

Pub Saving Awards – historic data

2023 Winner

Rising Sun – Save Our Sun

The Rising Sun in the village of Woodcroft, Chepstow appears on OS maps from 1870 and was brewery-owned in 2011 until high rents and inflated beer costs caused its doors to close. This led to an epic community-led campaign to buy the pub. Started by a few locals in early 2013, the campaign finally reached fruition with the Rising Sun opening its doors again to the community in October 2022.

Within one month of the Community Share option being launched, £350,000 had been raised from 240 different investors. The group were one of only two pubs in England to be successful in obtaining a grant from the Community Ownership Fund of £175,000.

Once given the keys to the Rising Sun, the community then made a herculean effort to clean, repair and refurbish the pub. With an amazing team of local tradespeople, a volunteer project manager and more than 120 volunteers all pitching in, the doors of the Rising Sun could open once again.

2023 Runner up

The White Horse - Stonesfield Community Pub Limited

Being the last remaining pub in the village of Stonesfield, the community rallied together to ensure the White Horse was safe from developers intent on turning it into housing. The Stonesfield Community Pub Limited was formed (as a Community Benefit Society CBS) to try to buy the pub into community ownership.

Needing to raise almost £400,000, the community embarked upon a fundraising crusade, from cake and t-shirt sales to virtual pub quizzes and Saturday morning car washing.

As well as capturing the imagination of the village, the pub's campaign garnered international attention, making headlines in the New York Times, ABC News and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, with funding coming from California and Connecticut as well as support from the local area.

2023 Highly Commended

The George in Bethersden, Kent: Saved by The George Community after closing during the pandemic, and now runs as a successful wet-led pub at the heart of its community.

The Raven Inn in Glazebury, Warrington: Campaigned for by the Save the Raven Group and backed by more than 1200 supporters to restore it to its former glory.



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Pub Saving Awards – historic data

The Travellers Rest in Skeeby, North Yorkshire: This opened its doors for the first time in almost 15 years after being saved from becoming a victim of re-development by an out of area property developer.

2022 Winner

The Plough Inn – Longparish Community Pub Ltd

Efforts to safeguard the future of the Plough Inn in Longparish, Hampshire, which dates to 1721, are today being recognised by the Campaign for Real Ale's Pub Saving Award, which celebrates people who have come together to save a pub from closure.

When the pub closed its doors – seemingly for good – in December 2015, local villagers sprung into action, lobbying local planning officers to deny planning permission to turn the pub into a residence. They subsequently used grants, donations and a community share scheme – which attracted over 300 investors – to purchase the pub, in conjunction with the Parish Council, in February 2021.

After months of incredibly hard work, completely refurbishing the property inside and out, and three hundred years after it first began trading, The Plough Inn is once again at the heart of the Longparish community. Bought with help from their Parish Council who now own the Plough Inn, local villagers have taken on a 99-year lease from the council for the exclusive use of the property to secure and safeguard the future of the Plough Inn as a public house and promote it as an amenity of prime importance to the community.

2022 Runner up

The Three Horseshoes – The Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society

After the Three Horseshoes, located in the remote village of Helions Bumpstead in Northwest Essex, was closed in May 2014, volunteers from the village of fewer than 500 people launched a survey which found that there was overwhelming support for the 19th-century pub to be restored as a public house.

The Helions Bumpstead Community Benefit Society was established shortly after, setting an ambitious fundraising target of £400,000 to buy the pub as a community asset. In March 2019 the pub successfully came into community ownership, and major refurbishment work took place both inside and outside the pub.

Once Covid restrictions were fully lifted in July 2021, the pub opened for occasional weekend events whilst tenant recruitment continued, with a full reopening finally taking place in December 2021.

2021 Winner



Pub Saving Awards – historic data

The Stoke Ferry Community Enterprise

The Blue Bell, which was the last pub in the village of Stoke Ferry, has been trading as a pub since 1794; however, it was closed in March 2018, and in 2019 an application was submitted to convert the pub into housing. Local villagers fought back, and the Blue Bell was listed as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) in March 2020, giving the community time to raise funds to buy the premises.

Throughout the Coronavirus restrictions that came into effect not long after, a dedicated committee continued to fight for the pub, leafletting, holding online wine and beer tastings and quiz nights. Celebrity support came in the forms of England cricketer Ryan Sidebottom, comedian Stephen K Amos and Stephen Fry.

2021 Runner up

Save The Railway Arms Pub

The Railway Arms, a 19th century branch line pub, was saved in October 2020 after a 4-year campaign by the group STRAP (standing for 'Save The Railway Arms Pub'). Closed on New Year's Day 2016, the owners had plans to build houses on the pub garden and convert the main buildings into residential ones. With advice and guidance from the Plunkett Foundation and More Than a Pub, a public meeting, attended by 130 people, was held in Saffron Walden Town Hall in April 2017, kickstarting the campaign to save the Railway Arms.

To keep STRAP in the public eye, a regular stall was set up in Saffron Walden market on a Saturday and quarterly weekend 'pop up' pub sessions were held in a local community centre – 'Not the Railway Arms'. After a prolonged campaign, the pub came into community ownership in October 2020, before reopening under COVID restrictions on 16 April 2021. Since opening, as well as providing a full range of pub services and facilities, the Railway Arms has hosted theatrical performances in the garden, played a full part in Saffron Walden's 'Fete de la Musique', hosts a local cycling club whose weekly rides start and finish at the pub and has a fortnightly 'knit and natter' session organised by a local craft shop.

2020 Winner

The Puzzle Hall Community Pub Ltd

The Puzzle Hall Community Pub Ltd, a not-for-profit Community Benefit Society, raised £172,860 from the local community to purchase and refurbish the Puzzle Hall Inn, West Yorkshire, which was fast falling into a derelict state. The pub, a 17th century building located between the canal and the river in Sowerby Bridge, once included a brewery which had since been turned into accommodation for the local area.



Pub Saving Awards – historic data

Crowd funding to save the local launched in 2017 and campaigners received critical social investment and support from Big Society Capital, More than a Pub fund, the Plunkett Foundation, Calderdale and the Key Fund. With their help, an offer was made on the pub the following year.

In December 2019 the pub re-opened after an extensive refurbishment, which one of the judges described as 'a great community effort to literally save both a local and regional presentation'.

2020 Runner Up

Tollerton Flying Club - Air Hostess

After a successful application to become an Asset of Community Value (ACV) was made in 2017, the Air Hostess in Tollerton, South Nottinghamshire was able to continue trading under Everards of Leicester. Unfortunately, after a couple of years of dwindling trade, it was announced that the pub and its associated land were to be disposed with.

In response, the community, supported by the Parish Council, began fundraising to purchase the pub. Over 400 residents purchased shares, and in March 2020 the pub was finally bought from Everards by the community. Volunteers project managed the renovation and the agreement of a lease with local award-winning tenants for them to trade the pub on an ongoing basis.

2019 Winner

Friends of Ye Olde Cross

Friends of Ye Olde Cross registered the pub as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) and with the help of the Plunkett Foundation and the Power to Change 'More than a Pub' programme, they developed a business plan and share offer to buy the pub as a community.

They established a Community Benefit Society which more than 300 locals invested in, raising £150,000 to purchase the pub. Further fundraising and a team of hardworking volunteers allowed them to completely transform the pub interior, and it re-opened in July 2019. Today, Ye Olde Cross runs a number of community events, including a regular quiz and open mic night, yoga lessons, food pop-ups, business networking, a yarn group and book club.

2019 Runner up

Three Tuns Action Group

The Three Tuns was closed by Greene King and sold to a developer in 2014 but thanks to the efforts of the local community, they were able to buy back the pub and refurbish the interior, the



Pub Saving Awards – historic data

tenant flat and the half-acre garden. Over 500 people attended the official pub launch in August, and community activities are now starting to take root including Tuns Talks, Walk & Talk and the Bar Games night.

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 of 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.



Pub Saving Awards – historic data

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 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

Craufurd 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 Craufurd 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 to demolish 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.



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