

Saving the Village Local - How we did it and what are the lessons?



Martin Booth

Hudswell

- Rural village
- Population about 280 – 110 dwellings
- Working village – a few holiday homes
- 3 miles from Richmond
- One village hall one church and
- One pub!

We can get cut off in winter



Close to open moorland



The George and Dragon



Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Why did it close?

- The business was doing well!
- Classic credit crunch victims
- Bought the pub at the height of the property boom in 2007
- Borrowed most of the finance at a high interest rate
- Economic downturn hit many business in 2008
- Could not meet repayments and went bankrupt

After nine months

- No one had bought it
- The economy continued to founder
- Some of us thought “can we – the village, buy it and re-open it?”

What we did

- Formed an organisation – the Hudswell Community Pub Initiative
- Did some research into how we could raise the funds to buy it
- Secured offers of grant aid and other support
- Called public meetings to assess the support from the village

Public meeting in the Village Hall



What we did

- Made an offer to buy the Pub (July 09)
- Worked on a Prospectus
- Formed a Co-operative (a Community Benefit Society)
- Sought pledges to invest
- Worked on grant applications

What happened

- Offer to buy G and D for £209,950 accepted on the 28th October '09
- By end of November we had pledges to invest amounting to £150,000
- IPS registered 18th December
- Prospectus Launched 28th December

Launching the Prospectus



What happened

- Throughout January the funds rolled in
- As deadline of 5th Feb approached still £40,000 short
- Key Fund Yorkshire agreed to convert £20,000 loan to £20,000 equity purchase
- By the 7th Feb we had enough funds
- 17th February it was ours!

Where the money came from

- Investments from individual members £209,200
- Investment from Key Fund Yorkshire £20,000
- Rural Access to Opportunities Grant £50,000
- Cultivating Enterprise Grant £5,000
- Donations £1,600
- **TOTAL £285,800**

The power of community involvement.

When we bought it:

- 177 individuals had invested
- 78 from the village
- Board of 11 directors – put in a great deal of time and effort drawing on their various skills
- Many other members and supporters have helped

The power of community involvement



The power of community involvement



The power of community involvement

- Clearing the ½ acre of land to create 10 community allotments
- Stripping and French polishing donated pub furniture
- Painting and decorating the interior and exterior of the pub
- Project managing the refurbishment
- Fund raising and publicity



George and
Dragon
officially
opened by the
Foreign
Secretary,
William Hague
MP (a member
of HCP Ltd) on
the 12th June
2010

More than a pub

- A village shop selling basic supplies bread, milk eggs and some local crafts
- A small library
- Internet access for pub users
- Allotments growing fruit and veg, sometimes for the pub and shop
- An Apiary with bees making Hudswell Honey
- A community orchard
- An information exchange for the villagers and tourists

The Little Shop



Hudswell Community Pub Ltd



21/11/2017

Allotments and an orchard



Bee keeping



Six years on

- 205 members
- 8 board members
- Second tenant been in place for 18 months
- Undertook some structural repairs to the building and re-decorated
- Had a Royal Visit
- Been awarded the national CAMRA Pub of the Year Award

Sept 2015 the prince drops in for a pint







CAMRA Yorkshire Pub of the Year Award for 2016





Stuart Miller receiving the National Pub of the Year award from CAMRA

What are the keys of success?

- Having a committed team with a good combination of skills
- Lots of publicity – still ongoing
- A viable plan to buy and run the pub
- Commitment to working together
- Having a financial model to fit the times
- There are now more than 40 other community pubs formed as co-ops, so this model works!

The practicalities of running a pub and making it profitable

- Know what you want to achieve
- Have a plan to get there
- Choose a legal structure that works for you
- Chose a management model that fits
- Monitor progress

The co-operative model

- It symbolises the community effort
- Everyone who joins has a say and one vote
- Surpluses are reinvested or must be used to benefit the community
- We've paid interest of 1.5% - 3.5%
- Give you legal status and limited liability
- It as structure that attracts grant aid

The Tenant Model



The Tenant Model

- The licenced business is let to a tenant
- The lease clarifies responsibilities
- The lease sets the rent for a specified period (3 – 5 years)
- The profitability of the business is the tenant's responsibility
- The board advises and sets broad parameters

The George and Dragon is profitable because

- The tenant is incentivised to make a profit
- 200 + members and their friends and family are committed to supporting the pub
- People like the idea of a “community pub”

The board monitor progress through

- Regular meetings with the tenant
- Access to the tenants accounts
- We offer support for special activities
- The tenant seeks our advice

**Beer Festival August 2016, our best yet!
You are welcome to pay us a visit anytime**

