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I come to writing my statement as an academic who has research expertise around the perceptions, and experiences of rural pubs. I am passionate about pubs because they offer so much more than a place to consume alcohol. They are important economically, historically, socially and culturally. I am particularly interested in the latter three of these. As such, this is where I tend to focus my academic/scholarly research. I have also tended to focus on rural pubs, mainly as I reside in a rural area, and I am interested in the sustainability of these areas, the services they provide, and their communities.

Considering the above my statement will be focussing on the community impact aspect of the inquiry.

Pubs mean different things to different actors. My work has highlighted that some rural residents and rural communities perceive and experience the village pub as a place to, amongst other things, socialise, build personal and professional networks, engage in community activities, engage in local history and heritage. As such, when village pubs close there are implications for some residents as well as from a community perspective - especially for those who relied on these services for their social engagements or, in some instances, the additional services pubs have diversified into. Rural pubs provide a variety of services from hospitality through to offering/facilitating community activities and services such as book clubs, and essential grocery provisions. Thus, when they close there are a wide-ranging impact on the sustainability of other community assets, which can have negative consequence for individuals and communities as my PhD highlights. Additionally, there can be a loss to local and national history and heritage. Village pubs can and do act as a link between the past and the present, both from an individual and a community perspective – see my piece for the Daily Express, link below. My research has shown that rural communities and residents place high value on these historical links. And when pubs do close this has connotations for images of villages, individual connections, and on community engagement activities.

I believe the pandemic has further shown the importance of rural pubs to their communities. For example, in the face of adversity many have come together to help their communities whether that be through offering takeaway services or delivering essential goods for those who were shielding. Going forward, I see pubs as continuing to have important economic, social and cultural value for communities. However, I do think pubs have often been taken for granted in so far as it is often assumed ‘they have always been here and always will be’. But evidence from sources such as CAMRA has shown there has been a decline in their number in rural areas. To this end, my work aims to not only highlight why rural pubs are important but also outline some of the ways to help sustain rural pubs and their communities – see my PhD thesis and Conversation piece, links below.

I attach a brief overview of my work on rural pubs and include links where possible.

- PhD thesis – the public house in the rural community available at <http://eprints.lincoln.ac.uk/id/eprint/23378/>
- Book chapter - Markham, C (2013) ‘The Rural Public House: Cultural Icon or Social Hub?’ in the UK in Somerville, P and Bosworth, G (2013) (eds.) *Interpreting Rurality: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, London, Routledge - I can send you a pdf, if that would helpful
- Book chapter - Markham C., Bosworth G. (2016) The Village Pub in the Twenty-First Century: Embeddedness and the “Local”. In: Cabras I., Higgins D., Preece D. (eds) *Brewing, Beer and Pubs*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137466181\\_14](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137466181_14) available

at [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297376465\\_Village\\_pubs\\_in\\_the\\_21st\\_Century\\_Embeddedness\\_and\\_the\\_local](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/297376465_Village_pubs_in_the_21st_Century_Embeddedness_and_the_local)

- Conversation piece - From book clubs to the Archers, how to reinvigorate the local village pub . Available here <https://theconversation.com/from-book-clubs-to-the-archers-how-to-reinvigorate-the-local-village-pub-129673>
- BSA sociology piece - Why now is the time for pubs to become a staple of sociological research, available at <https://es.britsoc.co.uk/why-now-is-the-time-for-pubs-to-become-a-staple-of-sociological-research/>
- Daily express piece - If pubs close we'll lose our links to history and community, warns expert <https://www.express.co.uk/comment/expresscomment/1394346/pubs-closure-culture-community-history-doctor-warning>
- Sociological show interview - Listen to "Interview with Dr Claire Markham" about her work on rural pubs [https://www.spreaker.com/user/thesociologyshow/claiemarkham\\_1](https://www.spreaker.com/user/thesociologyshow/claiemarkham_1)