



The Auctioneers Arms Community Newsletter August 2020 Edition.



Hello and welcome to our Summer edition of the Auctioneers Arms community newsletter. Well, what a rollercoaster the past four months have been! As you can imagine all those involved in the running of the Auctioneers Arms have been consumed with the issues surrounding the Coronavirus and the impact it's been having on our lives as well of course the impact upon the business. It's been an exceptionally worrying time for many of our local residents and we would like to take this opportunity to wish those who have been personally affected by the virus all the very best for a speedy recovery.

This summer's edition of the newsletter will focus upon the work that has been undertaken by our management committee, our manager and our volunteers during the shutdown and the initial reopening period.

Lock-down!



On 20th March 2020 the UK government forced the temporary closures of bars and restaurants to help prevent the spread of the virus and to protect the NHS which, whilst completely understandable still came as a huge shock to many. The management committee had to act quickly to assess the financial impact the closure would have on the business and our shareholders.

By doing this we were able to estimate how long we would be independently, financially sustainable before seeking alternative funding options. Our primary focus was on staff welfare and security, however conversations and negotiations had to take place with our suppliers and loan providers at a very early stage to identify and maximise all the support that that was on offer.

Our Strategy....

Due to the dynamic nature of the Covid-19 situation the management committee decided to meet on a weekly basis, formed an action plan and engaged in numerous Webinars with other community pub committee members to discuss ideas and share plans on how to operate during the shutdown period. Our initial strategy focused on the following four key areas:-

- (i) Reducing our overheads to a minimum,**
- (ii) Seeking alternative grant funding streams**
- (iii) Offering alternative services and**
- (iv) Refurbishment and maintenance of the venue.**

This work was undertaken by our team of dedicated volunteers, coordinated by our manager Terry and agreed and monitored by the Management Committee, and as always, we took advice from our community pub professional advisors The Plunkett Foundation (www.plunkettfoundation.co.uk)



What we have What have we achieved during Shut- Achieved down?



Whilst our focus was on sustainability of the business, we also took the opportunity to review our current operating practices since we originally opened back in May 2018. Over the past four months, we have managed to achieve the following: -

- We managed to reduce our overhead costs during lockdown by over 83%
- We created a take-away menu
- We redecorated the interior of the venue throughout
- We enhanced the beer garden with extra tables, parasols and planters
- We provide two new smoking shelters and a designated smoking area
- We replaced all the exterior timber cladding with new
- We provided staff training programmes to ensure all staff were Covid-19 aware.
- We invested in screens, sanitisers, track and trace systems, and signage for social distancing and customer safety
- We purchased a new beer ordering “App” to enhance customer service



Funding Update



power to
change



We were advised by The Plunkett Foundation who are our professional advisors, to apply for the *Covid-19 Trading Income Support Scheme Grant* which is funded via the "Power to Change" who support community businesses across the UK.

During April and May we commenced the lengthy process of compiling the business case to ensure that we met the initial application criteria. The grant providers asked us to provide them with detailed information relating to our original business plan, our financial accounts and evidence of how the Auctioneers Arms has made a positive, social impact upon the local community within the first two years of trading.

We were able to demonstrate that we had created employment opportunities for local people, volunteer opportunities for the old and young and that by doing so we

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had bought the local community together.

The full business case went to a panel of judges on the 20th June 2020 and we are pleased to announce that the Trust agreed to offer Caverswall Community Society/Auctioneers Arms support by way of a grant of **£25,000**.

I'm sure you'll agree this is a fantastic achievement which has helped us enormously to keep the Auctioneers Arms going as a community owned business. This money will go towards the cost of the redecoration, essential maintenance and it ensured that we were safe and ready to re-open our doors to the public on 8th July 2020.

The fine detail relating to why we were awarded the grant funding and what we intend to use it for will be discussed with our shareholders at the next AGM.

New Chef



Our original chef, Mitch has decided to leave us and take up a new business opportunity elsewhere. Mitch has been with the team for over two years and provided our customers with some excellent food offerings. We would like to thank Mitch for all his hard work and wish him the very best of luck in his new venture.

We would like to welcome on board our new chef Gregg Ward. Gregg has worked for us on occasions over the past year, as and when Mitch needed cover. He has now joined the team on a more regular basis as we start to reintroduce our popular Wednesday "Pie Night", Sunday roast baguettes and our Gavel menu on Saturdays. Like many other businesses at the moment, we too are slowly reintroducing our food offering and normal service as hoping to get back to our soon as we can.

We really appreciate and patience during hear so many "Out to Help Out" success, and the the busiest had since starting



all of our customers support these times, and it's lovely to positive comments. The "Eat scheme has been a real first night of this offer was Wednesday night that we've food



Revised Opening Hours

Terry and the team would like to welcome all our customers and shareholders back to The Auctioneers Arms. Due to the government restrictions in place we have revised our opening times. These will be reviewed on a regular basis but for the moment we are open as below:-

Mon: Closed
Tues: Closed
Wed: 14:00 – 22:00
Thur: 14:00 – 22:00
Fri: 12:00 – Midnight
Sat: 12:00 – Midnight
Sun 12:00 – 22:00



Covid-19 Operating Policy

Since reopening our doors on 8th July 2020 we have had to introduce strict guidance to our customers to ensure that they can enjoy their experience in a safe environment. This guidance is provided by the government and we have adapted what we can to suit the venue layout whilst also ensuring the safety of our staff and customers. The guidance is reviewed on a regular basis and we politely ask that all our customers adhere to the following points where possible: -

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Examples of some of the work the volunteers do include; general maintenance of the venue, taking care of the outside seating area/car park and watering the planters, painting & redecoration, administration and newsletters, social media and marketing, creating business cases for additional funding, venue safety and security.

The management committee and the manager would like to thank the following people for all their support, time and efforts:-

Our Volunteers:-

Graham Miller, Bob Fieldhouse, Paul Hulme, Heather Hulme, David Ash, Jonathon Rushton, Brian Griffiths, Clare Griffiths, Chris Hill, Peter Tighe



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Please Remember

As businesses start to reopen, please understand they may have just survived one of the hardest professional and personal challenges they've ever faced.

While they're excited to open, the owners and employees are still stressed. They're not through the woods yet.

Please don't go to these businesses and complain about changes that were forced upon them due to lost revenue, lost employees, new policies and protocols. They don't have the same business they had 2 months ago.

They're doing everything they can to adapt to the situation. But everything is different for them.

Be kind. Be compassionate. Have patience.

They're still trying to recover from battle number one and their next battle of rebuilding has just begun.



Auctioneers Arms Caverswall



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“The Auctioneers Arms community pub business plan has been referred to nationally as one of the best Community Pub business models in the UK and recognised as one of the highest performing in the first 18 months of trading, being awarded the Community Standard Mark in 2018.”



Caverswall Community Society

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