

Pub Saving Awards – historic data

2018 Winner

Save the Packhorse Project

The project was set up by residents of South Stoke, Bath, Somerset in 2012 when the much-loved 17th century Packhorse Inn was sold to new owners who planned to convert it to a house with ground floor office space. Very quickly, the group acquired the support of the local Council, achieved national news coverage and secured backing from nearly 1500 signatories to an online petition.

The Packhorse was listed as an Asset of Community Value in early 2013 and the group organised a pop up bar in the village in May that year which became a well-attended annual event.

After a long stalemate with the owners, the team were told in June 2016 that they had less than 100 days to raise £500k plus legal costs to secure the pub. £287k was raised within three weeks with £601k accumulated by September, thanks to the help of 200 investors.

The pub, now the property of 430 shareholders, successfully reopened in March 2018, following huge renovations to the building, taking an estimated 1000 hours of volunteer time for the garden alone. Local historians estimate that the inn was founded in 1618, meaning it returned to life exactly 400 years since its earliest days as an ale house.

2018 Runner up

Volunteer Pub Bexleyheath

This Kent pub had closed in 2017 after 152 years service to the community. Saved by local campaigners, it reopened in April 2018 and has established several football teams, an active golf society and regularly promotes live music with Open Mic nights and acoustic guitar sets.

2017 Winner

The Harrow Community Benefit Society

This 200 year old pub in Stockbury, Kent faced imminent closure after it was put on the market in September 2016. Local campaigners soon got to work to secure the £380k required to purchase the pub from Shepherd Neame brewery. They built a strong network of 140 local shareholders and tapped into both the Plunkett Foundation and More Than a Pub for funding.

Awareness of the pub's plight was raised by organising media publicity and hosting various local events like quiz nights, BBQs and performances in the village centre. The local MP threw her



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weight behind the campaign and Councillors donated funding towards the pub refurbishment.

The pub reopened in August 2017 with the aim of being the 'social hub of the community'. Today it offers a regular social lunch for vulnerable members of the community as well as a book swap and an internet cafe for those with poor internet access. Local sports teams have also returned and it is now a buzzing and thriving part of the village.

2017 Runner up

Crauford Arms Community Group

When the last pub in the northern part of Maidenhead was threatened by closure, a community group sprang into action to raise the £325k needed to buy it. Much effort went into engaging with the local community and in achieving publicity for the group's aims. Negotiations on the purchase of the pub were fraught but eventually successful and the Crauford Arms became Maidenhead's first community owned pub.

2016 Winner

Save the Drovers Campaign

The inaugural Pub Saving Award went to this group from Gussage All Saints, Dorset. It was set up when the Drovers Inn faced sudden closure in late 2014. The campaign kicked off by getting the pub listed as an Asset of Community Value and persuading the Council to refuse a planning application to change the use of the building to a house.

The group then compiled a viable business plan and ran a series of fundraising events, in due course securing initial grant funding by working with the Plunkett Foundation. Having managed to raise the funds necessary both to buy and refurbish the pub, an army of volunteers aged 16-82 got working to bring the pub back to life. It reopened in July 2016.

2016 Runner up

Centurion Community Action Group

The Centurion, Vicars Cross, Chester was sold in late 2014 to a property company who intended demolishing it to build a care home. The group raised a huge number of objections to the plans and the application was rejected, a decision upheld on appeal. The group then raised, within a fortnight, £21k to pay for three months rent and is now running the pub on a lease with a view to purchasing it.

