

# Funding boost for the great British pub

- Communities Secretary backs the great British pub this Christmas with a new £1.15 million fund
- New funding will benefit an estimated 100 communities to either own their local pub or benefit from new, pub-based community services and facilities
- Community backed pubs help to combat loneliness ahead of Christmas

Regulars across the country will be raising a toast to the Great British Pub this Christmas with over £1 million of new government money for community pubs, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced today (Saturday 21 December).

The funding will help an estimated 100 new groups to take ownership of and save their local or support their essential community services based in pubs in rural and remote areas.

Secretary of State for Communities Rt. Hon. Robert Jenrick said:

The Great British pub is one of the cornerstones of British life.

From the Rose and Crown, to the King's Arms, our pubs remain at the very heart of our cities, towns and villages.

This new funding will boost the number of community-owned pubs and pub-based community services. It will offer sustainability and create valuable new jobs in the process, both in our great pubs and within our great communities.

Pubs run by the community and for the community help bring people closer together. Importantly, they are a space for older, vulnerable and more isolated residents to access important local services and feel part of their communities.

The £1.15 million fund will support community pubs through two key programmes. £650,000 will be allocated to the second [More Than a Pub](#) programme.

More Than a Pub provides small grants and specialist advice for community groups at the start of their journey to community ownership. It also supports groups later in the process who require specialist professional advice with

larger grants and loans to help with business planning, conveyancing, architectural help or financial advice.

£500,000 will be allocated to Pub is The Hub to enable a range of projects providing new, pub-based community services from post offices and shops to libraries and allotments. This will increase the services available in rural and remote communities and help sustain pubs as community assets and businesses.

John Longden, Chief Executive of Pub is The Hub said:

We welcome the government's recognition of the wider social role that licensees, as small business owners, and their staff can play in supporting and providing additional services and activities to support their local communities.

Pubs run by good licensees are part of our national identity and can strengthen the fabric of all communities, particularly in rural areas where they support issues such as loneliness or social isolation.

Vidhya Alakeson, Chief Executive of Power to Change, said:

This additional investment from MHCLG is very welcome. Community controlled pubs are so valuable to the people who use them, offering a huge range of crucial services including lunch clubs for vulnerable people, training and development, gardening and cooking classes and parenting groups. Every penny counts in supporting this thriving, but fledgling, sector.

## **Case Study**

The Dog Inn at Belthorn near Blackburn has been supported by the Government supported More Than A Pub and Pub Is The Hub Programmes.

In the past, the village of Belthorn had over ten pubs, a shop, tearoom, chip shop, newsagent and community centre. But, by November 2015, all those community amenities had disappeared.

At the end of 2015, the residents of Belthorn took the collective step to bring the heart of the community back into the village via The Dog Inn by co-locating all the services and amenities that had long since disappeared.

The residents of Belthorn benefitted from a Pub is The Hub grant of £4,000 to create a community café, as well as helping the community to purchase equipment to make presentations in the community meeting room where village group meetings are now held. Work is also underway on a community garden and allotments by the pub.

As a result of the funding, the Belthorn now boasts a vibrant village committee, a history society group and a craft and chat group all of which meet regularly in The Dog Inn.

### **Note to Editors:**

- This new funding builds on a series of measures introduced by the Government to make sure that pubs remain a valuable national asset.
- Having already abolished the unpopular beer and alcohol duty escalators, cut business taxes for pubs and thousands of communities have taken advantage of the right to protect their locals from closure by listing them as assets of community value.
- The first More Than a Pub programme helped over 40 communities to take ownership of their local pub.
- The Keep It In The Community platform has identified over 4,000 assets of community value in England of which around half are pubs.
- Today's announcement follows latest Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures, highlighting the net gain of 320 pubs in the year to March – the first increase since 2009.

More than a Pub: The Community Pub Business Support Programme is a comprehensive package of business development support, advice, and loan and grant funding to help establish locally owned pubs in England that will contribute to the local community. Jointly funded by MHCLG and independent business charity Power to Change, Government support for More Than a Pub now totals £2.5 million. It is delivered by the Plunkett Foundation.

Pub is the Hub was set up in 2001 with the support of HRH the Prince of Wales to help improve community services and activities primarily in rural and remote areas. The organisation is staffed mostly by volunteers and works with pub licensees, local authorities, local communities and industry partners helping hundreds of pubs across the country provide a wide range of services and facilities for their local communities. The government has supported Pub is The Hub with over £1 million of funding since 2013.