

1 STAYING IN TOUCH

CHRIS HERRING
THE STIRRUP CUP, BARTON
SEAGRAVE, NORTHANTS

"It helped to stay in touch with staff when they weren't working. The Government's part-furlough, part-work and part-salary scheme was very helpful and meant we could adapt as we needed to. We did a special VE-Day picnic hamper in the first lockdown that sold out within 36 hours. Something like that helped the staff. If they were delivering them, or taking the calls, they felt they were part of the community and it made them feel good. For staff who were fully-furloughed we stayed in touch using a WhatsApp group, and we did a quiz every week. It was about making people feel they were still important and helping them put the nonsense and negativity in the news to the back of their minds."



2 A LISTENING EAR

ADAM PRESTAGE MBII
THE WITTON CHIMES
NORTHWICH, CHESHIRE

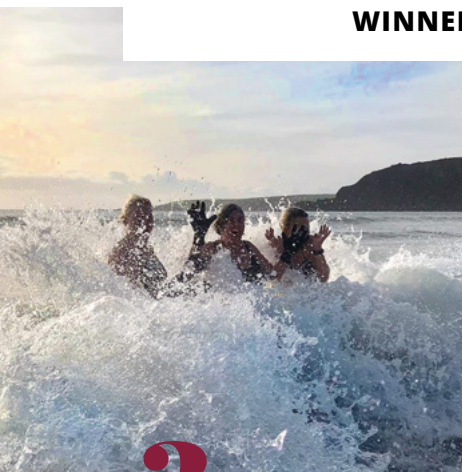
"I've learnt to be a good listener. It was surprising how many people would ring at 10.30pm or 11pm saying they were feeling a bit down or lonely through lockdown, so I became a bit of a counsellor really. They were probably people who had seen our online streams putting out positive vibes to everybody, and they sent me a text or Facebook message or just rang me direct. It made me feel positive knowing that people trust you to talk to about things like that. It's overwhelming really. It's taught me that the role of the pub is much more important than I ever thought."

Adam Prestage entertained people with live online DJ sets online when pubs were closed and say he has found BII support "brilliant" during his seven years as a member.

TEN to ONE

'How have you stayed focused and positive during the pandemic?'

STAYING MOTIVATED AND ENERGISED HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN NOW. NIGEL HUDDLESTON ASKED 10 OF OUR HEART OF THE COMMUNITY AWARD WINNERS FOR THEIR THOUGHTS ON HOW TO KEEP POSITIVE



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having a socially-distanced swim – no wet suits; just straight in with swimming costumes on. We're just doing it for our own mental health – to get us up, focused and ready for the day. It just energises me and I seem to have the same sort of drive that I had when the pub was properly open. I've been in a very different frame of mind from a few months ago. There are a lot of health benefits, but it's also just a nice thing to do. It's good job you didn't ring an hour ago; I'd have been in the sea."

BII members Tanya and Alex Williams extended the kitchen and bought a pizza oven to capitalise on takeaway opportunities during 2020.

SEA SWIMMING!

TANYA WILLIAMS FBII
THE POLGOOTH INN
ST AUSTELL, CORNWALL

"It sounds a bit nuts but I started sea swimming the day after Boris Johnson's announcement of the second lockdown in England. I go every day, there's a group of about six or seven, three of whom are licensees, all

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HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

GAVIN PRICE
FOUNTAIN BAR, ABERFELDY, PERTH & KINROSS

"We've done a project to put on a food delivery service for the over-70s who were shielding. It really exploded. We supplied 10 houses the first night and it doubled each day after that. By the end of the first week, we were delivering to over 100 homes and it just continued from there.

Other businesses got involved and we shared the workload. Between 10 businesses we delivered around 40,000 free meals during lockdown. A lot of good community and social spirit has developed from that. There were about 140 volunteers from the local community working on the project at one point. I think it will have a lasting legacy. It's been a real blessing for the whole town."

Gavin Price combines running the Fountain and three other hospitality venues with his role as manager of Elgin City FC, who play in Scottish League Two.



PHOTO: WILLIE VASS (THE SUN)



5 WELLBEING SESSIONS & YOGA

SALLY PICKLES MBII
THE BOWGIE INN, NEWQUAY,
CORNWALL

"We have staff wellbeing sessions every Monday morning, which includes yoga. It's something we started near the end of 2019 and we carried on online during the lockdowns. Sometimes it's fast-flow and sometimes it's more meditative and relaxing, with life tips and breathing tips. It's a live stream on Facebook page.

I also go for a walk every day, by the sea or in the country, and live stream some of it from my phone. It gives me positive feelings because we get people from around the world – who've visited Cornwall – leaving nice comments and saying they're looking forward to coming back. I'm a very positive person; if you focus on the negatives you just end up feeling that way."

BII members Sally and Andy Pickles used social media and technology to keep people connected during 2020.

6 STAYING PHYSICALLY FIT

CEE-JAY WILLIAMS
THE JUNCTION TAP, WOKING, SURREY

"I lost almost four stone over the first lockdown through exercise and eating more healthily. I quite enjoyed it. It involved lots of walking but I also hired a personal trainer, who I'd meet outdoors to do circuits with bits of boxing. I'm still doing it. It's made me massively feel better. There's something about exercise that means you don't worry so much. It takes you into this little space where you're not thinking about anything except what you're doing at that second. It takes away the worry and the stress."

Cee-Jay Williams used lockdown time to make face-shields and ear guards for NHS workers using a 3D printer.

7 BE A MAGPIE, NOT OSTRICH!

MARK HOLDEN FBII
VICTORIA INN, THREEMILESTONE, CORNWALL

"Stay open! We pivoted the business and did takeaways and deliveries during lockdown. We were active and working constantly on the business, looking for new customer bases to pitch to. We delivered to up to 275 houses on some days, with up to 600 meals in rural areas. We're trying to work out how that business model can work together with the pub operation in the future. It's now an essential part of our business, substituting that percentage of the clientele base who might not have the confidence to come out after lockdown. We're constantly looking for new ways to adapt. We try to be the magpie and not the ostrich."

Mark Holden's Inn Cornwall operates three pubs.



8 GETTING A SENSE OF PURPOSE

SHARON HOOKINGS, MBII
THE RED HART INN, BLAISDON, GLOS



"The first lockdown was about getting help to people that needed it. We're very rural and a lot of neighbours were vulnerable. We did people's shopping for them: we were buying bread, flour, sugar and hand sanitizer. There's part of the DNA of working in the hospitality industry that is about helping people. After lockdown and during the second one we got the payback; people supported us because of what we gave them in the first one. But helping people just gives you a lift as well. It gives you a sense of purpose."

Sharon Hookings has been a member for four years and has found BII's email shots useful in distilling key Covid-19 information.

9 HELPING THE VULNERABLE

DOREEN CAPPER MBII
MOUNT VIEW HOTEL, PENZANCE, CORNWALL

"We tried to get meals out to all those who are vulnerable and unable to go out shopping. It helped us stay in business long enough to come out of lockdown, and we carried on doing it afterwards too. It helps me stay sane; otherwise I'd be sitting here in a very big building all on my own with nothing to do. It was £4-a-meal delivered to their door by local volunteers. A lot of people booked their meals and asked if we could get bread or milk, so we'd do their shopping and deliver that with their meals as well."

Doreen Capper is a BII member who has rallied the local community to help those in need during the Covid-19 crisis.



10 BE THERE FOR OTHERS

PAUL DEXTER
THE OLD SWAN, EARLS BARTON
NORTHANTS

"Constant engagement with the community is a must. We did free stew on a Wednesday for the elderly and the vulnerable; we delivered that out to hundreds of people. We also did a Christmas hamper appeal to ask the community to check their cupboards and if they had tins of food, bags of rice or pasta they could spare, to bring them to us – and we put together hampers to deliver to the elderly. After the first lockdown ended and we reopened, we were 66% up on normal. If you support people, they will support you."

Paul Dexter and his team funded food for the vulnerable by selling a not-for-profit pub-in-a-box of drinks, snacks and "other bits and pieces".