cause supported by each of the winning pubs.

"2020 is definitely a year we won't forget – but there were also some silver linings amongst the hard times. It was always our mission to be a beacon of positivity and good-will, helping people to smile during difficult times. We are over the moon to have been shortlisted for these Awards and we thank everyone for their continued support. The Bowgie family are amazing!"

The winners will be announced on Thursday 24th September at 18:00.