

1 CONFIDENCE BUILDING

MALCOLM NICHOLLS MBII
HOUSEMANS BAR & RESTAURANT
CHURCH STRETTON, SHROPSHIRE

"Covid means we are operating at reduced capacity, so maximising trade at Christmas will be important. We extended the EOTH scheme, funding it ourselves on Thursday and Fridays, but running money-off deals all the time is no way forward. I'm very wary about making discounting a way of life. It's about building loyalty. We have regulars who come out and are our core, loyal customers, but there's a nervousness out there. Consumer confidence is a concern. We need to address the rent issue and help build consumer confidence."

Takeaway menu and gift vouchers available.



2 KEEPING TILLS RINGING

BILLY ALLINGHAM MBII
STEAMIN' BILLY, LEICESTERSHIRE

"We're creating all-year round gardens using retractable roof covers, heaters and blankets. With lockdown lasting longer in Leicester, we have changed some event space into co-working space. It's about attracting and getting a different income. It's not 280 people spending £40 a head, but hot desks (with internet from £40 a day). It will at least bring in some kind of revenue. We will sell food and drink to people working here, plus allow them to book a boardroom and meeting room too. We are adding a gym – class-led for max 15 – plus changing rooms and showers. A multi-use space until we can use it as a function room again. It's all about creating ways to bring in some revenue."

Steamin' Billy offers takeaways, meat hampers, veg boxes, eggs, cask ale, wine and more.

TEN to ONE

'How will you maximise the opportunities over the winter and festive period?'

WITH WINTER AND CHRISTMAS APPROACHING, SALLY BAIRSTOW SPEAKS TO 10 LICENSEES ABOUT THEIR PLANS TO KEEP THE TILLS RINGING



3 COMMUNITY SPIRIT

JUSTIN BOWLES MBII
THE QUEENS HEAD
LITTLE EATON, DERBY

"It's about how you react to a challenge. We saw lockdown as a chance to redecorate, change our food and drink menus, and relaunch the pub. You don't

know what's going to happen with Covid but it's been like that every day for the past six months. If you are positive and secure in the knowledge that you are offering a safe service, it gives customers' confidence. We will add a marquee to the courtyard, which will accommodate an extra 50-60 people. We are very much the hub of the village.

Our Christmas menu offers a three-course set menu. Last year we had a buffet option, but obviously we won't be doing that. Christmas Day will be a day when people can just come in to the pub and celebrate Christmas with a drink."

Justin Bowles and Wayne Robinson took over the Everards pub in May 2019.

4 BEER DELIVERIES OPENS NEW DOORS

MATTHEW TODD MBII
THE WONSTON ARMS, SUTTON SCOTNEY, HANTS

"It's gonna be one hell of a tough time for a pub like mine and many others. So I am really aware that it will be a dogfight of epic proportions to win what discretionary spend is out there. What I can say is, I have taken all the hard and painful steps and have hard reset the best Little pub in Hampshire to the P&L model I started in year one, when I opened the derelict business five years ago. I am operating it around limited trading hours, which I can run myself with the help of a couple of local students at weekends. We will regrow again with a brand new five-year business plan and adapt to 'follow the money'.

We deliver same-day doorstep real ales (www.doorstepbeers.co.uk). I am 100% pushing on with this, as 58% of folk I delivered to during lockdown have never stepped into the pub, opening up a whole new market."

CAMRA Pub of the Year winner.





5 FIRST CHRISTMAS

**ASHLEY CHERRETT MBII
& TIA NICHOLSON**
THE CEDARS, RYDE, ISLE OF WIGHT

"It will be our first Christmas here so we want to make the most of it and continue to build up our reputation as a great pub for food, drink, and good beer. We will have a set festive menu throughout December and we'd like to make the most of the outside space, perhaps have a choir or singers and carols, roasting chestnuts, etc.

We've found Sunday nights can be a bit quiet so we will try different ways to encourage in people, acoustic music nights, gin tea parties, and I'd like to run beer and food pairing nights.

As a beer sommelier, it's a good way to show off our great beers and our food – people enjoy discovering how different beer styles work well with the various dishes on our menus."

Ashley and Tia met while working at Fuller's brewery in Chiswick, W London before taking over as tenants of The Cedars, their first pub.

6 WINTER PROOFING & INVESTMENT

TREVOR BROWN CBII
THE PICKLED PLOUGHMAN
ADDERBURY, OXON

"I've been thinking about how to winter-proof the business. We invested in a marquee over lockdown, which we will heat. Our Christmas menu is all costed and went to the printers in August, which is late for us. The 5% VAT is a lovely cushion, but we've still looked to inflation-proof our offer and be clever with the bottom line. Last year we only had a three-course menu option for parties, but we learned that a lot of people want two-courses, so we've addressed that. We're also getting takeaway beer containers and offering Christmas meals for takeaway."

Trevor is Our Hospitality Hero - page 12-13.

7 DEPOSIT GUARANTEE

CAROLYN JORDAN
THE JOLLY FARMERS, ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX

"Christmas is about celebrating but it's tough – for us and our customers – to make plans with the uncertainty. We will just serve diner this year on Christmas Day, no drinkers in the bar. It will be better to manage social distancing and it gives us 20 extra covers. We have a set Christmas menu throughout December, it will get the spend per head up (there's 65% profit on the menu). We were later getting our offers printed, but messages are on the chalkboards and I'd expect to be fully booked even without the big office parties. All deposits are refundable – that gives people the confidence to book."

Carolyn has worked in the trade for 30 years. The Jolly Farmers is a McMullen's pub since 1910.

8 MAXIMISING MARKETING

KATE ROBERTS
DIRECTOR, SHELDON'S BAR
COLWYN BAY, N WALES

"Business this winter will be a challenge. Capacity is down (27 from 90) so it's about maximising trade. We have a full table service and we are taking bookings for private groups and office Christmas parties. We have a series of promotions and are expanding our cocktail range to add theatre and sparkle. It's something different for North Wales. Our food offer will continue, with small plates to complement the drinks. We also do a 'Platter to Go' (cheese or charcuterie), which works well. Bringing back live music will boost income. Next year, we will launch a Sheldon's loyalty card. We close for the first two weeks in January to give everyone a rest and recharge for 2021."

Food & Drink Business of the Year, 2019, Conwy Business Awards.

9 DELIVER A GREAT CHRISTMAS

DARYL FRANKLAND FBII
THREE HORSESHOES
LEAMSIDE CO, DURHAM

"We've 180 people booked for Christmas Day. We are confident we can sell what we offer; it's a matter of seeing what the Covid rules will allow. We are fortunate to be busy, and we work to capacity, hoping limits will be eased. The EOTH scheme brought some fresh faces through the door and hopefully we will see them back again."

Winner of CAMRA's North East Pub of the Year for four consecutive years.



10 CHRISTMAS BONUS

CAELAN COLEFLAX-CHAMBERS
THE BLUE STOOPS
DRONFIELD, YORKSHIRE

"We've offered free arrival drinks or desserts in the past but decided this year to match deposits paid in August and September to go towards a booking in 2021 (T&Cs apply). It's a great way to encourage customers out and to get them back in 2021. Another popular event is 'Breakfast with Santa'. Kids get to see Santa – at a safe distance – and go away with a gift. It's always popular and brings more customers in. Things will be different this year with social spacing, but we will still make it really nice and special."

Caelan is manager of The Blue Stoops. It's one of True North Brew Co's 12 venues across Sheffield, Barnsley and Dronfield.

