The George & Dragon was the only pub in an isolated village which had no shop or other community facilities apart from a village hall. Its closure was a major blow to the village. Yet, thanks to the imagination and innovation of villagers, it was reopened as a community enterprise, also incorporating a mini-library, a small village shop and allotments. The business model is fairly risk free and can be applied to many different kinds of community facilities.

Context

• Hudswell is a picturesque village in the Swale valley in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. But it lacked amenities, with no local shop, post office or any social facilities apart from a village hall and a pub called the ‘George & Dragon’. When the pub closed, due to its owners going bankrupt, Hudswell lost the main hub of village social life.

• The number of pubs operating in the UK fell from 58,600 in 2005 to 52,500 at the beginning of 2010. This is due to a number of factors including general economic conditions, property speculation, changing social customs and a smoking ban. But closures can have a negative affect on community life, especially in rural areas.

• The George & Dragon in Hudswell was put on the market, but no buyers came forward. So, a group of villagers decided to take matters into their own hands. They formed a community enterprise company to buy the property, re-open the pub and run it for the benefit of the village.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Last orders at the bar</td>
<td>The George &amp; Dragon, the only pub in Hudswell, closes when its owners go bankrupt. The building is stripped of its fittings and put on the market.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Local stirrings</td>
<td>A few former pub regulars start discussing possibility of creating some kind of consortium to buy it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Apr</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>A local resident attends course on community shares.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>May/Jun</td>
<td>Steering Group</td>
<td>Small group of seven meets several times to develop proposal to buy the pub, financed by a community share issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Jul</td>
<td>Public meeting</td>
<td>Attended by 45 people in village hall. Enthusiastic support for proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Aug/Dec</td>
<td>Development work</td>
<td>• Formal offer to purchase property (accepted 30 October) &lt;br&gt;• Prospectus drafted to secure pledges of support. &lt;br&gt;• Registration as an Industrial and Provident Society for Community Benefit. &lt;br&gt;• Grant applications. &lt;br&gt;• Publicity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Prospectus launched</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Weekend Report Back</td>
<td>Results from the Bringing it all Together Weekend reported at a public meeting by consultant team. Including an emerging Charter and Vision for the Valley and Aims, Objectives and Actions for each Topic Group. Agreement that a Valley Forum be set up and a number of Action Groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>HCP raises funds from investors and grant aid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>Building purchased</td>
<td>HCP buys the George &amp; Dragon plus an acre of associated land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td></td>
<td>Refurbishment</td>
<td>Pub refurbished by local builders and craftsmen with help from many volunteers. Tenants appointed to run the pub.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>Pub reopens</td>
<td>The George &amp; Dragon re-opens as a community run pub. Launch event attended by local MP and HCP member, Foreign Secretary, William Hague.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Dec</td>
<td>Shop opens</td>
<td>The Little Shop opens for business.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes - Success

• The community-run George & Dragon pub has become a real success, with sales figures 50% higher than predicted in the first year.

• The pub has become a vibrant hub for the local community and also for the many tourists and walkers that visit. It hosts a wide range of community events: live music, a book club, a folk club, a Halloween scarecrow competition and much more.

• The pub has 10 allotments, rented to local people. It also hosts a small library, with books provided by North Yorkshire Library Service, free internet access for customers and laptops to hire for a small fee.

• A 'Little Shop' has been created in a small room in the pub but with its own street access. It is thought to be the smallest community shop in the country and sells bread, milk, eggs, vegetables and other groceries.

• Future plans include creating a Bed & Breakfast facility and developing unused land on the site.

• HCP's Annual Report 2011 states: “With the shop, allotments, library and internet access we feel that we have created a hub of services that make the George & Dragon a real centre of village activity and we have helped to create a more cohesive and friendly community in the village. It is clear that there are now far more people involved in village life and we all feel part of a caring and supportive community.”

Outcomes - Lessons

• A Co-operative is a good model for funding and running local services.

• Communities can do a lot if they have access to fairly minimal but crucial professional advice and assistance at the right time.

Parties involved

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Co-operative and Mutual Solutions</td>
<td>Funding advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.cms.coop">www.cms.coop</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locality (formerly Development Trusts</td>
<td>Funding, support and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.locality.org.uk">www.locality.org.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudswell Community Pub Ltd</td>
<td>Bought and runs George &amp; Dragon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.richmond.org/community/hudswellpub/">www.richmond.org/community/hudswellpub/</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Fund Yorkshire</td>
<td>Funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.thekeyfund.co.uk">www.thekeyfund.co.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muckle LLP</td>
<td>Legal advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.muckle-llp.com">www.muckle-llp.com</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Crown pub, Hesket Newmarket, Cumbria</td>
<td>Mentors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.theoldcrownpub.co.uk">www.theoldcrownpub.co.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jackie and Margaret Stubbs</td>
<td>Tenant Landlords</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Phillips and Company</td>
<td>Property advisors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.sidneyphillips.co.uk">www.sidneyphillips.co.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Funding and resources

- HCP sold shares in the pub for £1 each, with a minimum buy of 500 shares and a maximum of 20,000. They found 160 investors, mostly Hudswell residents, and raised £240,000.

- In addition, they secured £50,000 from Rural Access to Opportunities Programme, the Key Fund invested £20,000 in HCP Ltd shares and Locality gave a grant of £5,000 through its Cultivating Enterprise programme.

- The Little Shop secured a £5,000 grant from Awards for All and £4,600 from the York and North Yorkshire Community Foundation. The shop is staffed by a rota of 20 volunteers from the village.

Budgets

- Property purchase £210,000
- Refurbishment of the pub £30,000

Special features

Support

Assistance from Locality (formerly Development Trusts Association) consisted of:

- A £5,000 grant from Locality’s Cultivating Enterprise programme;
- Advice and support around the share issue prospect and general membership recruitment;
- Sign posting to Leader funding/Key fund;
- Encouraging the group to see the potential for creating a rural community anchor and development trust, not just keeping a pub open.
Photos
Hudswell Community Pub

The George & Dragon pub, 2009
Hudswell01.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Seeking investors
Launching the Prospectus outside the pub, 28 December 2009
Hudswell02.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Money raised
Packed meeting of members in the village hall receives the news that sufficient funds have been raised to buy the pub, 2009
Hudswell03.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Refurbishment
Carpet cleaning, 2009
Hudswell04.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Refurbishment
Volunteer coordinator marking off jobs done at a working party weekend, 2009
Hudswell05.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Board meeting
Directors on the pub patio prior to its reopening, 2010
Hudswell06.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Launch
Members chatting at the opening event, 2010
Bristol07.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Launch
Foreign Secretary, local MP and HCP member, William Hague declares the pub open for business by cutting a George & Dragon cake, 2010
Hudswell08.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Fun
Halloween scarecrow competition, 2010
Bristol09.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

The shop
Hanging sign over separate entrance, 2010
Bristol10.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

The shop
First customer, 2010
Bristol11.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd

Growing food
Allotments created to the rear of the pub, 2010
Bristol12.jpg © Hudswell Community Pub Ltd
Quotes

“We have shown what a community can achieve when its spirit and effort is harnessed and thanks goes out to all of you who have helped in any way to make our community pub the success it is today.”

Paul Cullen, Chair, HCP Ltd., 2011

“The pub was a casualty of the credit crunch. The last landlord bought it when property prices were at their highest. When business declined as a result of the recession they couldn't make the mortgage repayments. The co-op won't have that problem because we haven't borrowed any money.”

Martin Booth, a director of HCP Ltd, 2010

“It is fantastic to know the pub is now open and so far, business has been good. The risk in this buy-to-let model is fairly minimal, with the community organisation receiving a fixed income every month from the tenants, and ensuring local repeat clientele from the proud owners of the pub. The directors also have further plans to diversify their income streams, and attract more visitors to their pub, which should ensure its sustainability.”

Sophie Michelena, Development Officer for Locality in Yorkshire & Humber, 2011

Contacts and links

Hudswell Community Pub web page
www.richmond.org/community/hudswellpub/

Sophie Michelena, Development Officer for Locality in Yorkshire & Humber
sophie.michelena@locality.org.uk