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## COMMUNITY PUB CASE STUDY

# The Craufurd Arms Maidenhead

15 Gringer Hill, Maidenhead SL6 7LY

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### ABOUT THE CRAUFURD ARMS PUB

The Craufurd Arms is a free house located in Maidenhead, a large town in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Berkshire, on the River Thames.

The pub is prominently located on Gringer Hill, in a densely populated residential suburb, approximately one mile north of the town centre and mainline station.

Two years ago, The Craufurd Arms looked destined to become the latest pub to call last orders for the final time. It was put on

the market in October 2016, prompting the swift formation of a community action group among the regulars who were determined to save their local pub.

In December 2012 the Golden Harp pub in Furze Platt (situated a mile north of the Craufurd Arms) was closed and re-developed into a convenience store. Tesco had secured a 20-year lease on the property without consulting the community as at the time it was not a requirement to do so.

The Furze Platt Action Group (FPAG) was formed to lessen the impact of the development on the Furze Platt Triangle Conservation area in which the pub was situated. Meanwhile, the FPAG registered The Craufurd Arms as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) with the Borough Council and in August 2016 the Council received a 'Notice of Relevant Disposal' from the Wellington Pub Company Plc. Within a week the Craufurd Arms Community Group was formed with the aim of bringing the pub into community ownership.

### **FIRST STEPS**

The group applied for support from the More Than A Pub programme and received advice and guidance from a Plunkett Foundation Specialist Adviser. The group also received a £2,500 bursary which helped them to consult with the community in the early stages and to incorporate as a Community Benefit Society (The Craufurd Arms Society Ltd.)

A funded study visit was also arranged to the community owned Antwerp Arms pub in Tottenham. This generated an exchange of experience, information and good practice.

The Specialist Adviser reviewed the Society's Standard Mark Accreditation application for the Share Offer, which was awarded in February 2017. This meant that the group became eligible for the Big Society Capital Match Fund (£100,000) from the Community Shares Company.

Support was also received from:

- The local Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead branch of CAMRA, who offered support and advice.
- St Piran's School, who facilitated and hosted a Public Meeting for the group.
- Michael Beavan, of Our Community Enterprise Ltd, who registered the group's 'Right to Bid' on 28th September 2016 with the local Council.

Other support was also received from a wide cross section of local charities, societies and associations that the group consulted and worked with when developing the business plan and social impact matrix.



***“Although the pub is situated in an urban setting, the Craufurd feels like a village local. There used to be six pubs in this part of Maidenhead and now this is the only one. The pub, which dates back to the late 1800s, has always been popular, but it suffered from under investment. Under community ownership we are investing any surplus into improving the pub, and with the support of well over 200 members, the pub is now more popular than ever.*”**

***We are very excited and proud to be another co-operatively owned pub in the UK and we are grateful for the support and advice we have received from the Plunkett Foundation. I am sure that without them we would not have been able to achieve our dream of bringing our pint-sized pub into community ownership. Buying the pub has helped to not only sustain the community, but it has also preserved a local asset and a piece of local heritage.”***

Mark Newcombe, Chairman of the Craufurd Arms Society Limited

## LEGAL MODEL

The Craufurd Arms Society Ltd was registered with the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) as a Community Benefit Society (CBS).

The Society holds weekly meetings every Tuesday and all investors, regulars and supporters are encouraged to come along and find out the latest news and get involved in any upcoming events.

At the AGM, founder Members of the Society will resign and a new Management Committee of nine members will be elected in line with the Society's Model Rules.



## FUNDRAISING

The Craufurd Arms Society raised £310,000 in community shares from 229 people who invested sums of between £250 and £20,000. A £50,000 grant and loan finance worth £70,000 was also awarded through the More Than A Pub programme.

Local Councillors and Officers offered the group support and advice, and the Borough Council also approved a loan of £65,000 to pay the VAT on the purchase of the pub. The group, however, did not take up on the loan, as they preferred to have only one secured loan on the property.

Co-operative & Community Finance did, however, provide an additional £93,000 secured loan based on the robust business plan.

## KEY STRENGTHS

- The pub is the ideal venue for many activities and strong working relationships have been developed and established with a wide cross section of local clubs, societies and organisations in the local community.
- The Craufurd Arms plays a significant role in preventing loneliness and social isolation, and, in order to further this aim, the group contacted the Campaign to End Loneliness and are now delivering activities that help to reduce social isolation.
- The pub is a social hub where people can meet existing friends, make new friends and enjoy a selection of real ales, lagers and other beverages. Visitors can also host events, use the internet, have a game of crib or throw some darts. The next stage of the refurbishments will include re-fitting the kitchen so a permanent food offering can be introduced to improve the visitors' experience. At the moment the food for the various meetings and events is out sourced.
- An impact survey confirmed that it is not just the events that take place in the pub itself, but there are extra things that come out of having somewhere safe as well as sociable to meet, such as lasting friendships and romantic relationships, all of which make a big difference to local people.



## SOCIAL IMPACT

The Society believes the business is making a big impact and helps to:

- Improve people's health and wellbeing.
- Reduce social isolation.
- Provide better access to basic services.
- Support greater community cohesion.
- Engender community pride and empowerment.

As well as morning drop-ins, a local autism group holds regular coffee mornings and social evenings at the pub for parents and carers of autistic children and young adults. The 'Maidenhead Memories' group have also held their first meeting at The Craufurd Arms and are planning to meet on the first Wednesday of every month. This group helps to bring together any isolated members of the community.

The café and drop-in sessions have extended the service provided by the pub outside of traditional trading hours, offering not only a wider range of drinks and snacks, but also the opportunity for increased social interaction and community engagement.

As well as enhancing the social side of the business, additional work opportunities have also been created through employment, work experience and volunteering.



## AWARDS

**In September 2017 The Craufurd Arms was voted Runner-up in the Maidenhead Advertiser's 'Pub of the Year Award 2017' losing out by only 9 votes out of 5,000.**

**In December 2017 the pub was voted Runner-up in CAMRA's prestigious national 'Pub Saving Award 2017', which recognises communities saving their beloved local pub from closure.**



## TO FIND OUT MORE

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