

#PubsMatter this Christmas say drinks industry partners

Pub-goers across the UK are flooding social media and MPs' inboxes with messages about why their pubs matter this Christmas, as the UK prepares for a very different festive season.

Even though over 85 per cent of Brits have said that the pub is an important – or very important – part of their Christmas celebration, many valued locals are facing forced closure or severe restrictions at what should be their busiest time of the year.

In response, a coalition of industry partners including the British Beer and Pub Association, British Institute of Innkeeping, the British Guild of Beer Writers, the Campaign for Real Ale, the Society of Independent Brewers, the Independent Family Brewers of Britain and UKHospitality have launched the #PubsMatter campaign to remind politicians and the media just how important pubs are to local communities across the UK.

The campaign puts a spotlight on pubs (like the Grey Horse, Balerno, pictured), tap rooms, social clubs and hospitality venues that are at the centre of their communities. These venues have been disproportionately hit by recent restrictions and lockdown measures despite the important role that they play in looking after their regulars, providing local amenities, raising money for charities, and tackling

loneliness and social isolation.

Anyone who loves their local is encouraged to share why #PubsMatter to them on social media and contact their MP, using resources available at whypubsmatter.org.uk

Thousands of pub-goers have already taken part, sharing testimonials such as:

“As I’ve gotten older and have lost many dear friends, it is heart-warming to see their spouses come to the pub on Christmas Day lunchtime. It is a chance to see old friends, exchange memories, re-tell old stories and shed tears. Without the local pub, these long-lasting friendships would never have been forged.” – David Davies, 71, West Lancashire

“This blasted COVID lockdown has achieved what the Grinch, Ebenezer Scrooge, Miracle of 34th Street’s Jack Duff and a million more miserable gits have tried and failed to do – and robbed us of Christmas. The festivities just won’t be the same this year for me without meeting up with relatives, friends and neighbours on Christmas Eve and carousing over a few pints of good ale in the Queen’s Head, my local boozier, while the landlord plays on his organ. The Government needs to throw the licensed trade a lifeline before it is too late and our way of life changes forever.” - Charlie Garth, 69, Ampthill, Bedfordshire

“At Christmas time, family, friends, work colleagues, and people you have not seen all year will make an effort to meet up for the all-important Christmas drink – a most important excuse in all our lives, to dress up and go out. As we get older, we look forward to doing that one important thing even more.” - Linda Harris, Wirral

“My local pub to me is like Alice in Wonderland going down the rabbit’s hole. I can take refuge in an alternate universe where good beer, good company and pleasant surroundings allows me to escape the pressures of life.” – Charles Tucker,

Beckenham

A spokesperson for the campaign said: "There has never been a more important time to send a clear message to politicians and the media that pubs matter.

"Despite the fact that many publicans have spent thousands ensuring their pubs are Covid-secure, hundreds are still unable to reopen under the current guidelines. This is not only hurting local businesses, but also the wellbeing of the people using them. Pubs need fair treatment and better financial support to get through the festive period."

Michelin-starred chef Tom Kerridge, who penned the foreword for CAMRA's Good Beer Guide 2021 earlier this year, said: "It's clear from the testimonials flooding into the #PubsMatter campaign that Christmas this year won't be the same without the backdrop of our pubs. The one thing we have all missed during lockdown is human connection and social interaction which, above all else, is everything that the Great British pub provides – a warm, happy and friendly place for people to drink and eat. This is even more keenly felt at Christmas, a time of year that we would usually trek the miles to reconnect with friends, family and colleagues.

"Yet despite the important role that many pubs play in our local communities – and the significant investments that many pub landlords have made to re-open Covid-secure premises post-lockdown – it looks like most of us will be unable to visit our local this Christmas. This is a reality that will weigh heavily on people who have already faced a year of loneliness and social isolation due to the ongoing pandemic.

"The Great British pub is recognised around the world as a uniquely British institution and the passion and the heart and soul that goes into brewing is equal to the top winemakers, distillers, cheese makers, bakers, artisan chocolatiers or any

other craft led hospitality producer. It is something we should be very proud of and should aim to protect for generations to come. I fear that without greater Government support our unique pub culture will be under significant threat, and we will see many pubs close their doors forever.”

To find out more and take part, visit whypubsmatter.org.uk and regularly check the [@CAMRA_Official](https://twitter.com/CAMRA_Official) Twitter feed from 13-16 December for updates and testimonials.

