



P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Merseyside pub named Community Pub Hero 2021

Pub recognised for community support during lockdowns

The Horse & Jockey in Melling, Merseyside, has taken the top award in the Community Pub Hero Awards, organised by PubAid and the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group and sponsored by Matthew Clark.

The pub, run by Adam & Suzanne Franklin, was unveiled as the winner in an online event. The Horse & Jockey was named joint winner with The Portsmouth Arms in Basingstoke. Both winning pubs receive a £500 donation from Matthew Clark to the charity of their choice, and an engraved trophy.

The Community Pub Hero Awards were created to recognise the great work done by pubs since the first Covid lockdown in March last year, and reward those landlords and landladies who have gone above and beyond to support their local communities, despite often facing uncertainty themselves.

Adam & Suzanne cooked and delivered a total of 15,000 free hot meals to vulnerable and shielding local residents, sent out 1,000 care packages, shopped for the community and collected and dropped off medication. They also ran a 'listening ear' service, calling everyone on their hot meal service to check on them and offer a chat. In all of this, they were helped by a band of 50 volunteers, who came forward within hours of an appeal from Suzanne. After the end of the first lockdown, the pub created a permanent community kitchen to continue helping those in need.

Nationwide, 115 pubs entered the Community Pub Hero Awards, many of them nominated by their local MP. Entries were judged by a panel of industry experts and a shortlist of 10 finalist pubs was announced earlier this year.

PubAid co-founder Des O’Flanagan said: “Judging these awards was a real challenge: we struggled to choose our 10 finalists from an incredibly strong field, and selecting a winner from that shortlist proved impossible!

“We decided to give the top award to two pubs who took very different approaches to supporting their communities in lockdown: The Horse & Jockey cooked and delivered hot meals and sent out care packages, while The Portsmouth Arms started a record-beating pub quiz that raised money for local charities. Faced with ‘comparing apples with pears’, we voted to reward both!”

Adam Franklin said: “We really weren’t expecting to win from such a strong shortlist, so it’s amazing to have been named as winners.

“The award has really boosted the confidence of the whole team as we prepare for indoor reopening next week. It’s been an incredibly tough year, but we’ve come through it, with the help of our wonderful team of volunteers, and created an even stronger relationship with our local community.”

Bill Esterson, MP for Sefton Central, said: ““I am really thrilled that The Horse & Jockey in Melling has been named Community Pub Hero 2021.

“The work Adam & Suzanne have done throughout the pandemic, including delivering over 15,000 hot meals to vulnerable and shielding residents, shows exactly why pubs are the lifeblood of our local communities.

“The hospitality sector has been hit really hard over the past year, and pubs like The Horse & Jokey need to be supported as we come out of lockdown. The government should urgently consider reforms to business rates and extending the VAT cut for hospitality, to ensure local pubs and breweries across the UK can drive Britain’s social and economic recovery. The repayment of Covid-19 loans should also be delayed until businesses are in a position to repay them.”

Richard Hayhoe, Marketing Director, Matthew Clark said: “This year’s awards have shone a light on the great support lent by so many pubs to their communities, despite frequently facing uncertain futures themselves.

“Like everyone else in the hospitality industry, we’re delighted that pubs have started to reopen. And it’s been great to see that people have turned out in numbers to support the pubs that supported their communities during lockdown. Let’s hope that one upside of the pandemic is that people now understand just how important the pub is to its community.”

This is the third year for the competition, which was reshaped and renamed this year – it was formerly Charity Pub of the Year - to focus on community support rather than traditional charity fundraising.

THE FINALISTS

- The Angel & Crown, Richmond

- The Bevy, Brighton
- The Bowgie Inn, Crantock near Newquay, Cornwall
- The Clifton Arms, Blackburn
- The Horse & Jockey, Melling, Merseyside
- The Mowden, Darlington
- The Old Courts, Wigan
- The Orange Tree, Baldock, Hertfordshire
- The Portobello Inn, West Kingsdown, Kent
- The Portsmouth Arms, Hatch Warren, Basingstoke

Captions to attached images

- *The team at the Horse & Jockey, Melling, in the online awards presentation with (bottom) their MP Bill Esterson*
- *The team with food parcels during lockdown*

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PubAid is a working party created in 2009 to promote UK pubs as a force for good in their communities, sharing the message that they raise over £100m per year for charities and contribute £40 million to grassroots sport. PubAid runs the World's Biggest Pub Quiz, which has raised £750,000 since its launch in 2016, and the Charity Pub of the Year Awards, which ran in 2018 and 2019 before being renamed as the Community Pub Hero Awards in 2020.

The PubAid steering group is led by co-founder Des O'Flanagan, and includes a number of well-known figures from the pub world, who lend their time and other resources to help spread the positive messages about pubs' role at the heart of their communities.

Matthew Clark is a leading national drinks wholesaler with over 200 years' experience supplying drink products, hospitality training, labour management and marketing support to over 16,000 On-Trade premises in the UK.

The All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group was set up in 1993 and has a membership of over 350 MPs and Peers. The Beer Group's objectives are to broaden recognition of the enormous contribution of brewing and pubs to the UK economy from grain to glass - and to celebrate the unique role that beer and pubs play in our society