

Local pubs deliver invaluable socio-economic value, ministers must act to save them – new report urges

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Press release

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Localis follow up report on the worth of our nation's pubs reveals:

- **Economic Impact:** The beer and pub sector contributes £34.3 billion to the UK economy annually, supporting over one million jobs.
- **Social Value:** Pubs are vital for community cohesion, providing spaces for social interaction and combating isolation.
- **Public Support:** a significant majority of British adults (72%) believe pubs have a positive impact on their communities.
- **Policy Challenges:** But the current tax, regulatory, and planning environment poses significant challenges to the pub sector.

Local pubs deliver invaluable socio-economic value, ministers must act to save them – new report urges

Government must overhaul a counterproductive regulatory and tax landscape that threatens the future of the ever-popular British local pub as a vital social and economic anchor for communities across the country, a study published by the think-tank Localis today warns.

In a report issued today at the Labour Party Conference in Liverpool entitled '**Inn-Valuable 2: unlocking the socio-economic potential of our nation's pubs**', Localis urges the government to launch a taskforce to clear obstacles that endanger the beer and pub sector which cumulatively supports more than one million jobs, generates £34.3bn in GVA to the economy and delivers £11.4bn in tax revenues to the Exchequer annually.

According to polling undertaken by YouGov for the report, **72%** of people felt the impact of pubs to community life to be positive. When asked if pubs are important in bringing people together, more than four-in-five (**81%**) of British adults agreed they are, with just **14%** feeling that they are not.

Polling carried out for the report showed nearly three quarters (73 percent) of British adults felt that pubs help combat loneliness in their local area. Among pro-community activities supported by local pubs, nearly half (**42%**) of people were aware of pub events that bring the community together, more than a **quarter (27%)** knew of local pubs that supported charitable causes and close to one in five, **19%**, knew of local pubs that supported vulnerable people in their area.

The research identified from case studies taken pubs across the country some dominant themes on how the sector supports local people and communities, namely by:

- combatting isolation
- supporting local causes
- bringing local business together
- keeping prices down so pubs remain accessible social spaces for communities.

Pollsters also found that among those who've ever visited a pub more than half (**53%**) had met a friend in one, while nearly two-in-five (**38%**) of people had visited the pub to meet up with family, a quarter (**26%**) had enjoyed Sunday lunch in one and **11%** of the public had attended a pub-held birthday party in that timespan. In addition, **7%** of the public had used pubs for dating purposes and **20%** watched a sporting event.

A key recommendation of the report calls for short-term support by extending business rates relief for hospitality and to increasing the window for this to three years in line with the spending review period to

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give long-term certainty to pub landlords.

The report authors also call for a government taskforce to arrest the decline of the Great British pub which would identify policies to ensure long-term sustainability for the sector, including:

- reviewing business rates and excise duty;
- providing employment incentives so pubs keep employing younger members of staff;
- examining planning policies to support the night-time economy and preserving the role of local pubs as social, cultural and economic anchors in towns and villages.

Report author and Localis head of research, Joe Fyans, said: "Pubs are more than just businesses; they are the heart and soul of our communities.

"To ensure their long-term survival, we need a policy framework that recognizes their value and supports their continued success."

Emma McClarkin, chief executive of the British Beer and Pub Association, said: "This research cements what people up and down the country know and believe – that the pub is a home from home, the beating heart of our towns and villages, and offers a warm welcome to people from all walks of life.

"As this research proves, pubs aren't just about a pint – people know that pubs stave off loneliness, support the vulnerable in their communities, and raise millions for charity.

"While we know that brewers and pubs invest billions into the economy, their huge contribution to our communities and society is priceless and they must be supported.

"Government must use this Budget to cut beer duty, reform business rates, and maintain 75% business rates relief so that pubs and brewers can remain a cherished part of society."

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Notes to Editors:

1. **An advance copy of the report is available for download here:**

1. About Localis

Localis is an independent think-tank dedicated to issues related to politics, public service reform and localism. We carry out innovative research, hold events and facilitate an ever growing network of members to stimulate and challenge the current orthodoxy of the governance of the UK.

<https://www.localis.org.uk/>

About British Beer and Pub Association

The British Beer & Pub Association is the leading body representing Britain's brewers and pub companies. The Association is more than a century old and was originally founded as the Brewers' Society in 1904. Our members account for some 90 per cent of beer brewed in Britain today, and own around 20,000 of the nation's pubs.

1. Methodology:

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2054 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 30th - 31st July 2024. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

1. Key report recommendations

Policy recommendations

With each passing year of temporary patches and short-term support, the need for a comprehensive rethink of the framework in which pubs operate becomes more urgent. The election of a new government, and the beginning of a new political cycle, provide an opportunity to begin this task in earnest. In the short-term, there remains a need for the continuation of measures to shore up the sector. Over the long-term, there are several policy areas which must be examined as part of an effort to fix the foundations of the UK pub trade.

The short-term: continuing support over longer time frames

To continue to mitigate the closure of pubs across the country, the government must **extend business rates relief for hospitality and increase the window to three years**. This would bring the time horizon in line with the next spending review and provide more long-term certainty in the sector.

To continue to support the production, export and domestic sale of beer in the UK, the government must **extend the beer duty freeze for another year**.

The long-term: fixing the foundations of the UK pub trade

To halt and reverse the decline of the Great British pub, central government must **launch a task force to identify routes to long-term sustainability for the sector**. Some considerations for such a body would be:

1. **Reviewing business rates** to look at the possibility of different multipliers for pubs and hospitality, along with the potential to provide discounts for pubs providing social value through diversification.
2. **Reviewing excise duty** to look at how the tax can best support the brewing, domestic sale and export of beer in the UK.
3. **Providing employment incentives** such as tax credits to ensure that necessary increases to the national living wage do not disincentivise pubs in their important role as employers of part-time, younger members of staff.
4. **Examining planning policies** to see how the framework can support the night-time economy, along with pubs as social, cultural and economic anchors in town and village centres.

The ambitious policy agenda laid out by the government in the King's Speech 2024 also provides opportunities to increase the long-term sustainability of pubs in the UK:

1. The New Towns Taskforce should **examine how new towns can boost pubs and hospitality** through planning for vibrant town centres.
2. As part of their push to drive good growth locally, **local growth plans should include sections on the foundational, overlooked and night-time economies of place**.

Polling

1. In general, to what extent do you feel pubs have a positive or negative effect in a community?

0% Weighted base

Base: All GB adults

Very positive

Slightly positive

Neither positive nor negative

Slightly negative

Very negative

Don't know

72% Positive

14% Negative

2. Still thinking about local pubs...How important, if at all, do you think pubs are in bringing people together?

0% Weighted base

Base: All GB adults

92% Very important

4% Fairly important

1% Not very important

0% Not at all important

0% Don't know

0% Important

0% Not important

3. Which, if any, of the following activities have you ever done in a

pub? (Please select all that apply)

~~0%~~Weighted base

~~0%~~Base: All GB adults

~~0%~~Attended a birthday party

~~0%~~Attended a wedding reception

~~0%~~Been to a charity event

~~0%~~Group as part of a community group or activity

~~0%~~Group with friends

~~0%~~Group with family

~~0%~~Watched a sporting event

~~0%~~Sunday lunch

~~50%~~ Been on a date

~~51%~~ Watched live music

~~5%~~ Worked remotely

~~0%~~ Other

~~1%~~ Don't know

~~5%~~ Not applicable - I have never been to a pub

4.. Thinking about the last 3 months (i.e., since May 2024)...Which, if any, of the following activities have you done in a pub? (Please select all that apply)

~~100%~~ Unweighted base

~~100%~~ Base: All GB adults who have visited a pub

~~11%~~ Attended a birthday party

~~2%~~ Attended a wedding reception

~~3%~~ Been to a charity event

~~8%~~ Met up as part of a community group or activity

~~5%~~ Met up with friends

~~9%~~ Met up with family

~~7%~~ Watched a sporting event

~~2%~~ Had Sunday lunch

~~2%~~ Been on a date

~~1%~~ Watched live music

Worked remotely

Other

Don't know

Not applicable - I have not been to a pub in the last 3 months

5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement? Pubs help combat loneliness and isolation amongst people in my local area

Weighted base

Base: All GB adults

Strongly agree

Tend to agree

Tend to disagree

Strongly disagree

Don't know

Not applicable – there are no pubs in my local area

Agree

Disagree

6. Which, if any, of the following, applies to pubs in your local area?
(Please select all that apply)

Weighted base

Base: All GB Adults who have a pub in their local area

Supports charitable causes

Supports people with the rising cost of living

Hosts events that bring the community together

50% supports vulnerable groups in the area (e.g. older people)

10% of these

26%t know

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