

Pub Saving Awards – 2019 Shortlist

1 Swan, Clewes, Windsor, SL4 5JG

An 18th-century coaching inn which closed in 2016. Long-serving tenants (20 years) had retired in 2009, after which a series of dubious successors managed to run it into the ground, hence the closure. Windsor has many excellent pubs so, to survive and prosper, this pub needed a new lease of life.

Will Calvert from Windsor & Eton Brewery and Richard Allen, Head of Green Room School, were instrumental in obtaining ACV status for the pub in anticipation of the inevitable sale. The Swan Clewes Community Interest Company (SCCIC) was formed, attracting 200 people desirous of bringing the pub into community ownership. The pubco's asking price was £750k and there was interest from developers for residential conversion. SCCIC approached high street banks for capital finance but were turned down. Eventually, Bristol-based Triodos Ethical Bank stepped up to the mark as they only lend to projects benefitting people and the planet. SCCIC won their bid to buy the pub.

The Green Room School is for students aged 16 plus with special needs. These young people can no longer access mainstream education and the school acts as a bridge to work, The pub's stable yard will host small businesses and shops and work in them will be open to the young people.

Phase one is progressing well. Volunteers stripped the pub back to basics and started again, working either for free or on preferential terms. The bar is open, serving ales from local breweries and the school is using an upstairs room. Football is growing and the pub is used throughout the day. Regular live music, quiz nights and summer BBQs are also bringing life back to the Swan. Phase two will see the kitchen open and phase three opening of upstairs rooms for B&B.

Nominator Alan Willoughby said 'This is a shining example of what can be done when a community pulls together to protect local assets with an ambitious business model. A heart-felt 'well done' to everyone involved in the Swan's phoenix-like revival. The hard work starts now!'

2 Ye Olde Cross, Ryton, Tyne & Wear

The Friends of the Ye Olde Cross Group came about when the pub was closed by its pubco owners and put up for sale. Local residents and pub regulars organised a meeting at the church hall to discuss what could be done. Quickly, a large following developed from all parts of the community and the Group formed.

The Group successfully applied for ACV status and began engaging with local people through regular meetings, pop-ups at local events and in the local supermarket and setting up a Facebook site. There was also a mail-out to local residents.

Interest blossomed and a bid to buy the pub was accepted so the



Pub Saving Awards – 2019 Shortlist

real fundraising began. The Group set up a community partnership to manage the overall running of the pub and sold shares to the local community as well as a few interested parties from further afield. They appeared in local newspapers, TV and radio, making sure awareness of the project stayed high. The backing of local Councillors plus the M.P. was obtained, all of whom were very supportive.

Once the purchase was completed, volunteers began bringing the pub back to life, with hundreds of hours of volunteer labour helping restore the place to its former glory.

The pub reopened in Summer 2019. As well as the usual pub activities, they offer regular street food pop-ups and community events like job fairs and community days. More details at www.facebook.com/RytonYeOldeCross

Nominator Paul Hillhouse of Tyneside and Northumberland CAMRA said 'In my time active in the Branch I don't think I've ever seen a bunch of people start something they had no prior knowledge of and, with passion and commitment, see this through. The pub is once again beginning to truly shine in the centre of the community'.

3 The Chelsfield, Orpington, Kent, BR6 6EY

Three local people formed the 'Save the Chelsfield' group in October 2018 to prevent their local pub being demolished and replaced by a block of luxury flats and a token bar. The campaign was conceived on a lap-top at the end of the bar after the trio heard about the plans through the local newspaper.

Priority one was to encourage objections to the planning application and over 1000 were lodged. The Facebook page (with 1500 followers) was the main engine and the group acknowledge help from the local CAMRA Branch, local MP, branding designers and local Councillors.

The objections convinced Bromley Council to reject the application. Owners Punch Taverns then lodged an appeal. The group increased its campaigning through the use of social media and also held a public meeting. Links were made with other pub campaigning groups and mutual assistance achieved via Twitter and other social media platforms.

The Planning Inspector dismissed the appeal and Punch conceded defeat, agreeing to continue to run the Chelsfield in its current guise. With help from CAMRA, ACV status was granted, further cementing the pub's future.

The full time-line for the campaign can be read at www.savethechelsfield.com

A large number of nominations came in for this campaign. Typical comments include:

'All this confirms a true community can come together and achieve the greater good.'

'Bromley Council had never seen so many objections to an application on a pub.'



Pub Saving Awards – 2019 Shortlist

‘The campaign was well-organised by a group who knew nothing about taking on a pubco. Bromley CAMRA gave excellent support and the pub is thriving.’

‘A great community-driven campaign – public meetings, local pressure. Saved live music for miles around. Fantastic Facebook inter-action. People power!’

‘A wonderful victory for community over corporate greed.’

4 Paul Crossman

Nominator Kevin Jones says:

‘Landlord of the Swan, York, Paul Crossman has worked selflessly with the local community saving pubs like the Volunteer Arms and Slip Inn by revitalising them himself when that were deemed ‘non-viable’ by pubco owners who would rather sell for redevelopment. He orchestrated the switch to MRO from his evil pubco (Punch) tie at the Swan and, most importantly, offers help and advice to fellow publicans on issues regarding MRO and the pubco tie. This was most poignantly seen in his assistance to landlord John Pybus in fighting for the future of York’s iconic pub, the Bluebell.

In a business environment hugely under pressure in current times, Paul hasn’t reverted to fighting his competitors – he’s helping to keep them afloat and ensure they have a future. This award is to acknowledge people who save a pub but Paul would selflessly save an entire city of pubs if he could. If anything, the award should be honoured by having Paul’s name attached to it.’

5 The Lilacs Inn, Isham, Northants, NN14 1HD

A community group, Friends of the Lilacs Inn, was formed in January 2017 when rumours first surfaced that the owners of this, the last pub in the village, intended submitting a planning application to build two houses in the car park – seen as a ‘thin end of the wedge’ application. FTLI successfully applied to list both pub and car park as an ACV. The pub was very much a focal point and centre of the community so its loss would be unacceptable.

The application was duly submitted and refused following significant and powerful objections from the community – an appeal was also dismissed. The tenant then left, the pub was put up for sale and the 6 month moratorium was invoked. FTLI solicited views across the village and successfully gained investment commitments from many residents. After a protracted and complex process, FTLI signed the purchase deal in August 2018. The next six months saw a tremendous effort by an army of volunteers supporting professional trades to return the pub to its old self. This work took until April 2019 when, on the 26th, the pub opened its doors to the public. Since then it has flourished – the grounds look wonderful and the kitchen is open serving lots of meals. The pub is well used not just by local people but visitors from far and wide, walking and cycling groups being hosted as well as events for motorbikes and classic cars. Four real ales (two local) are served and the local CAMRA Branch has met there. The Lilacs is family and dog friendly and also supports local



Pub Saving Awards – 2019 Shortlist

sports teams.

Nominator Colin Golding says 'The pub, even in the short space of time since opening, is proving to be a success that the villagers can be very proud of saving.'

The Dyke Tavern, Brighton

This iconic and popular pub closed without warning in September 2016 and reopened the next day as a furniture shop. The Save the Dyke Pub group was set up to protect the site from redevelopment and campaign for its reopening. They applied for ACV listing which was granted in December 2016.

The owners submitted a planning application in June 2017 to convert the building into a small pub, shop and flats. After huge local opposition orchestrated by the group the application was withdrawn and, in August 2018, the property was sold to LAN estates. After months of negotiation between LAN and the group, the former agreed in March 2019 to let half of the ground floor to a local publican, Will Farmer. With help from a successful crowdfunding campaign, the pub reopened in September 2019.

The Three Tuns, Guilden Morden, Cambridgeshire

A six year campaign by a dedicated campaign group saw this 17th century, grade 11 listed pub reopen in June 2019.

The pub was listed as an ACV in March 2013 shortly after Greene King announced its plans to sell the property. Due to a technicality, the ACV status lapsed and, in the meantime, the pub was sold to an owner who made clear she had no intention of running it as a pub or selling it to someone who might want to do so. She wanted to convert the building to residential and to build houses in the large garden. The ACV was subsequently reinstated and confirmed after a review.

The Save the Three Tuns Community Group was then formally constituted. The first priority was to organise opposition to the owner's planning application. This was successful and an appeal was also dismissed. The owner then threw in the towel and put the freehold up for sale in 2017. In the interim, the building had been allowed to decay and required extensive internal, external and landscaping refurbishment to bring it back to life.

The Guilden Morden Community Pub Ltd was set up and raised £250k in share capital with over 280 mostly local people buying shares. £100k was raised in grants and loans awarded under the More Than a Pub programme. Purchase was completed in November 2018. The whole property was then extensively renovated, mostly by volunteers.

The Broadleys, Hereford, HR2 7RP

This large, two-bar 1930s pub was built to serve a then rapidly



Pub Saving Awards – 2019 Shortlist

expanding part of the city. It was bought by New River retail who entered into an agreement with the Co-op whereby the latter would convert it into a convenience store. An initial attempt to gain planning permission in 2015 was thwarted by local opposition and effective campaigning. An ACV was obtained at this time.

In December 2018, the Co-op sent leaflets to local residents announcing proposals to demolish their local and build a store on the site. Mark Haslam from Herefordshire CAMRA (a doughty campaigner if ever there was one) committed to helping the community fight the proposals.

Mark attended a meeting of the Hereford Branch of the Co-op Pioneers and explained to these locally-based representatives of the organisation the serious negative impact the proposals would have – leaving a vulnerable community with just two pubs for an adult population of 17000. There were already seven convenience stores within a 500 metre radius of the pub, one a Co-op.

271 objections were lodged to the planning application along with a 47 page report submitted by CAMRA. The planning officer said 'I consider the detailed response provided by CAMRA usefully captures much of the strong feelings that have been expressed by local residents and, contrary to the applicant's submission, explains that the Broadleys fulfils a very important role as a community pub'.

The application was refused.

Thorold Arms, Harmston, Lincs

When this historic pub (built in 1740 and in pub use since at least 1760) was known to be under threat of being sold off for housing, villagers decided they had to act if a vital cornerstone of the community was not to be lost. The pub closed in January 2018.

Thorold Arms Property Co. (TAPCo) was formed and 126 investors bought shares in the venture. The purchase was negotiated by September 2018 and there was enough in the pledged investments to renovate and refurbish the building to a high standard. Much of the work was carried out by volunteers. The pub reopened in September 2019.

Royal Oak, Collingham, Notts

When the pub closed in 2016, it was on the market for quite some time before being bought by the Lincolnshire Co-op. In January 2018, a steering group of villagers was formed to save the pub from permanent closure. The aim was to reach out to the community and create a social hub that could be enjoyed by the whole village.

A long-term lease was signed with the Co-op on excellent terms, based on this being a community pub. £350k was needed to cover



Pub Saving Awards – 2019 Shortlist

building and start up costs. People from the village and beyond provided fantastic support by way of share purchases. The steering group also secured grants from the Plunkett Foundation, North Nottinghamshire Leader Fund, the Parish Council and Tarmac Group. The Co-op also made generous financial contributions to help with the building work and purchase of shares.

Once the lease was signed, a substantial refurbishment began including a new kitchen, renovation of the bar areas and a restaurant extension. The upstairs function room has been restored and is available for meetings, functions and social gatherings. The pub reopened this summer.

