

The Social Value of Pubs and Publicans providing Services in their Communities

Initial Report 2020

How pubs and Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund responded to community and business needs during the first Covid-19 lockdown between March 17th and July 4th 2020.

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Prepared by Gemma Finnegan, Development and Evaluation Manager, Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC) and our thanks to all who have helped to produce this social evaluation in so many ways during lockdown:

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The Social Value Engine (socialvalueengine.com) was developed by Rose Regeneration and East Riding of Yorkshire Council in response to the Public Services (Social Value Act 2012) which requires Public Bodies to think about how they can also secure wider social, economic and environmental benefits. The SVE works alongside and has incorporated Social Return on Investment principles (SROI) and the 7 Social Value UK principles (socialvalueuk.org).



Executive Summary

The experience of our regional advisors throughout the UK has resulted in the success of several hundred pub services diversification projects, inspired by caring publicans and many assisted by grants from Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund. We became aware that some pubs may also have a social value as well as their economic asset value which itself is based on actual trade and business viability unlike other commercial properties.

Whilst a social value may be "intangible" and spread across a variety of activities we were encouraged and supported to follow the example of The Treasury's Green Book on appraisal and evaluation to see if this perceived value could be quantified for pubs.

We were fortunate to have the academic support of Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC) to help coordinate the appropriate research and use of the Social Value Engine (SVE) to analyse results.

Work commenced but unfortunately with the sudden national lockdown starting in March 2020 we had to quickly modify the original national aims and objectives in order to meet the revised criteria of the SVE (See page 6).

The SVE revisions and forced closure of pubs meant we had to restrict data processing to that collected on projects initiated and completed during the Covid-19 outbreak. It is our intention to complete a full analysis once all pubs are fully reopened.

The report now focuses on the social value delivered through the Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund between March and July 2020 during the first Covid-19 lockdown.

Analysing the social benefits that these rural pub projects achieved together with other anecdotal comment and case studies during one of the most difficult years that many have lived through, has revealed important learnings which could influence future decisions and policies at all levels.

Key Summary Points:

- **For every £1 invested in a project it has been established that between £8.98 and £9.24 of additional social value was created per project from the range of services or activities created.**
- Both rural and some urban pubs have been found to offer individual local solutions to a broad range of social policy priorities and deliver projects which have a large social impact for a relatively low-cost investment.

- Local and National policy makers should understand that social and enterprise policies can be very closely related particularly in remoter rural community areas and projects are often reliant on the involvement of an inspired publican to make it happen.
- A good publican and pub together can offer a powerful collective resource to tackle many of the most pressing societal priorities. This can include local jobs, supporting an ageing population, overcoming the reduction in essential local services and helping with social isolation and loneliness issues. These were able to be quantified in social value terms during the Covid-19 lockdown.
- To realise the future social value potential of local pubs and their publicans, the owners, Government, local authorities and other public bodies and trade associations could:-
 - Build collaborative partnerships to encourage publicans within their local area to deliver solutions to meet local priorities eg Regional Hubs.
 - Increase advisory support for busy publicans to embrace diversification and connect to customers' current needs in the local area.
 - Encourage specific funding for digital services infrastructure and training for pubs to recognise their long term social role in a changing society.
 - **The availability of local services diversification grant funding** over a longer term eg 3 years, would inspire more publicans and pubs to embrace reopening after the Covid-19 storm and help plan the permanent repositioning of rural and other services and local isolation issues which can now support a social value growth and return as well as aiding Government priorities for economic recovery.

John D Longden OBE
Pub is The Hub

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Background

In January 2020, CRCC was commissioned by Pub is The Hub (PiTH), with support from the Building Opportunities Fund of The National Lottery Fund, to evaluate the social value delivered by its Community Services Fund. Terms of reference were agreed and an evaluation framework was developed alongside accompanying guides, collection methods and timelines.

The Community Services Fund, with some regional support from the Norfolk County Council, has been helping pubs to connect and sustain the communities they are located in since 2013, when it was created with the help of Diageo and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. In that time over 160 projects have been delivered by the fund, as well as many other local initiatives.

PiTH was keen to demonstrate the social value of projects where it had directly supported publicans in order to amplify the wider role pubs can play in UK society.

Social value is said to be an important term that looks at the broad effects that an organisation is achieving with its work - taking account of the wider economic, social and environmental effects of their actions. By analysing the impact that all activities have, you can start to understand how these are contributing to the long-term wellbeing and resilience of individuals, communities and society in general.

**“One of the few
benefits to come out
of the current pandemic
is how many great
publicans have become
more involved with their
local communities”**

West Country Brewer
and Pub Owner



But then, with the outbreak of Covid-19, it was announced on the 16th March that all pubs must close as of March 20th 2020 at midnight.

This lockdown was subsequently followed by further lockdowns and restrictions in September and November 2020 and through to May/ June 2021.



Richard Pohle / News Licensing

Understandably, this sudden lockdown changed our original aims and objectives. Much like the resilient licensed hospitality sector it supports, **PiTH regrouped and adapted its processes and activities to meet this new reality** alongside the individual publicans it supports with its Community Services Fund.

What follows is an evaluation of what publicans, pubs and PiTH were able to achieve in the initial first lockdown period of March 20th - July 4th 2020 in light of significant challenges and a very uncertain future.

The key themes the evaluation has identified **underpins and highlights the unique role that the pub plays**, especially in rural communities, and echoes what the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group inquiry report titled 'Unlocking Pubs' Potential' - February 2020 called their '**social worth**' which policymakers must embrace especially in tackling a "myriad of health, social and cultural issues."

The structure of this Social Value Report is as follows:

- A brief summary of the Community Services Fund (2013-2020).
- How PiTH adapted during lockdown to meet the new operating environment.
- An exploration of the themes that emerged from the projects initiated and delivered during lockdown, interspersed with case studies and other data collated through surveys and interviews with PiTH regional advisors, publicans and project beneficiaries.

This data informs an indicative, natural social value calculation, which is then followed by a conclusion, recommendations and next steps.

What is Social Value?

It is a term that is being used more commonly in the discussion of impact and value but can appear to have different meanings attached. In the evaluation sense and in the usage in The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012, social value is about a consideration of the social, economic and environmental wellbeing benefits that a service or a project may bring to an area.

The Public Services Act recommended that central and local Government should consider the potential social benefit of a service from the start of the commissioning process. From a public spending perspective it is certainly a method to drive more value through every pound spent but it also might deliver more holistic and innovative services and projects that have wellbeing and environmental benefits embedded.

What is the Social Value Engine?

The Social Value Engine (SVE) was created and developed through a partnership between Rose Regeneration and East Riding of Yorkshire Council. They identified over 150 fully-researched proxies which are used to robustly measure and evidence impact through the Social Return on Investment (SROI) process. This is a separate major refinement; in many cases SROI impacts were based on weakly researched or abstract proxies, which can bring the process into disrepute.

Their totally independent approach involves relating project impacts to improvements to the sustainability of settlements. They do this by grouping the proxies into the 8 domains within the widely accepted Bristol Accord matrix, which represents an EU accepted approach to measuring the sustainability of settlements as a national approach.

What is a proxy?

Social Value UK (who develop the social value methodology and make accredited training and quality assurance), describe their use of proxies as:

In SROI, agreed financial proxies are used to estimate the social value of non-traded goods to different stakeholders. Just as two people may disagree on the

value of a traded good (and so decide not to trade), different stakeholders will have different perceptions of the value they get from different things.

The SVE uses this range of accepted proxies that are research based and come from sources such as academically peer reviewed research, government reports and surveys. They are used to calculate the individual social value of a project with established proxy values from a range of services/projects that have delivered the same or comparable outcomes as the project or service being considered.

The proxies used in the SVE social value calculation for PiTH's Community Services Fund are discussed in this report in a specific section (See page 24).

How is the social value calculated?

The calculation involves the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data before a ratio can be calculated.

The process involves:

- projecting the value of all the outcomes achieved into the future - how long will an outcome last (usually a year)
- calculating the net present value (NPV). In order to calculate the NPV the costs and benefits paid or received in different time periods need to be added up.

$$\text{Present value} = \frac{\text{value of impact in year 1}}{1 + r^*}$$

* r = Discount rate.

Discount rate recognises that people generally prefer to receive money today rather than tomorrow because there is a risk. HM Treasury's Green Book has the discount rate at 3.5%.

- calculate the ratio.

$$\text{SROI ratio} = \frac{\text{Present Value}}{\text{Value of inputs}}$$

The Social Value Engine using the Bristol Accord Matrix



Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund

Inspired by HRH the Prince of Wales and established as a 'not for profit' advisory organisation in 2001, Pub is The Hub (PiTH) works with publicans to connect and sustain their local communities in rural areas by diversifying their activities to provide or host local services or amenities and create additional jobs.

PiTH offers advice and support to publicans, who alongside their communities, may be looking to relocate, re-open or introduce vital services and activities from their local pub. It also offers independent guidance to communities who may be considering the various ownership options available if they acquired their own local pub. This includes advice on the wide range of challenges, responsibilities and commitments that are involved.

Small grants are available to support individual publicans in alignment with PiTH and local authorities' priorities to kick start rural community pub-located services.

In addition PiTH is often able to match fund and leverage funding from publicans, owners or other third parties as a result of the Community Services Fund support. The grant is a 'fund of last resort' where no other local funding exists, and helps to widen the benefits in the local economy by providing additional rural services from the pub.

Rural Services decline

Depending on the definitions used, rural areas accommodate almost 18% of the population of England, and a higher proportion of people of voting age. From the coasts of Lindisfarne to Lands' End policy makers too often treat the country as part of a single, homogenous urban unit and overlook the needs of rural communities.

Over the last 20 years there has been an inexorable trend in a reduction of services being delivered in rural areas.

There has been a steep decline in local post offices, rural bank branches, bus services, access to cash, retail, further education, older people's services and mental health services. It is widely recognised that providing rural services is challenging given the geography of small and scattered settlements, lost economies of scale, additional travel required and the delivery costs involved.

There is a strong case that the projects that have been provided by resilient publicans in their local communities and part funded by PiTH are exactly the sort of collective action that Rural England is describing, and although technically not third sector organisations, there is a shared value base and sense of meeting local needs that proactive publicans are responding to.

There is also a sense that well-run pubs and inns are returning to being the centre or hub of community life that they often played in the past. They are returning to host a more cultural and wider interpretation of hospitality which has meaning beyond the usual drinks, food or entertainment offering.

As well as delivering much needed local services, these projects are increasing social interaction and greater participation in community life leading to reduced social exclusion amongst some of the most vulnerable. The range of projects has reached out to varying disadvantaged groups such as people aged over 65, young families and those without transport.

In its 'State of Rural Services' Report (2016) Rural England state that:

"As a rule, the third sector or community volunteers are playing a growing role in service delivery and they are more likely to be found in rural than in urban areas. By contrast, as a rule those services which are delivered by the public and private sectors are less likely to be found in rural than in urban areas, and many of them have been contracting.

Collective community action is playing a growing part in rural service provision especially where there is declining provision as a result of public sector austerity or competitive market pressures."

"The rise of the publican and pub has a unique social and vocational aspect that acts as one of the pillars of local life as an inn used to do."

Creating a positive image for pubs

By helping bring communities together, publicans have contributed to a new, more positive image of the pub industry, which, historically, has had negative associations for some; whether it be alcohol related anti-social behaviour or a more old-fashioned image of a place just for men.

The broad spectrum of projects that PiTH has part funded, demonstrate the unique makeup of the individual local areas they serve whilst at the same time showing how flexible and innovative publicans can diversify their services to support their businesses.

Further positives to this approach have been the notable media interest and coverage of projects has been extensive in both local and national press.

"We have seen a wider range of people and groups now realising what the pub has to offer. It is lovely to see a range of clubs and associations now using the pub as a meeting point."

Publican, South East

Table 1. Range of key projects PiTH has funded since 2013.

Butchers & Bakers	Community Travel	Lunch Clubs
Campsites	Craft Workshops	Post Offices
Cinemas	Cycling Facilities - Maintenance	School Dinners
Community & Wildlife Areas	Delicatessens	Takeaway Meals/Meals on wheels
Community Allotments	Farm Shops	Theatre/Arts
Community Bus	Heritage Centres	Tourism
Community Cafés	IT Hubs, Computer training	Village Stores
Community Centres	Keep Fit	
Community Support Initiatives	Library Services/ Book Exchange	

"It's created a whole new dimension to the village, brings the village to life."

...it has seen some residents engage in village life for the first time in years."

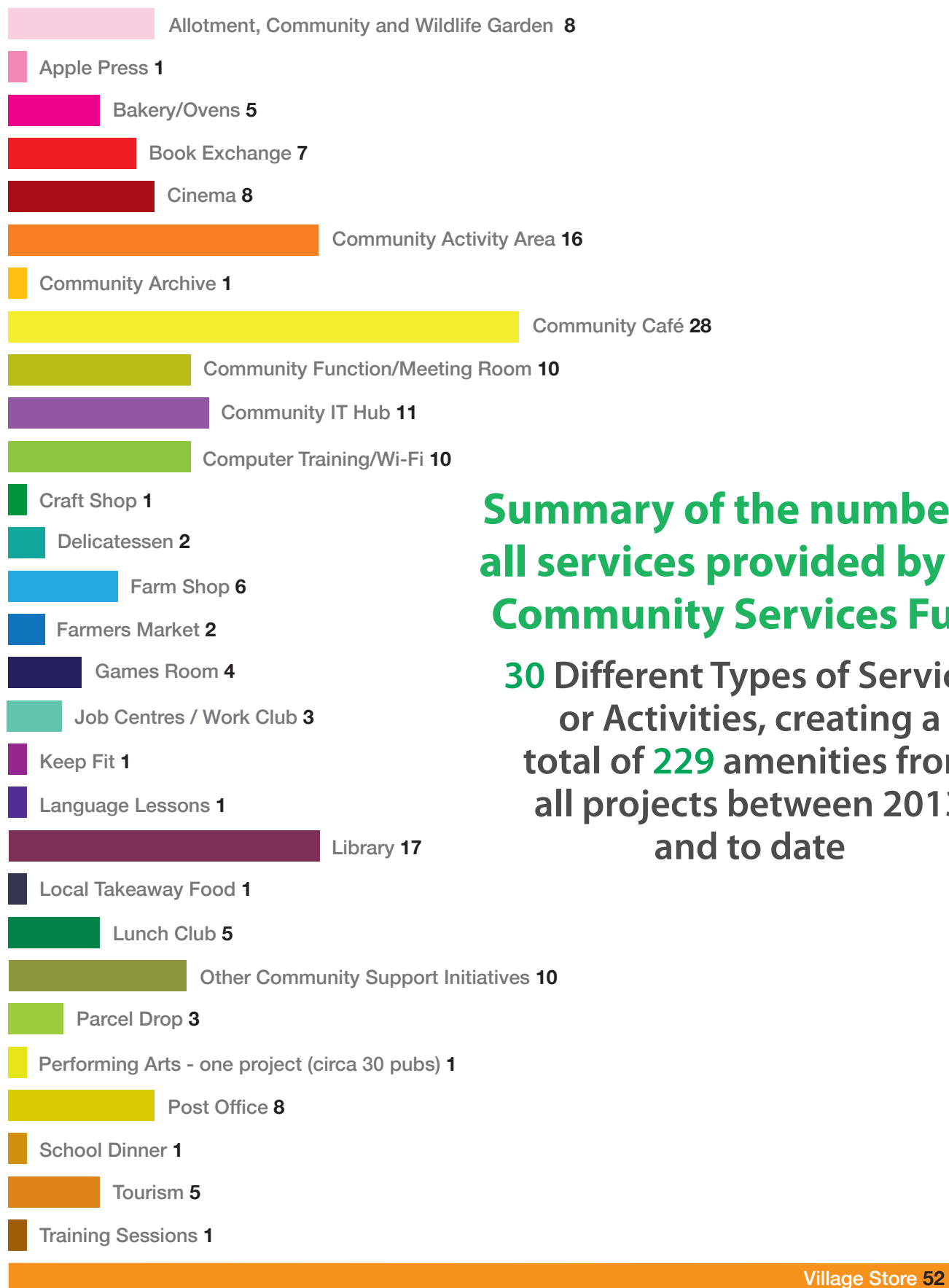
Community Feedback

With the onset of Covid-19 in early 2020 and subsequent lockdowns, it has not yet been possible to fully complete the intended social value evaluation of the whole history of the Community Services Fund as delivered since its creation but those completed during the Covid-19 lockdown period provided acceptable equivalent references for the SVE to assess.

It is hoped that PiTH will soon have the opportunity to recommence its full review of all pre-Covid projects. By highlighting how publicans can currently develop different, flexible and innovative business approaches and remain relevant and economically viable to policy makers, they and the wider hospitality industry can understand how the trade can be supported.

The final report should have a powerful influence on regional and national policy and practice in rural services and related public sectors. It should now be clear to policy makers and the hospitality industry how areas of local concern such as isolation and loneliness can be tackled through innovative approaches that will also support the rural economy in the future.

Table 2. Summary of total number of services and activity from Community Services Fund



Summary of the number of all services provided by the Community Services Fund

30 Different Types of Services or Activities, creating a total of **229** amenities from all projects between 2013 and to date

Pub is The Hub's response to Covid-19 and lockdown

Like many of us during the first few weeks of national lockdown, it was challenging to see what the Community Services Fund would do next. Speaking with the Pub is The Hub (PiTH) team and Chief Executive, John Longden, a couple of weeks later, it was obvious that delivering the fund's priorities would require some rethinking about processes. It was also clear that the enthusiastic appetite from the regional advisors and the wider PiTH team was undiminished especially at a time when the types of services the fund had already funded were needed more than ever in rural communities and strong interest was still being shown in diversifying by many publicans.

The national lockdown emphasised even more clearly the loss of local retail stores and other amenities in remote areas, which were often an hour or more away from supermarkets, and with the reduction of an already minimal public transport provision it was going to be very difficult for residents to access shopping and other services.

It should also be highlighted that older people are a significant share of the rural population. Those aged 65+ comprise 23% of the rural population, well above the 16% of the urban population. Research also shows that 24% of older people living in rural areas are unpaid carers of someone else (in most cases an older person).

Digital Isolation Issue

This meant that many of those who were recommended to 'shield' by the Government were rural residents. The readily identified solution of internet shopping was not a universal panacea - due to the remoteness of some areas it was not always available as often dwellings lie outside of the delivery area and a significant proportion of older people are either lacking the digital skills or do not have an internet connection. According to the Office of National Statistics 36% (4.2 million) people age 65+ are offline: lapsed or never users.

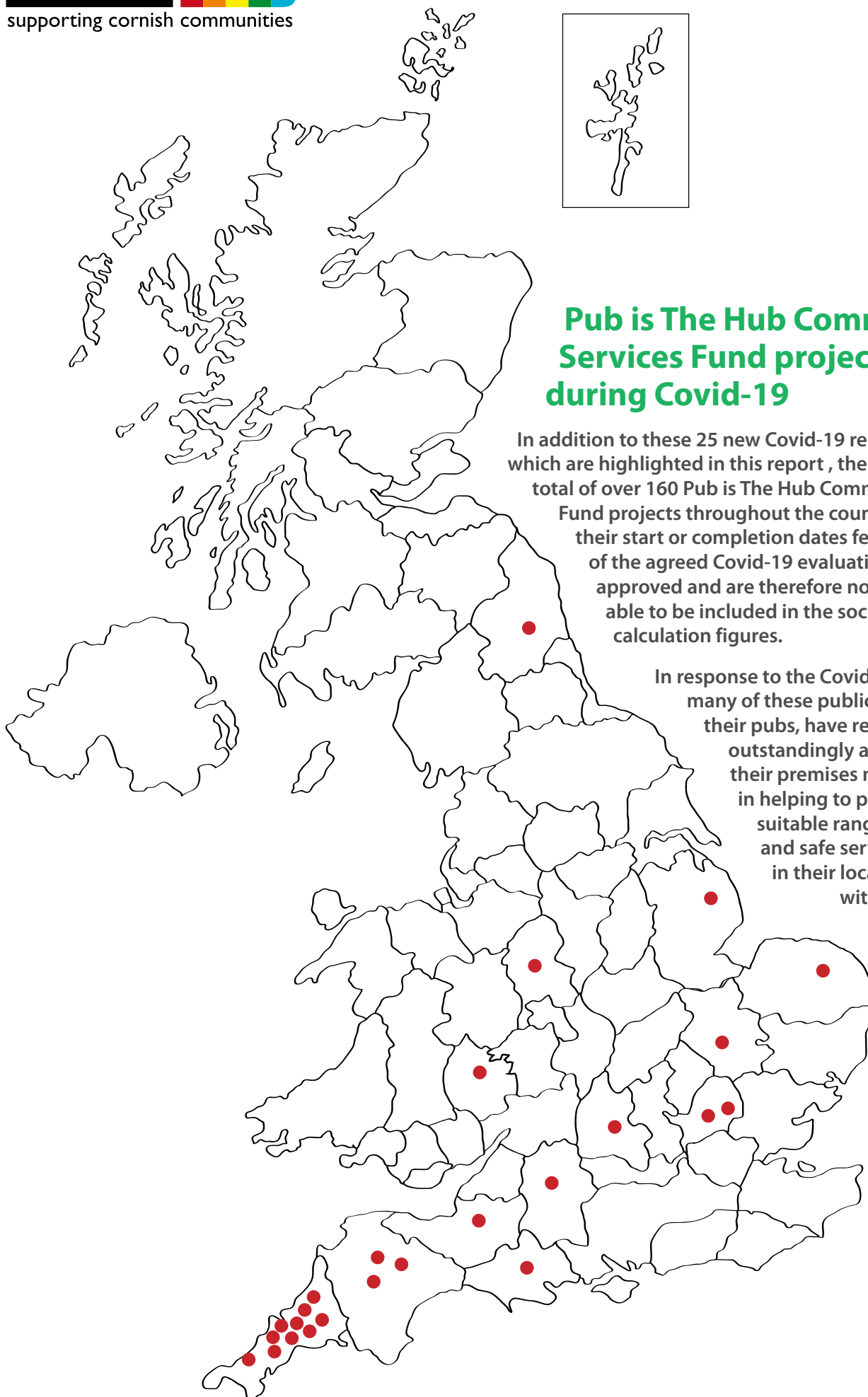
The restrictions presented by the national lockdown were considered an opportunity for PiTH to digitise a lot of their processes which had previously been paper based. From the point of view of those working at PiTH who process and advance applications for approval this opportunity actually made their work more efficient, but decisions also had to be made more quickly, which was advantageous to publicans who wanted to get their projects up and running.

A real challenge, in the main part for the regional advisors, was the sudden lack of personal interaction with publicans to really get a sense of the projects' impact, advise them on suitable ideas or adaptations of pre-existing ideas and support them with their applications. This was undertaken via the telephone and email, which is how many grant funders work in the wider sector, but the face to face approach illustrates the backgrounds and local knowledge of the vast majority of PiTH regional advisors.

Despite the many challenges imposed, the first 12 projects were initially able to be assessed, approved and opened during the first lockdown period (i.e. from March to July 2020) and these provided the initial data for evaluation. Subsequently, a further 13 projects were also inspired during the first lockdown, but were completed and opened shortly after the reopening of pubs from July 2020 as these had required a longer project period due to size and contractor/parts availability or normal planning regulations. These provided further data for a second phase of evaluation i.e. 25 in total.

National projects have continued ever since the reopening of pubs and the total number of Community Services Fund projects supported since its original inception is currently over 160, with expressions of interest and projects committed on many more.

- **The first** 12 Community Services Fund/Covid-19 projects were carried out in rural regions throughout the country, from Lincolnshire, Cornwall, Northumberland, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Herefordshire (9 counties).
- The projects comprised 6 village stores, 2 community cafés, 1 bakery, 1 IT hub, 3 community/garden areas (13 services/activities in total).
- **The second** tranche of 13 projects were completed in the four regions of Staffordshire, Cornwall, Dorset and Devon and comprised 2 village stores, 3 IT hubs, 6 community/garden areas, 2 libraries and 1 community workshop (14 services and activities in total).
- The total population supported by the 25 projects is 14,472 residents. (The current total population supported by the Community Services Fund since inception is in excess of 150,000 residents).
- The Community Services Fund funding for the 25 projects inspired during the first Covid-19 lockdown was £75,000 - but supported a total cost of the projects completed of £147,000 following additional leveraged support.



Pub is The Hub Community Services Fund projects during Covid-19

In addition to these 25 new Covid-19 related projects which are highlighted in this report, there are also a total of over 160 Pub is The Hub Community Services Fund projects throughout the country. However, their start or completion dates fell outside of the agreed Covid-19 evaluation period approved and are therefore not currently able to be included in the social value calculation figures.

In response to the Covid-19 lockdown many of these publicans, with their pubs, have responded outstandingly and adapted their premises magnificently in helping to provide a suitable range of accessible and safe services provision in their local areas with continued support for local suppliers.

Feedback from Publicans

Projects support pubs' viability

The main types of projects that were funded and delivered during March - July were adapting food service to takeaway or home delivery and farm shops/ village stores. Regional advisors recognised this as an identified need from rural residents, particularly in the 65+ age group, who were staying closer to home and not wanting to travel far. Proactive publicans reacted to this behaviour change by opening or expanding the types of services that responded to this need.

When the first lockdown was announced many publicans rose to the challenge. They were often one of the first in the community to respond to the crisis, recognising the issues and challenges now facing their local area. Rapidly responding in a practical, effective, efficient and inclusive manner, going above and beyond all whilst trying to process and respond to the stark reality of how the pandemic would impact on their own businesses and livelihoods.

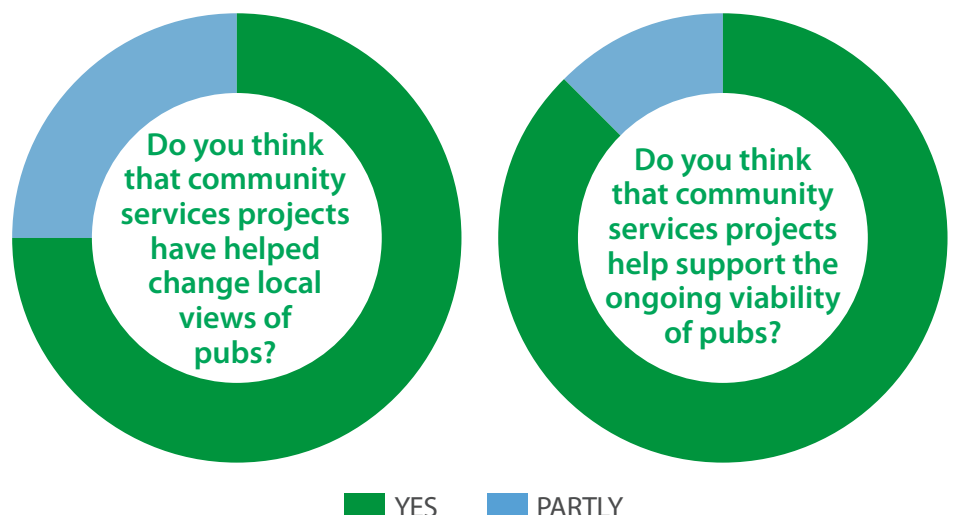
Offering community-based services was never envisaged as a replacement for the normal business of pubs.

More that they were an additional, complementary diversification that would add social as well as economic benefit in the long term alongside appropriate help and support from Government and the wider pub industry.

The Ploughshare, a community owned pub in Beeston, Norfolk, with a pre existing PiTH funded project (not a Covid-19 response project) stated that the shop was now becoming a 'permanent feature of their business'. The Horse and Groom in Tunstead, Norfolk, again with a pre existing PiTH funded project (not a Covid-19 response project), noted that they had 'definitely seen a number of new faces' since the introduction of their new services during lockdown.



Feedback (right) from publicans supports findings from interviews with all of the regional advisors that community service/amenity projects help support the ongoing viability of pubs and enhance the perception of the pub locally.



Insights from PiTH's Regional Advisors

Through June and July, each of Pub is The Hub's (PiTH) regional advisors completed a survey as well as being telephone interviewed. There is an incredible amount of industry experience represented by this dedicated group – trade director of a brewery, running/owning pubs, regional chair of the British Institute of Innkeeping, member of the National Executive of the National Federation of Licensed Vintners, National Pubwatch, brewery business development managers, chartered surveyors, and a national sales director. Many described wanting to give back to an industry or profession that they had spent their working lives in and how that they believed in the positive role pubs play in society when businesses are run with acuity and social purpose by a good publican.

It was clear during the interviews that their advisory role is very hands-on and relationship focused. There was an obvious challenge in engaging with publicans if it could not be carried out face to face. Most successful lockdown projects were initiated pre-Covid – in that a relationship had already been established between businesses and PiTH. This helped to expedite the process of approval and investigating the viability of projects and the pubs involved.

One of the points emphasised by nearly all regional advisors was that funding from the Community Services Fund was not there to prop up a failing business. Although the Community Services Fund is a fund of last resort it is certainly not meant for businesses that are not viable. It was fascinating to hear how these experienced people assessed a pub's viability when they were able to visit in person – from the appearance of fridges, to the notice boards, speaking with customers, taking a walk around the village and speaking to local people and businesses.

How then in lockdown did regional advisors satisfy the need for assurance that pubs applying to the fund were sustainable businesses? To lessen the risk of unsuitable projects, regional advisors turned to internet sleuthing – researching online, checking photographs and Google Earth, looking through Facebook and social media to see if publicans had an established relationship with the communities they served and checking financial status.

Letters/emails of support including parish councils remain an integral part of the application process and in reviewing the numerous messages of support it is apparent that publicans are working with local leaders and residents as well as third sector organisations to support the most vulnerable in their community but to also help contribute to a sense of normality.

...Any support given to the owners of the pub to start up this venture is not just supporting them but will be supporting the whole village, especially our elderly residents...

...the landlady had already established an ethos of embracing the community before the 'plague' shutdown. Since then, she has been providing a service of prepared and delivered food and provisions...

...Given the current challenges any enhancement in outside space would be of benefit...

It was recognised that some projects which were in the early stages prior to March 20th were in "suspended animation" and a few were not possible during the national lockdown period. Many projects were obviously reliant on the ability to access the pub building and the physical reality of pub spaces was a limiting factor and during the interview period many publicans were naturally worried about their future responsibilities to manage social distancing.

Case Study: The Star Inn, Harbottle, Northumberland (Freehold)

Village Store, Community Café, Games Room, Woodfired Bakery

The Star Inn is the only pub in the village of Harbottle and until August of 2019, had been run by the same family for over 40 years. The pub was built as a coaching inn about 200 years ago and so has a range of substantial but mostly derelict outbuildings around a courtyard.

In August 2019, Phil and Karen Wilkinson, who already knew the village, bought the freehold of the pub and started refurbishing it whilst also upgrading its customer facilities.

The previous owners of the pub had, for many years, run a newspaper delivery round to service the village and the surrounding farms and villages. The owners wanted to retain this service and develop it further by creating a small village shop.

With support from PiTH a lean-to building at the rear of the pub was refurbished to provide newspaper and magazine displays, shelving and racking for household goods, food and drinks, refrigerated storage and displays for tourist information.

With the shop in place, Phil and Karen were very quickly able to react to the first Covid-19 lockdown crisis by expanding the range of produce they sold. They teamed up with a local butcher and dairy, both who had lost many of their usual customers, by providing an outlet for their produce within Harbottle and the surrounding area including remote farms who were starting the lambing season. During lockdown, Karen and Phil offered a free delivery service within the area and continue to do so for elderly customers or those self-isolating.

Karen said: "When we heard that one of the neighbouring farms was expecting to deliver 4,000 lambs over the next few weeks we knew we had to help these time-pressed farms to provide the daily essentials that they needed."

With a stand-alone building for a wood fired bakery oven in development with help from PiTH's Community Services Fund, the next intent is to include a takeaway service for their remote village, alongside their sales of beers from a micro-brewery.

Karen said: "With the pub closed, we have been able to accelerate some of our plans and the pizza oven was top of the list. There is nothing like this nearby and we are surrounded by locals looking for good food, something a bit different. Our aim is to provide delicious hot and cold food a few days each week to meet demand."

She added: "Bringing this lovely pub back to life and expanding its services has been a true labour of love and we are bowled over by the support from our community".

The publicans worked with PiTH's regional advisor Nigel Williams to create a hub of services around the pub's old courtyard. Nigel said: "Anything Karen does at The Star is done with such enthusiasm and energy. They built the bakery oven whilst also tackling major refurbishment work inside the pub and in their private accommodation above the pub, as well as running the shop and delivering shopping around the community".

The Star was nominated for a Hospitality Lockdown Hero Award in The Best Community Initiative category - a campaign which honours pubs that have gone the extra mile to support their community during lockdown. The shortlisted pubs were recognised for uplifting the spirits of those around them and putting a smile on the faces of those in need.



Case Study: The Green Man, Scamblesby, Lincolnshire

Village Store

Green Man in Scamblesby near Louth opened a permanent village shop with the support of Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund, the idea was a result of the Covid-19 shutdown in March.

Pub owner Richard Bradley explains: "While we were closed during lockdown, I realised that the villagers and surrounding area would benefit from having a village shop. I came across PiTH's work following a search online for support available for village pubs. We had amazing support from Dave Allan the regional advisor with PiTH and, following our application, our grant was approved within days. From enquiring to the point of opening the shop, it only took six weeks."

The village shop is situated in an old storeroom next to the pub with its own separate entrance and is open from 8.30am to 5.30pm from Tuesday to Saturday and from 12 midday to 5pm on Sunday. Once restrictions are lifted anyone visiting the pub in the evening can also buy anything they need from the shop. It has also provided employment opportunities for two local people.

The shop sells newspapers, fresh bread and a wide range of locally sourced produce including Myers Farm Eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables from Shaws in Louth, meat from Wards Butchers in Sleaford, Saints and Sinners Preserves as well as a full range of grocery essentials.

Richard and his business partner, Charles Nickerson, purchased the pub in September 2019 after it had been closed for 12 months.

They spent three months completely refurbishing it and re-opened again in December 2019 with pub manager Jade Dillon at the helm, only to be closed again just three months later due to Covid.

Richard continued: "The Green Man had not been fully open for three years by the time we purchased the pub and it had lost its place at the heart of the village. When we re-opened at Christmas, we hosted the village choir and Christmas carol concert in a packed-out pub with many smiling faces. It was heart-breaking to have to shut the doors again.

"We are thrilled to be up and running again and with the addition of the shop we aim to be the hub of the village once again."

Dave said: "Richard, Charles and Jade have worked their socks off to get this fantastic new service open for local residents as well as tourists visiting and staying in the area. We wish them all the success they deserve."





Publicans' Learning Curves

In speaking with publicans, pub managers and team members it was clear that one of the key elements in a successful Community Services Fund project is the flexibility and adaptability of the people involved. Applying practical skills and reacting swiftly to identified needs, meant changing the emphasis of existing services. Converting food service to takeaway provision was not as straightforward as it may sound and learning about managing timelines and how to pack and keep food warm for delivery was a steep learning curve.

It is also notable how publicans offering a community collection or larder were aware of ensuring that people's dignity in needing help during the lockdown was recognised and possible stigma reduced by the anonymity of a community fridge. People's anxieties were addressed in other ways such as 'offering contactless shopping' which allowed people to order, pay and collect with no contact.

Digital Skills Development needed

It was observed by a number of regional advisors that a lack of digital skills was noticeable with some publicans and that this was a definite barrier to their long-term sustainability. The advantages of having a digital presence was certainly apparent in publicity and marketing terms but also in demonstrating community involvement and genuine engagement with local people. The Lodge, Tuttonham, Norfolk used a regular online 'live' video tour of their shop which allowed residents to see the range of goods available from the comfort of their own home.

We recommend publicans, pub-owning organisations, brewers and other owners and funders recognise digital adaptiveness as an essential part of a publican's skillset, and support programmes that give them confidence and skills.

We also believe, as many of PiTH's regional advisors do, that the British Institute of Innkeeping, for example, provide considerable advice about adapting business practices to meet restrictions so that, for example, takeaway or home food delivery can be incorporated for disadvantaged groups such as people aged 65+, young families and those without transport.

"Sourcing produce and running the shop and the takeaway - taking the food orders, managing the payment process (all by phone), cooking the meals and then delivering them was a daunting experience, but it was and will continue to be needed and if the pub is to remain in business... no other choice".

Publican feedback during lockdown

"It was a huge learning curve due to the uniqueness of the situation. We faced challenges unheard of in 'normal'/pre covid times. Early loss of furloughed staff hugely impacted on the workload of the two remaining staff"

Publican feedback during lockdown



Case Study: The Ferry Inn, Stokesby, Norfolk

Village Store

Local residents of Stokesby near Great Yarmouth in Norfolk can skip the six-mile round trip to the nearby town for essential groceries since their local, The Ferry Inn, opened a permanent shop in the pub.

Alison Brewster and her family who run the Adnams-owned waterside pub came up with the idea after the village shop closed over two years ago and the lack of essential local service provision was increasingly impacting negatively on local community life. PiTH supported the venture with advice and a grant towards the cost.

The Ferry Inn Village Shop opened in May 2020 with strict Covid-19 rules in place with Perspex around the shop counter, social distancing for waiting customers, and a one-in one-out policy. The shop is situated inside the pub in, what used to be an underused pool room. It has a separate entrance so it can be separate from the pub.

The shop has opened daily from 11am to 4pm and will stock all the basic essential groceries, as well as Alison's freshly baked breads and her famous homemade cakes and pastries.

During the lockdown Alison and her family have raised £400 for the NHS by giving away beer and cider on the 75th Anniversary of VE Day. Locals queued two metres apart with their own containers to collect their lockdown 'rations'.

The family have also been delivering groceries free of charge to the community and for the most vulnerable in the village, collecting their shopping from the supermarket, along with supplying takeaways and homemade cakes.

Alison commented: "When the village shop closed it meant that local residents and visitors along the river had to leave the area for basic provisions. Our pool room was sitting empty for most of the time, so the conversion to a retail space seemed like the perfect solution for everyone. We are really grateful to PiTH for their ideas and financial support to get the project underway."

Terry Stork who is the advisor for PiTH added: "Alison and her family have worked really hard in this venture during a very difficult period for the pub, while still finding time to help local people and raise money for charity. We hope that the shop is a great success in promoting local business and supporting Stokesby's economy well after lockdown has ended".

Social Value of Pubs - testimonials on how pubs and publicans made a social difference during the Covid-19 pandemic

"You have been such a huge help and support to so many others these last few months."

"Don't know what we would have done without you."

"They say every village needs its centre. You are without doubt 'the centre' of our village. I don't know what we would have done without you both over these last few months. Not only is the pub the star...you are both stars..."

"How lucky we are to have our amazing community hub."

"The Star has been such a star for the local area during lockdown... keeping us all going."

"Thank you for keeping us safe and fed during lockdown."

"Your shop is brilliant...you have been my lifeline... well done to you all."

"Such an amazing thing you are doing for the community... an amazing service you are providing to keep them near home and safe."

"Thank you for being so responsive to this most strangest and complex of times.."

"It is now so clear what a key part of the community the pub is."

"Well done to you all over the last couple of months, there are many vulnerable people out there that are very grateful to you."

"Your grocery home delivery service is becoming such a vital service for so many, thank you."

"Thank you, I haven't been in a supermarket since lockdown began and won't as long as your shop is open! Great service for locals."

The Power of Partnership Working

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, publicans looked at what more their business could offer to their local community in meeting basic needs. With the onset of the national lockdown it was very much a case of going back to basics or the bottom rung of Maslow's Hierarchy of Need - taking care of people's physiological needs of food, water, warmth and rest. In a sense these basic needs are what all pubs and inns address and have done for millennia – to feed and warm people and offer them shelter.

It may seem a nostalgic and sentimental viewpoint, and it might be, but it does not make it any less true that in rural villages and smaller settlements, with the reduction of other services and amenities, **pubs are the hub in their community in a way that denies the ever-strengthening trends of globalisation or centralisation.**

Collaborative Approach

However, during Covid-19, publicans did not act alone. Many who provided hot meals for home delivery did so by working with local third sector organisations and mutual support groups. This is where Community Services Fund projects excel; in remembering that leveraging in the right people to deliver the right element of a project is where success lies. It is not for publicans to become experts in social care but to work with the right partners who can help, and play to their strengths. Pub is The Hub's (PiTH) regional advisors recognise this and have supported publicans and licensees to forge collaborative relationships with library services, training providers, church groups, and local third sector organisations as well as local authorities throughout the history of the Community Services Fund.

"I personally have felt hugely supported. I've enjoyed meals delivered, fresh bread, shopping delivered, and the community feeling they have generated has been outstanding. The village social media page has never been busier, and I really feel that a greater sense of community has evolved purely down to the pub's hard work and wonderful selfless commitment to help all of us."

Customer feedback

"There are a number of organisations who have delivered services across the area like the 'Good Neighbour Project' and the pub has reached out to support them in anyway they can, especially early in the pandemic when access to supplies and resources was difficult."

Community representative feedback

A number of publicans we spoke to, for example the Gaggles of Geese at Buckland Newton, Dorset, worked with Covid-19 Mutual Aid support groups to ensure the most vulnerable ate or got food delivered. These very localised groups had the knowledge of where the most vulnerable lived and by coordinating with local pubs were able to provide support more quickly than centralised schemes.

The Star Inn at Harbottle, Northumberland is another good example, actively trying to help essential service delivery in their local community. They volunteered their help in the Northumberland National Park Neighbours initiative, providing support (through essential food supply and provisions) to vulnerable and isolated residents of the park during Covid-19.

The response of publicans and the working relationships they established or harnessed where they already existed, fully supports and demonstrates the role pubs can play in meeting the challenges for health and social care services in rural settings. It is important that policy makers understand the role pubs can offer in helping ease loneliness and social exclusion and also how publicans can help contribute to building resilience in rural communities as well as delivering vital services.

Pandemic's Impact on Wellbeing

It is fair to state that everyone will have struggled at some point since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, dealing with the new circumstances and challenges that the virus has thrown up.

It was apparent that many publicans were worried about their staff and communities as well as their own economic future and it was concerning to hear how physically and mentally tired many of the grant holders were. There was a lot of anxiety expressed about sustainability from regional advisors and publicans - especially around rent arrears. While there was a pause for many pubs, breweries and pub companies during lockdown there was an anticipation that the relief would only last so long. The length and depth of Government support such as the National Furlough Scheme was also a cause of concern as publicans wanted to keep loyal staff.

The holistic approach from PiTH encourages diversification to support sustainability and also uses the support and information available to support businesses. Regional advisors recommended to grant holders to contact and use the free support available from the British Institute of Innkeeping (BII) – one year's membership is included with being a recipient of the Community Services Fund. During lockdown the information the BII provided concerned the Furlough Scheme and how to apply for business relief. Most pub groups and breweries were excellent in providing information and support to their publicans but for freehouses and other independents, having advice from organisations like the BII, the British Beer & Pub Association and UKHospitality has been vital.

Having advisors who clearly understood the business side is a positive to publicans and is certainly one of the key strengths of PiTH as an organisation. The advice received is high quality and there is a strong use of signposting to other key best-in-class organisations. It is clear that the regional advisors care about the ongoing viability of the pub trade and also about the wellbeing of the people working within it. It is strongly recognised that the industry is under an acute amount of pressure currently and the staff team at PiTH is mindful of the evolving and sensitive needs of publicans.

"The team were absolutely wonderful with their practical support and compassion whilst my husband was in hospital with Covid. I never felt alone - thank you."

"We had to furlough all of our staff so did the first 4 weeks just as a couple working 20 hour days to keep up with demand! We had no 'lockdown' ourselves and have come out the other side exhausted!"

"...must be prepared to diversify if you want to survive, I felt completely overwhelmed at times but you've just got to keep going, there will always be the one person who is relying on you..."



Case Study: St John Inn, St John, Torpoint, Cornwall (Freehold)

Village Store

St John Inn opened a village shop to support the local community during lockdown with amazing speed.

A standalone shed was built next to the pub, in the car park, and initially opened with stocks of bakery and dairy essentials with plans to build a wider range of groceries and other locally sourced goods. The shop was unmanned during the Covid-19 lockdown so that customers could observe social distancing rules and operated a cash-only honesty box system. Items were priced in multiples of 10p to make cash payments easier.

Owners Gill and Rob Berry had approached PiTH earlier in the year for help and advice and successfully applied for a grant from the Community Services Fund to support their costs. As the Covid-19 national lockdown was announced Gill and Rob accelerated their three-month project into a matter of weeks, sharing progress for their community on their Facebook and web pages.

Gill explains: "We were fortunate in that we had most of the materials we needed to build the shop as the lockdown was announced. We worked hard during the early weeks in a stifling heatwave and managed to open with some very basic essentials. When we came out of lockdown the shop continued to serve the village with a wider range of stock and complemented our pub business."

Gill and Rob Berry purchased the St John Inn freehold in 2017 and have built back trade, after a five-year closure, to bring it back as the main hub of the village. They serve real ales and home cooked food (Friday nights only), run regular events such as quizzes and beer tastings, have a large garden and a small campsite for visitors.

St John's Inn pride themselves on being an old fashioned pub, and not a restaurant.

"Gill and Rob pulled out all the stops to get this essential village service up and running with such a quick turnaround."

Beyond Covid they hope that this community hub will be a social meeting place to help fight isolation and loneliness."

Pub is The Hub advisor,
Reg Clarke





Case Study: The Brewery Tap, Furneux Pelham, Hertfordshire

Village Store

A Hertfordshire pub that set up a pop-up shop when Covid-19 hit in March successfully went onto open a permanent shop three months later, thanks to local support and Pub is The Hub's Community Service's Fund.

The Brewery Tap, owned and run by Elizabeth (Ebe) Bonner and her daughter Lucy, transferred the temporary pop-up shop they had established in the dining room of the pub to the permanent outbuilding adjacent to the pub at the end of June. Furneux Stores shop and deli is open on Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 3pm and on Saturday from 11am to 3pm serving a wide range of locally sourced Hertfordshire foods.

When the pubs were closed in March because of the Covid-19 pandemic, Ebe and Lucy came up with the idea of turning the dining area into a pop-up shop filled with essential goods from local suppliers. It then developed into an online and telephone grocery ordering service with more than 200 deliveries a week to those who were elderly or isolating.

The success of the shop, combined with the planned closure (not Covid-related) of the nearest village store in Braughing, meant that Ebe and Lucy soon realised that a permanent village shop was a much needed service, not just for essential provisions but also, and equally important, it provided a social opportunity for all age groups across the community.

Ebe and Lucy decided to replace two old sheds behind the kitchen with a new purpose-made shop unit. Their commitment and the true potential of this project has become increasingly acknowledged and recognised. They received funding support from the parish council; investment through an online Crowdfunding project with support from the Hertfordshire LEP, as well as adding their own investment. PiTH itself also provided a grant to support the development of the new shop.

Ebe said: "We bought the only remaining pub in our small, rural village in December 2018 and quickly turned it round to provide a hub for our community, as well as putting it on the map as a destination pub. Pre-Covid, we hosted a monthly book club, knit and stitch group and breakfast on Friday mornings for school mums that turned into an impromptu toddler group. We were fully booked for Mothering Sunday and then Covid-19 struck.

"When we opened the pop-up shop, customers were delighted to have somewhere they could go that provided a safe environment that was friendly and accessible. We attracted custom from not only all the local villages but towns too. We are enormously grateful to PiTH for the faith they have shown in our project that has inspired support from our parish council and local people."

Buoyed by the success of the shop, Ebe and Lucy applied for further support from PiTH, the parish council and another Crowdfunder project to support the costs for the village community playground.

The new equipment includes swings, a slide and a climbing frame and is always accessible to anyone from the village during the day. Children can use the equipment only with supervision from a parent or carer.

Jeremy English, advisor from PiTH commented: "The community spirit already whipped up by Ebe and Lucy in the area pre-Covid has meant that these two inspired ventures were always bound to be a success. Their pub is truly the hub for their village and we wish them well."

Impact of the First Tranche of Community Services Fund Projects during lockdown (March - July 2020)

These 12 Community Services Fund/Covid-19 projects were carried out in rural regions throughout the country, from Lincolnshire, Cornwall, Northumberland, Hertfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Oxfordshire,

Wiltshire and Herefordshire (9 counties). The projects comprised 6 village stores, 2 community cafés/takeaways, 1 bakery, 1 IT hub, 3 community/garden areas (13 services/activities in total).



Number of Community Service Projects completed
March 20th - July 4th 2020.

£2,876



Average grant received from
PiTH's Community Services Fund
March 20th - July 4th 2020



Indicative Social Value Calculation
of the Community Services Fund
March - July 2020 calculated using
the Social Value Engine.

A further 13 projects were initiated during the pandemic (See Page 11).

**THE SOCIAL VALUE IS
£9.24 PER £1 SPENT**

Social Value Calculation for Second Tranche of 13 additional Community Services Fund grant projects

These 13 projects were completed in the 4 regions of Staffordshire, Cornwall, Dorset and Devon and comprised 2 village stores, 3 community IT hubs, 6 community/garden areas, 2 libraries and 1 community workshop (14 services and activities).

The range of projects in this cohort were more varied than in the initial phase - this is thought to be as a result of some of the restrictions of the first national

lockdown after lifting but also that publicans and PiTH were nimble to adapt and be creative in response to widening opportunities. It should also be noted that due to fewer restrictions on people's movement and choices, the deflators used in the Social Value Calculator would reflect this and the Social Value would be less than in the national lockdown period. The Social Value return still remains highly positive and demonstrates the key role of pubs in these additional communities.



Number of projects funded
by the Community Services Fund
which were initiated during
the first lockdown but completed
shortly after the reopening

£2,769



Average grant received from PiTH's
Community Services Fund



Indicative Social Value Calculation
of the Community Services Fund
subsequently calculated using the
Social Value Engine.

**THE SOCIAL VALUE IS
£8.98 PER £1 SPENT**

Analysis of the Social Value Return

We looked at four key outcomes that all 25 of the PiTH funded projects achieved. These positive outcomes were the results of collective working, deep engagement with their local communities and the passion and skills of publicans.

In response to difficult operating constraints publicans were quick to work with local organisations and groups to reach those who were the most vulnerable and provide a focal point in very rural villages and hamlets to centre activity and communication.

It is also worth noting that these projects delivered exceptional social value in part because they were relatively low cost in comparison with the typical rural delivery of social projects. The Social Value Calculation is a very healthy return and from comparison with similar projects demonstrates an excellent return on investment in creating social benefits.

For the purposes of the first social value calculation we looked at the following:

Output	Outcome	Financial Proxy	Source
Publicans delivering a range of projects responding to community need during Covid-19 National Lockdown	More cohesive communities, tackling social needs	Initiatives to be taken to support older, disabled and vulnerable people to build stronger community networks (e.g. befriending schemes, digital inclusion clubs)	National TOMS Framework
Publicans working with a range of local organisations such as Mutual Support Groups, Church groups, Red Cross.	Greater sense of cohesion and cooperation across different sectors	Cost of time spent collaborating	The Carmichael Centre
Providing a localised response	Improved capacity for local solutions to local problems	Average size of a charitable donation in the UK	UK Civil Society Almanac, What are the Main Trends in Charitable Giving?
Providing support to the local community, acting as a central point for support and action, checking on welfare and supporting communication	Reduced social isolation for community members.	Annual value attributed to talking to neighbours more frequently	Ducane Housing Association, Value for Money Statement

Summary

Whilst writing this summary, England has just re-entered further periods of national lockdowns where pubs have been forced to close, initially for two months. Just prior to this the UK Government had ruled that pubs had to be closed by 10pm. It is fair to say that the whole hospitality industry is collectively facing the most challenging and changing operating environment in a century or more. There is justified concern about how the industry can weather the storm. Trade bodies are calling for a sector specific financial support package for pubs to see the industry through the long winter as many local pubs are small individual businesses.

Despite the dismal sales data, The CGA Research Company (Curren Gooden Associates) Director of Client Services, Jonny Jones, said the industry may still make up lost ground. "Whilst there is no doubt that the new regulations have dealt a further blow to operators and sales have been most significantly impacted... One of the great things about the whole hospitality industry is the ability to quickly innovate and adapt to new market conditions and customer demands," he said.

In considering how some publicans responded to the crisis in the earlier part of 2020 and 2021 the innovations and adaptations made by Community Services Fund recipients are an excellent example of this ability to respond to new conditions. Inevitably, the loss of sales due to lockdowns will not be covered wholesale by the operation of farm shops, cafés, takeaways and home deliveries and more data is needed to assess the economic impact of these activities long term.



Social Impact supports sustainability

However, the important social impact of publicans' responses to the community needs of the people and the places they are located in really cements the role of pubs in these communities and will support their viability and sustainability in the long term alongside appropriate government support in the short term.

It is apparent that the Community Services Fund, as administered through Pub is The Hub, has a vital supportive and collective role to play, especially as some publicans may have grown more risk adverse due to their recent experiences, in demonstrating and funding

projects that deliver a significant social value as well as increasing the ability of a business to diversify its services.

It is hoped that later in 2021 continued evaluation of the social value of the whole Community Services Fund will again become possible, with a focus on all projects delivered without the restrictions of Covid-19 in place. As showcased earlier in this report Pub is The Hub has funded a vast range of projects and activities since 2013 and it is important that the social value of these projects is captured to demonstrate to funders and policy makers the central role that many pubs and good publicans can play in supporting rural communities in the future.

Emerging General Recommendations

Throughout the evaluation a number of themes became apparent to us that we feel are worth further consideration and action:

- Both rural and appropriate urban pubs have been found to offer local solutions to a broad range of social policy priorities and deliver projects which also have a large social impact for a relatively low-cost investment. However many may also require the ongoing supply of owners or trade associations advice and support to achieve their objectives.
- Local authorities and other national bodies could prioritise working with pubs and publicans to create connections with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector by supporting networks for local collaboration to be established.
- There needs to be greater support for independent publicans as a small business to build their digital skills and clearer information/toolkits on new opportunities and the practicalities of adopting a supportive network.
- Local and national policy makers should understand that social policy and enterprise policy can be very closely related and particularly in rural communities, pubs can offer a great collective resource to help tackle some of the most pressing challenges such as an ageing population, the reduction of rural services and isolation and loneliness issues.
- There may need to be a clearer distinction made between pubs and the wider hospitality industry. The value of a pub's role in their local area and communities in a wider social context may risk being lost if they are considered the same as branded restaurants and hotels. **(See appendix for Pub Numbers, Locations and Styles of Tenure page 28).**
- The importance of simple local solutions to local problems should not be overlooked. Local publicans by working with their communities can design their own low cost solutions, often through diversification if initial grant advice, project guidance and information support is there for them.
- **Further ongoing funding resources through a services diversification fund could allow for more pubs and publicans on reopening to create additional local services and amenities which would support future economic and social recovery priorities in their local neighbourhoods and community.**



Appendix 1

Pub Numbers, Locations and Styles of Tenure

Pubs and the people who run them in the UK have always been at the heart of their communities. The following is an analysis of the July 2020 data pub numbers, types of operation and location. Courtesy of CGA Strategy and Research Company

LOCATIONS				
Pubs	Approx. Total Nos.	Rural	Suburban	High Street
All GB pubs excl. Northern Ireland	48,753	16,168	16,985	15,600
England pubs	41,655	13,407	14,781	13,467
Scotland pubs	4,083	1,250	1,363	1,470
Wales pubs	3,015	1,511	841	663

Approx. Tenure Numbers (England)	Approx. Total Nos.	Independent Free Houses	Business Tenancies	Managed Houses
Rural Pubs	13,407	5,441 (41%)	6,085 (45%)	1,881 (14%)
		Free House + Tenancies = 11,526 (86%)		
Suburban Pubs	14,781	4,147 (28%)	7,136 (48%)	3,498 (24%)
High Street	13,467	5,648 (42%)	3,713 (28%)	4,106 (30%)
Total England	41,655	15,236 (37%)	16,934 (41%)	9,485 (23%)

Note all % have been rounded

Rural pub numbers are particularly interesting with free houses and tenancies which are often family or independent publicans business, comprising 86% of the total.

In addition to the estimated 41,655 pubs as on-licensed premises today (On Trade), there are a further 74,408 competitive licensed premises (ie restaurants, hotels and individual bars) producing a total of 116,063 on-licensed premises ('On Trade').

Sales in supermarkets and off-licences are referred to as off licensed premises ('Off Trade').

Appendix 2

Following contributions and collaboration with The Campaign to End Loneliness, Loughborough University and Heineken. The Open Arms report shows the positive role publicans can play in tackling loneliness.



Pubs are important social hubs that help to tackle loneliness and social isolation in local communities, a new report, commissioned by The Campaign to End Loneliness in collaboration with Heineken and Loughborough University has reinforced.

Among key findings in The Open Arms Report are that 64% of respondents* felt that the pub is one of the main places that people living in the local area can socialise. The research, conducted by Loughborough University, also shows that 86% of those surveyed think that when a local pub closes the whole community can suffer, highlighting the key role pubs play in the UK in providing people, from all walks of life, with a space to come together for interaction and connection.

Social value of pubs

Dr Thomas Thurnell-Read, a senior lecturer at Loughborough University and author of the report, said: "The Open Arms Report was guided by the belief that pubs can, and often do, have a social value beyond their economic role. Pubs can be really important settings for social activities beyond the home and the workplace, a place where people can feel a connection with others."

He adds: "The report reveals that for many, going to the local pub is an opportunity to get out of the house and have a conversation. This social contact, and the sense of connection and community it provides, has been under threat during the Covid-19 pandemic, and protecting the social role of pubs is now more important than ever."

Other insights in the report include:

Just over three quarters (76%) of those surveyed said they felt the pub where they worked makes a positive contribution to the local community in connecting individuals, groups and communities in beneficial ways.

A conversation between regulars in a pub, or between a customer and a pub's member of staff, can go a considerable way to alleviate feelings of loneliness, even though it may last merely seconds or minutes. Older pub-goers, in particular, said the sociable and welcoming atmosphere of a pub gave them the chance to make friends and stay socially active.

Pubs are places that have an important social function in providing a space for different forms and levels of social interaction, including offering the opportunity to make new friendships. Going to a pub, particularly for older respondents, is not necessarily about drinking alcohol, but to have a hot drink or meal out.

Some of the most successful community focused pubs offer a diverse set of activities to help bring people together, with the most common being live music, quizzes and board games, as well as providing a meeting space for people in the local area to connect at different groups. Many also feature community noticeboards.

Skilled and experienced pub staff facilitate social interactions in the pub and help forge social linkages that might not otherwise find expression.

Pandemic has increased loneliness issue

Robin Hewings, director of campaigns, policy and research at the Campaign to End Loneliness said: "Loneliness has been a growing concern in our society in recent years, but the pandemic has brought the issue of loneliness into sharp relief. We've seen both older and younger people affected by feelings of loneliness.

ONS figures show that in 2020 more than 7.5 million people (30% of the UK population) said feelings of loneliness affected their well-being during lockdown."





“Loneliness has been a growing concern in our society in recent years, but the pandemic has brought the issue of loneliness into sharp relief.

We’ve seen both older and younger people affected by feelings of loneliness.”

Robin Hewings, director of campaigns, policy and research at the Campaign to End Loneliness

He adds: “Pubs are places, which particularly for older people, offer a safe and sociable space to meet other people. Importantly, this report has recommendations for how pubs can be even more welcoming places, for example through more accessible design.”

Report recommendations

Other report recommendations include encouraging publicans to reach out to collaborate with local community groups to help tackle the issue in their local area and more specific training and materials provided to help support publicans and their staff in addressing this key issue.

‘Brewing Good Cheer’ campaign helps tackle loneliness

The Open Arms Report has been released as part of Heineken’s annual ‘Brewing Good Cheer’ campaign which aims to help combat loneliness. The initiative usually sees Christmas lunches being held for hundreds of people in pubs across the country.

Instead, Heineken has been supporting its pubs, and the communities connected to them, by donating thousands of pounds to 100 pubs across the UK for them to support local charities.

Heineken colleagues have also been volunteering with projects which help lonely, isolated or vulnerable people by calling them on the phone.

Loneliness is critical issue

James Crampton, corporate affairs director at Heineken UK, said: “This year has been incredibly tough for so many people. Loneliness and isolation have affected many across the country and our annual ‘Brewing Good Cheer’ campaign is all about tackling that. To release this report as part of our activity to raise awareness of this critical issue is even more pertinent now.”

Pubs are places of connection

He adds: “Pubs are hubs of communities in every village, town and city. They’re so much more than just a place to have a pint – they’re a place to be with each other, and as soon as it is safe to do so, we cannot wait to welcome people back.”

Since 2019 Heineken UK has supported Pub is The Hub’s ‘Join Inn - Last Orders for Loneliness’ campaign. Find out more about our campaign here:

www.pubisthehub.org.uk/join-inn-last-orders-for-loneliness/

Read The Open Arms Report, including recommendations on how publicans can help tackle loneliness in their local areas.

*Research interviewees were people working in pubs and from across the pub industry. Focus groups were also conducted across the country in rural, suburban and urban areas, with an emphasis on people from older age groups as well as specific groups including members of the Caribbean community and people with learning difficulties.

The Open Arms Report was commissioned and carried out prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

Download the report at: **www.pubisthehub.org.uk/news/open-arms-new-report-shows-the-positive-role-publicans-can-play-in-tackling-loneliness/**

**“Today we have another
chance to do something that’s
never been done before!”**

John Bonham, Led Zeppelin



Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC) is an organisation dedicated to supporting and strengthening Cornwall's Communities to improve quality of life.

cornwallrcc.org.uk



Inspired by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales in 2001, Pub is The Hub operates as a 'not-for-profit' organisation dedicated to improving community services and activities from pubs.

pubisthehub.org.uk