PUBS POWER SPORT

PUB AID
The positive voice for pubs

Unlocking the impact of pubs on community sport

sky business

GUINNESS

"Pubs are not just the backdrop to Britain's sporting culture. They are part of its foundation."

Definitions

Grassroots sport:
structured, competitive sport at club level.

Community sport:
inclusive, social or recreational physical activity.

Pubs operate across both, supporting leagues and local clubs while also hosting walking groups, darts teams, yoga sessions and other community activities.

©PubAid 2025

Contents

5	Foreword
7	Pubs Power Sport
9	The Need for Community Sport
11	Pubs Power Community Movement
12	Which Sports Pubs Support
15	Why & How Pubs Support Community Sport
16	Case Studies - The Royal Dyche, Burnley
19	What is Holding Pubs Back?
20	The Business Benefits of Belonging
23	A Modern Measure of Value
24	Five Dimensions of Pub Power
27	The Future Outlook
28	Opportunities for Partnerships
30	Call to Action
32	PubAid Provides the Proof
34	Support from the BBPA
35	The Final Word
36	Sponsors
38	Patrons
40	About PubAid
41	Positive PUBlicity Hub
42	Case Studies
50	Appendix

Pubs power 6.7 million activity sessions every year through community sport

Foreword

Grassroot sports clubs transform lives and strengthen communities. They create opportunities for people to come together and learn from one other – and for the local heroes who run these amazing groups and organisations to use the power of sport to make a difference, not just in making those involved more physically active but in addressing real issues such as mental health, community cohesion and social isolation.

As the UK's leading charity helping these clubs to remain sustainable and empowered, Sported knows they are often under-resourced and under-appreciated. But they are at the heart of positive change up and down the UK.

We know they also need an ecosystem to help them work – sponsors, backers, those who provide facilities where this good work can come to life. And so often, pubs are a key part of that equation, hosts for that after-match chat where people can open up and express themselves, where relationships are nurtured over bread broken or a drink shared, where wins are celebrated and the joys recalled.

We see why it makes good business sense too for the pub industry and the brands who work with it. There is a return on investment in partnering with community sport: as a supporter, shirt sponsor, host or even a grant-giver. Those links help everyone in our localities to have a ball. We can all toast to that.

Mark Woods
Head of Marketing
and Communications, Sported

www.sported.org.uk

SPORTED

Pubs Power Sport

Executive Summary

Across the UK, pubs are quietly powering something our nation needs more than ever: physical activity and community wellbeing. They are where activity starts and connection follows; where the walk, the run, the match and the celebration often begin and end.

This research from **PubAid**, supported by **Guinness** and **Sky Business** and conducted by **KAM Research**, builds on the 2019 PubAid 'Impact of Sport' report that had revealed pubs contribute £40M to local sport. This 2025 report reveals that pubs are not just spectators of sport, but key enablers of it, funding, hosting and motivating millions of people to move more, connect more and live well.

Despite there being 7% fewer pubs than in 2019, the total value of their support for grassroots sport remains at £40 million every year, proof that pubs are giving more than ever. That support powers over 6.7 million activity sessions each year, reaching 1.7 million people and generating between £160–£331 million in social value to the UK economy.

Behind every number is a publican opening doors early for a charity run, clearing a function room for yoga, or raising money for a local team. This is the human infrastructure of sport and wellbeing: thousands of people keeping their communities moving, one game, mental health meet up, or fundraiser at a time.

Why this matters

The UK faces growing inactivity, loneliness and declining access to community spaces. Pubs counter that trend. They bring movement into everyday life, strengthen social ties and provide accessible, non-clinical spaces that support both physical and mental health.

Their impact directly complements government priorities, from the DCMS Get Active Plan to the NHS Long Term Plan and The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID's) physical activity framework, all of which recognise the importance of embedding movement, prevention and connection within communities. Pubs already deliver this every day.

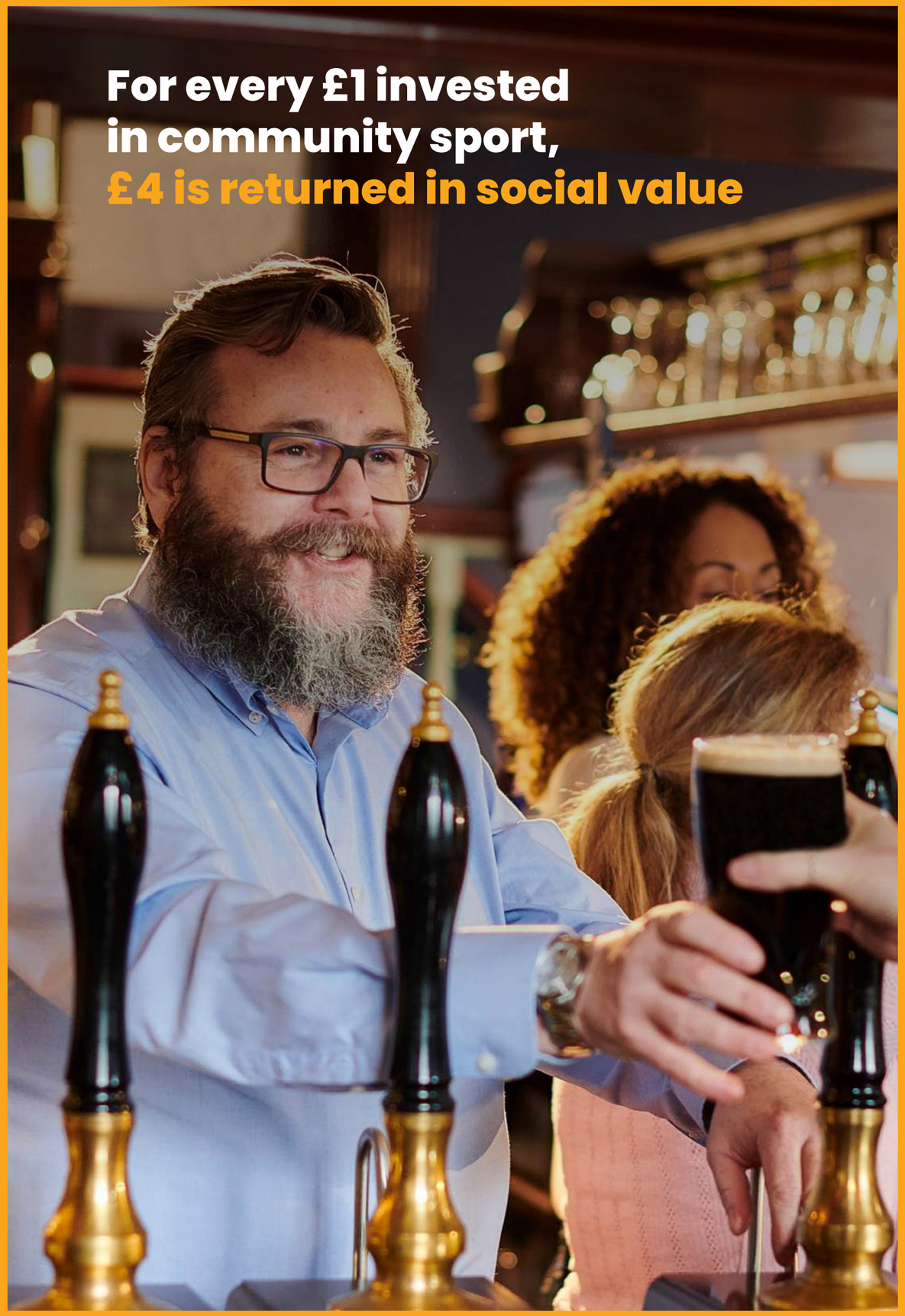
The opportunity ahead

If the UK is serious about creating a healthier, more active nation, pubs must be recognised and supported as part of its social and sporting infrastructure. They are uniquely placed to help achieve government goals on movement, prevention and wellbeing, reaching people that traditional sports and health settings often cannot.

This report makes a clear call to policymakers, industry partners and health leaders:

Work with us to put pubs at the heart of the nation's active future, because when pubs thrive, communities move.

©PubAid 2025



The Need for Community Sport

Context

Britain faces a perfect storm of declining participation, facility closures and rising loneliness. The cost-of-living crisis, reduced council funding and time-poor communities have made it harder for people to stay active.

Sport England reports that one in four adults and more than four in ten children are not meeting recommended activity levels. This is not just a health issue; it is a social one. Communities with lower participation in sport experience greater isolation, poorer wellbeing and reduced local pride.

Why Pubs Matter

Pubs are part of the solution. They are trusted local spaces where people of all backgrounds come together. They host teams, raise funds, provide meeting places and often act as informal clubhouses for local leagues.

In hundreds of towns and villages, the pub is the only remaining public space with the capacity to bring people together. By supporting local sport, pubs help communities to stay active, connected and proud.

Policy Alignment and Opportunity

The role of pubs in powering sport aligns directly with key government priorities:

Levelling Up and Place

Pubs sustain pride in place and strengthen the social fabric of towns and villages.

Health and Prevention

Every hour of activity enabled by pubs supports the government's preventative health agenda and helps reduce pressure on the NHS.

Mental Health and Loneliness

Pub-supported sport fosters belonging, connection and purpose, complementing the government's Mental Health and Loneliness Strategies.

Youth and Skills

Pubs' backing of under-18 sport complements school sport plans and youth engagement initiatives.

Sustainable and Active Communities

Pub-hosted and pub-supported sport encourages greener, more active lifestyles.

Recent research from Pub is the Hub about the social value of pubs in general identified that £1 invested in the provision of services and activities returns £8.28 in social value. Pubs must not be overlooked in their significance as part of that value chain.

Pubs Power Community Movement

The physical and financial impact of pubs on communities

Financial Impact

Pubs make an extraordinary contribution to grassroots and community sport across the UK.

Our research show that pubs raise around £40 million every year to support local teams. This figure has remained steady since 2019 despite a reduction in the overall number of pubs, meaning each pub is contributing more per venue than ever before.

- **Total annual contribution:** Pubs have given £40 million to support community sport in the last 12 months
- **Average annual contribution per pub:** £1,300
- **Equivalent social value:** £160 million (based on the government's £1:£4 ratio)
- **Equivalent social value:** £331 million (based on Pub is the Hub ratio of £1:£8.28)

Movement and Participation Impact

Pubs do far more than write cheques. They are powering millions of hours of movement and participation every year.

- Pubs have helped 1.7 million people in the last 12 months, through the support of local community sport
- Pubs have powered 6.7 million hours of movement through supporting community sport
- Pubs facilitate an average of 240 hours of sport and physical activity per pub each year.

Why it matters

Behind every statistic is a publican giving time, space and care to keep local teams alive. Each session represents a real moment of movement - a five-a-side match, a netball game, a darts league night, or a yoga class in the function room. Pubs are playing a crucial part in improving the physical and mental health of the nation.

"Behind every grassroots club, there's often a pub that helped it survive."

Which Sports Pubs Support

Football remains the dominant sport, but the range of support is widening. Many pubs now sponsor or host walking football, netball, rounders and multi-sport community leagues.

The most popular sports that pubs help to support are as follows:

Football
76%

Darts
26%

Pool
20%

Rugby
19%

Cricket
13%

Bowls
5%

Tennis
3%

Snooker
2%

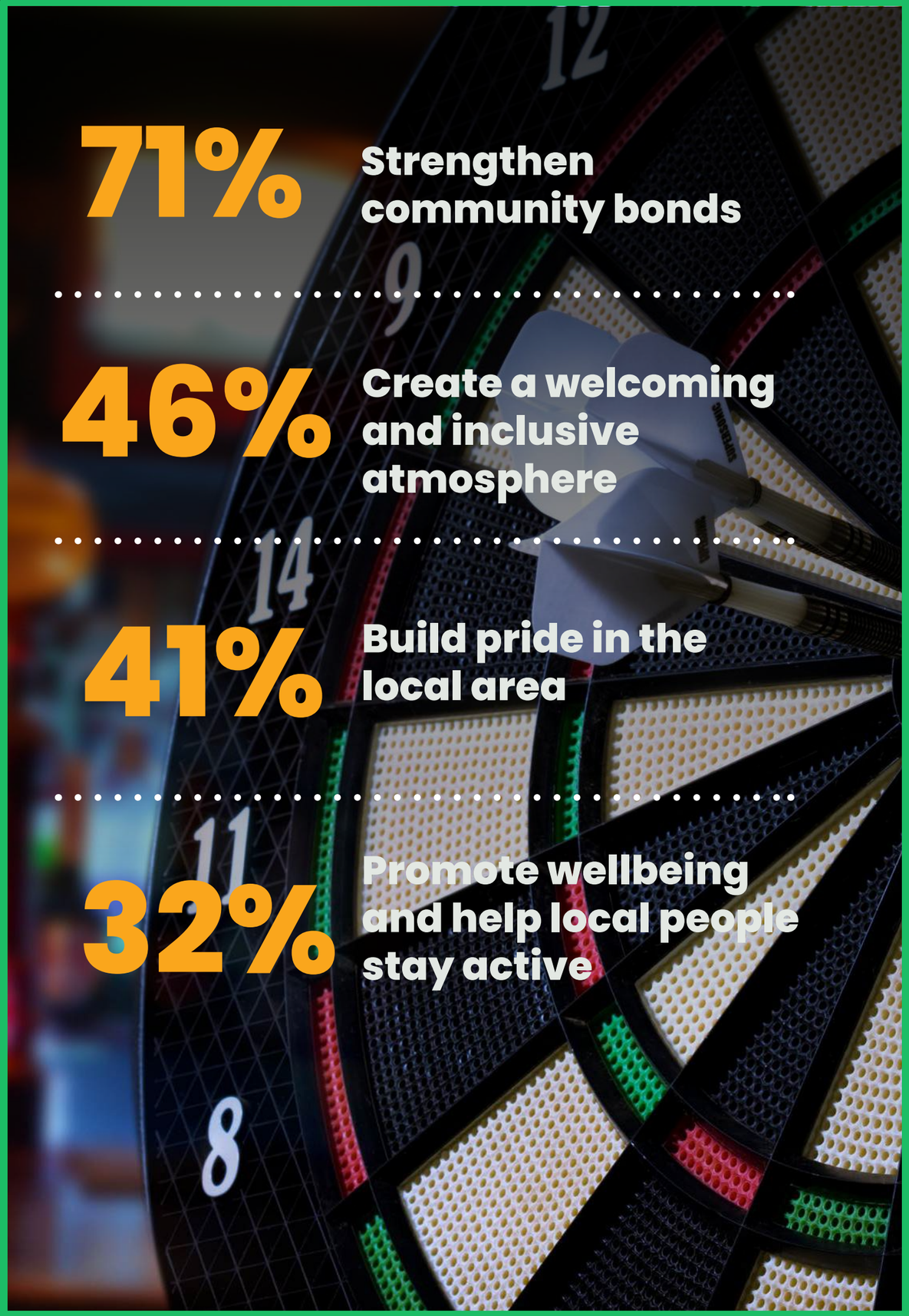
Athletics
1%

The rise of women's and inclusive sport

71% of pubs, who support local community sports support those which specifically benefit under represented groups, with 19% of pubs now supporting female teams or initiatives, reflecting a surge in women's and girls' participation following the success of the Lionesses and the growth of women's rugby under the RFU's Every Rose programme.

This movement is mirrored in mixed-gender and inclusive sport, with 20% of pubs backing teams that involve people with disabilities or mental health conditions, and 15% supporting over-55s activity groups.

Pubs are not just part of sport's past. They are part of its future



71% Strengthen community bonds

46% Create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere

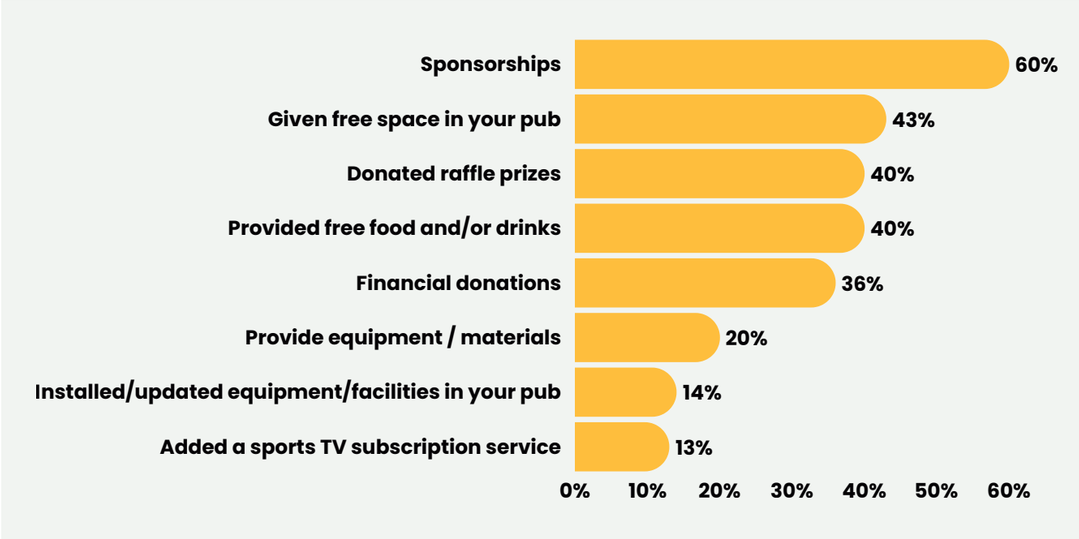
41% Build pride in the local area

32% Promote wellbeing and help local people stay active

Why & How Pubs Support Community Sport

We know from our Community Pub Hero Awards, that Publicans support sport because they care about their communities.

For many, the motivation is emotional rather than financial. Sport gives pubs purpose, creates shared stories and deepens their role as the beating heart of community life. Pubs see themselves as community anchors, not just venues. They provide warmth, belonging and connection at a time when other community spaces are disappearing.



£1,300 Per Pub

Pubs have raised, on average, £1.3k for local community sports in the last 12 months

£5,000+

With 4% of pubs raising more than £5,000 annually

Case Studies

The Royal Dyche, Burnley

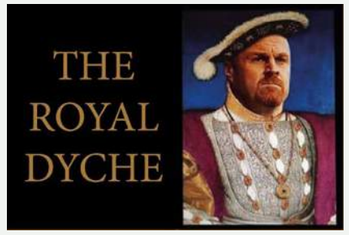
How one Burnley pub powers community sport and belonging

A claret and blue landmark a short walk from Turf Moor, The Royal Dyche has turned a once-tired pub into a high-energy community sports hub. It's a multi-screen matchday magnet, home to fan meet-ups, pool and darts teams, fundraising initiatives with Burnley FC in the Community, and a steady rhythm of inclusive sport and wellbeing activity that runs all year.

From casual games to organised leagues, The Royal Dyche keeps its community physically active and socially connected. Whether it's locals competing in pool and darts tournaments, friendly fixtures played out in the beer garden, or residents inspired to get back into sport through the pub's links with Burnley FC in the Community, this is a place where movement, togetherness and pride go hand in hand.

In 2023 it won **Best Pub to Watch Sport** at the Great British Pub Awards. In 2024 the publican was named **BII Licensee of the Year**, and in 2025 the pub took **Best Small Business** at the Lancashire Red Rose Awards.

The pub is far more than a place to watch matches. It is a meaningful community anchor, creating opportunities for connection, participation and support in a town where sport sits at the heart of local life.



Championing sport, wellbeing and belonging

The Royal Dyche makes sport accessible, social and inclusive for everyone. With live fixtures screened inside and out, including women's and grassroots games, the pub attracts both dedicated fans and casual viewers.

Regular events such as **Free Pool Mondays** and **local darts and pool teams** bring people together through friendly competition and social play, helping to keep people active and connected throughout the week.

On Thursdays, the pub hosts **Turf Talk**, a relaxed meet-up run in partnership with **Burnley FC in the Community**. Supporters come together for conversation, guest speakers and good company, all part of the Premier League's Inside Matters mental wellbeing campaign. It's a safe space to talk about football, life and everything in between, proof that sport and community are powerful partners for wellbeing.

Raising funds and spirits

Community pride runs deep at The Royal Dyche. When landlady **Justine Lorriman** introduced **Little Longside**, a scaled-down replica of the Turf Moor stand in the beer garden, it became an instant hit. Supporters could sponsor their own seat, with proceeds going to **Burnley FC in the Community's Mission Possible** campaign.

By late 2025, the initiative had raised **£1,500** and built a waiting list stretching into 2027. It is a simple but powerful idea that turns local passion into positive impact, combining nostalgia, sport and social good in one brilliant gesture.

A local hub with national recognition

The Royal Dyche's influence reaches far beyond Burnley. Its award wins highlight the extraordinary difference pubs can make when they champion community sport and wellbeing.

The Great British Pub Awards praised the venue's electric matchday atmosphere and inclusivity, while the BII recognised Justine's leadership and commitment to her team. The Red Rose Awards then celebrated the pub's contribution to Lancashire's economy and its thriving sense of place.

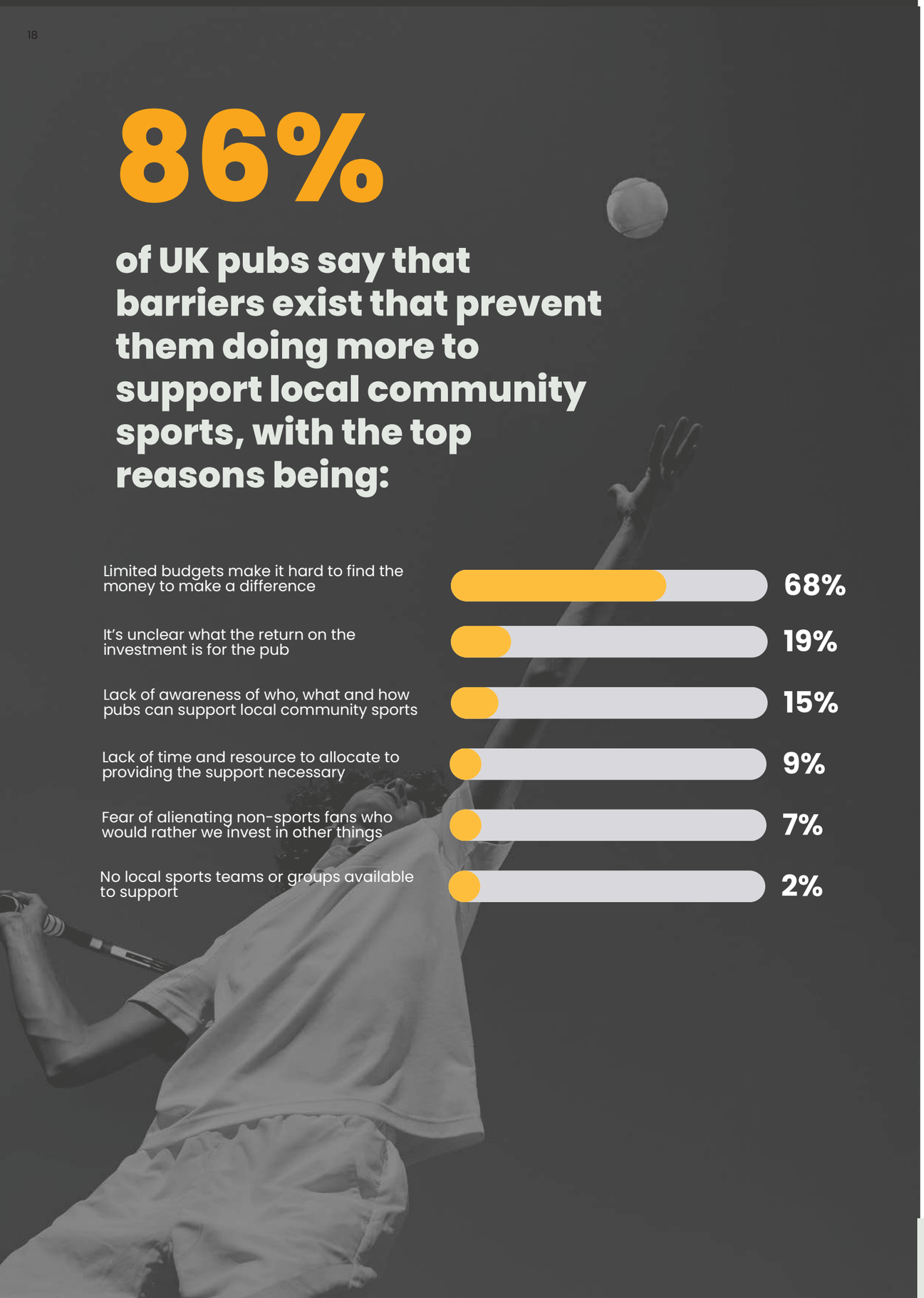
Behind every accolade is a network of local people who meet, play, talk and fundraise together because their pub makes it possible.

"We're more than a pub, we're a community team."

Justine Lorriman, Publican, The Royal Dyche

86%

of UK pubs say that barriers exist that prevent them doing more to support local community sports, with the top reasons being:



What is Holding Pubs Back?

While the evidence confirms that pubs play a major role in supporting community sport, the research also reveals the pressures and limitations that constrain their ability to do even more. Understanding these barriers is essential to identifying where future opportunity lies.

Financial and operational pressures

Rising costs, reduced margins and wider trading challenges were the most commonly reported constraints. Although many publicans contribute financially to local teams, they frequently described doing so at personal cost.

In PubAid's survey, 68% of respondents cited lack of budget as the main factor limiting their community sport support.

Despite these challenges, many still prioritise sport, demonstrating strong social motivation that goes beyond profit.

Space, time and staffing

Publicans highlighted limited staff capacity and long working hours as barriers to organising or hosting sport-related activities. Smaller venues in particular lack storage or facilities for equipment, or outdoor space to host training sessions.

Case studies from the Community Pub Hero Awards 2025 show that the most active pubs often rely on informal networks of volunteers to manage fixtures, fundraising and communications - commitment that cannot be taken for granted.

Awareness and connection

While demand for local sponsorship is high, many pubs and community clubs operate in isolation. Teams may not know which pubs are open to partnership, and publicans may be unaware of clubs nearby. The survey found that 15% of respondents were unsure how to identify teams in need of support.

Confidence in supporting diverse participation

Some publicans expressed uncertainty about how best to support women's, disability or youth sport. They often lacked clear guidance on safeguarding, inclusivity or accessibility. This limits participation growth at a time when these areas represent major public interest and policy focus.

Examples from the 2025 Community Pub Hero Awards demonstrate that where pubs have received advice from governing bodies or local councils, participation rates in inclusive sport increased.

The Business Benefits of Belonging

Beyond profit

Publicans are clear that their motivation to support sport is rooted in people, not profit. Yet the research also demonstrates that community engagement delivers tangible business benefits. Nine in ten pubs report positive outcomes from supporting sport. These benefits extend far beyond the till – they include loyalty, reputation, and a stronger sense of place.

Sport transforms a pub from a venue into a community hub. It gives customers a reason to come together midweek, stay longer after matches, and bring family and friends. These are not traditional trading peaks but social peaks - moments of connection that foster belonging.

Extended trading and repeat visits

Teams create rhythm and routine. Fixtures, training sessions and tournaments anchor repeat custom. Publicans consistently report that sports nights are reliable midweek drivers - but more importantly, they generate predictability and community rhythm in an uncertain trading landscape.

Reputation and loyalty

Communities increasingly judge pubs on character, not chain. Pubs associated with local sport are perceived as friendly, safe and family-oriented - qualities that drive word-of-mouth recommendations.

PubAid's research shows that 75% of publicans say supporting community sport strengthens ties with the local community.

Social capital and staff morale

Supporting local sport also boosts staff engagement and pride. Many bar teams play for or help manage the clubs they sponsor. This connection deepens the bond between staff, customers and the wider community - creating a virtuous cycle of trust

At The Bowgie Inn in Cornwall, staff members play for local football and surf lifesaving clubs, with the pub funding equipment and hosting celebration nights. The publican describes it as "a circle of belonging - the staff, the players, and the community all win together."

Community resilience and shared moments

Publicans often speak about the intangible but powerful lift that comes from shared celebrations. Major tournaments, local finals and charity matches bring people of all ages together, reinforcing the pub's role as the centre of community life.

In many communities, the pub is the only space large enough to host such moments. These gatherings sustain morale and identity - particularly in times of economic hardship.

Pubs as Wellbeing Hubs

At The White Horse in Trowse, Norwich, local group Pub Yoga Norwich runs weekly yoga sessions in the pub's function room. Participants of all ages and abilities gather to stretch, breathe and connect - staying afterwards for a social drink or chat. It is a small but powerful example of how pubs can help keep communities moving and connected.

A Modern Measure of Value

Traditional economic metrics rarely capture the social value that pubs create. When we apply the government's social value ratio (£1 invested in sport = £4 returned), the £40 million pubs raise each year generates an estimated £160 million in social and wellbeing benefit - an impact extending far beyond the hospitality sector.

Pubs have become places where movement, celebration and conversation co-exist. In policy terms, they are part of the UK's "social infrastructure," delivering community outcomes that align with the Levelling Up, Health and Wellbeing, and Loneliness strategies.

"Every hour of activity powered by a pub contributes to community resilience - the kind of resilience money alone can't buy."

Across the UK, pubs are evolving into spaces that support not only social wellbeing but physical and mental health.

Alongside the White Horse in Trowse, other venues have followed suit.

The @yogaandpints initiative brings yoga and mindfulness into taprooms and bars, attracting audiences who might never visit a gym.

Pubs in London and Yorkshire have hosted "Beer Yoga" and "Men's Wellbeing Nights," blending movement with camaraderie and inclusion.

These activities may be light-hearted, but their impact is serious. They create accessible, stigma-free pathways into health and connection.

"Every stretch, every smile, every sip – it all strengthens the community."

As the UK looks for new ways to activate the high street and reduce inactivity, pubs are proving that wellbeing can happen in familiar, welcoming spaces - not just in sports halls or clinics.
The evidence is clear: pubs that support community sport experience greater customer loyalty, stronger reputation and deeper community ties.

But the true return on investment is not only financial - it is the creation of social capital.

Every partnership, every shared match, every training session in the car park or yoga class in the function room builds the resilience, wellbeing and pride of local people.

"It's about giving people a place to belong. That's good for them, and good for us."

Five Dimensions of Pub Power

Community sport is increasingly recognised by policymakers as a cornerstone of public health, social cohesion and economic resilience. The evidence presented in Pubs Power Sport 2025 aligns directly with this national agenda. In 2023, Sport England's "Uniting the Movement" strategy set out an ambition to make sport and physical activity accessible to everyone, regardless of background or ability.

The government's Health and Wellbeing Framework and the NHS Long Term Plan both emphasise prevention, connection and local action. Meanwhile, the DCMS Sport and Social Value Framework quantifies how sport contributes to education, health and social capital - and underlines the importance of informal, community-led spaces. This report demonstrates that pubs already deliver on each of these policy ambitions. They are accessible, community-owned, intergenerational spaces - uniquely placed to tackle inactivity, loneliness and inequality through participation and partnership.

To show the impact we've mapped our report findings against five recognised dimensions of social value. Together, they show how every pound, hour and gesture from pubs multiplies across communities.

01

Physical Health

Pubs make sport happen. Every football shirt sponsored, every darts league hosted, every walking club that meets at the bar before setting off contributes to national activity levels.

The 2025 research shows pubs facilitate over 6 million hours of movement per year, directly supporting the government's aim to increase adult activity by 2.5 million people by 2030. The rise in walking football, netball, and inclusive team sports hosted by pubs reflects a broader shift towards active social spaces. These activities reduce inactivity-related conditions, from cardiovascular disease to obesity, supporting NHS prevention goals.

02

Mental Wellbeing

Community sport is as powerful for the mind as it is for the body.

Publicans consistently describe the sense of purpose and pride that comes from hosting teams and seeing regulars re-engage with community life.

PubAid's research found that 29% of pubs explicitly support sport to promote health and wellbeing. This aligns with NHS England's Community Mental Health Framework, which calls for more local, non-clinical spaces to reduce stigma and offer early support.

03

Community Cohesion

Pubs remain one of the few places where people of different generations, backgrounds and interests mix freely. 75% of pubs surveyed said they invest in sport as it strengthens ties with the local community with 32% saying they do it as it supports local talent and youth development.

Sport amplifies this inclusivity. From The Malt Shovel's 300-player football club in Selby to The Black Bull's women's cricket legacy in Haworth, pubs create shared identity and pride. They help communities celebrate together, recover together, and stay connected even in difficult times.

04

Economic Resilience

Every hour of sport powered by a pub generates social and economic ripple effects. Beyond increased footfall and spend, sport sustains local employment, hospitality supply chains and tourism. According to the Sheffield Hallam University and Sported social value study, every £1 invested in community sport returns £4 in social benefit.

Applying that ratio to the £40 million raised annually by pubs, the total estimated social value reaches £160 million per year. This supports the government's Levelling Up agenda by driving inclusive growth in towns and villages often underserved by larger-scale investment.

05

Volunteering and Skills

The UK's community sport ecosystem depends on volunteers.

Pubs are not just sponsors - they are organisers, coordinators, fundraisers and drivers. Many licensees coach youth teams, maintain pitches, or organise fixtures in their own time.

This eco system of support brings a wide array of benefits to a community, providing a feeling of belonging, mental health support and something that communities can come together to be a part of.

" Every pint poured, every pose held, every walk shared – all of it moves the nation forward."

The Future Outlook

The findings of Pubs Power Sport 2025 confirm what the industry has long known: pubs are a vital part of the nation's social infrastructure.

67% of UK pubs say they are providing more support to local community sports now compared to 5 years ago.

Many cited the sense of purpose and belonging this work brings - both to themselves and to their regulars - as motivation to continue.

This desire to do more comes at a time when national strategy is also shifting.

- The Government's Get Active plan (DCMS, 2023) sets an ambition for 3.5 million more adults and children to be active by 2030.
- The Sport England "Uniting the Movement" strategy (2021–2031) emphasises local delivery and cross-sector collaboration.
- The NHS Long Term Plan prioritises prevention and community-based health interventions.

The alignment between pub-led activity and national priorities is striking:

Government Policy Goals	Pub's Contributions
Levelling Up	Pubs sustain local identity, pride and opportunity in every constituency.
Health and Prevention	They deliver low-cost, accessible movement that reduces NHS burden.
Mental Health and Loneliness	They offer stigma-free social spaces where people connect.
Youth and Skills	They provide informal mentoring, volunteering and community leadership.
Economic Growth	They generate spending, jobs and tourism through sport and hospitality.

The opportunity now is to formalise this partnership - recognising pubs not only as hospitality venues but as community assets integral to the UK's wellbeing infrastructure.

Opportunities for Partnerships

This research highlights clear potential for collaboration across the pub, sport and wellbeing sectors. The findings show that pubs already act as community anchors, helping people stay active and connected. By working together, there is an opportunity to strengthen this role even further, building partnerships that make it easier for pubs, communities and organisations to achieve shared goals for health, inclusion and belonging.

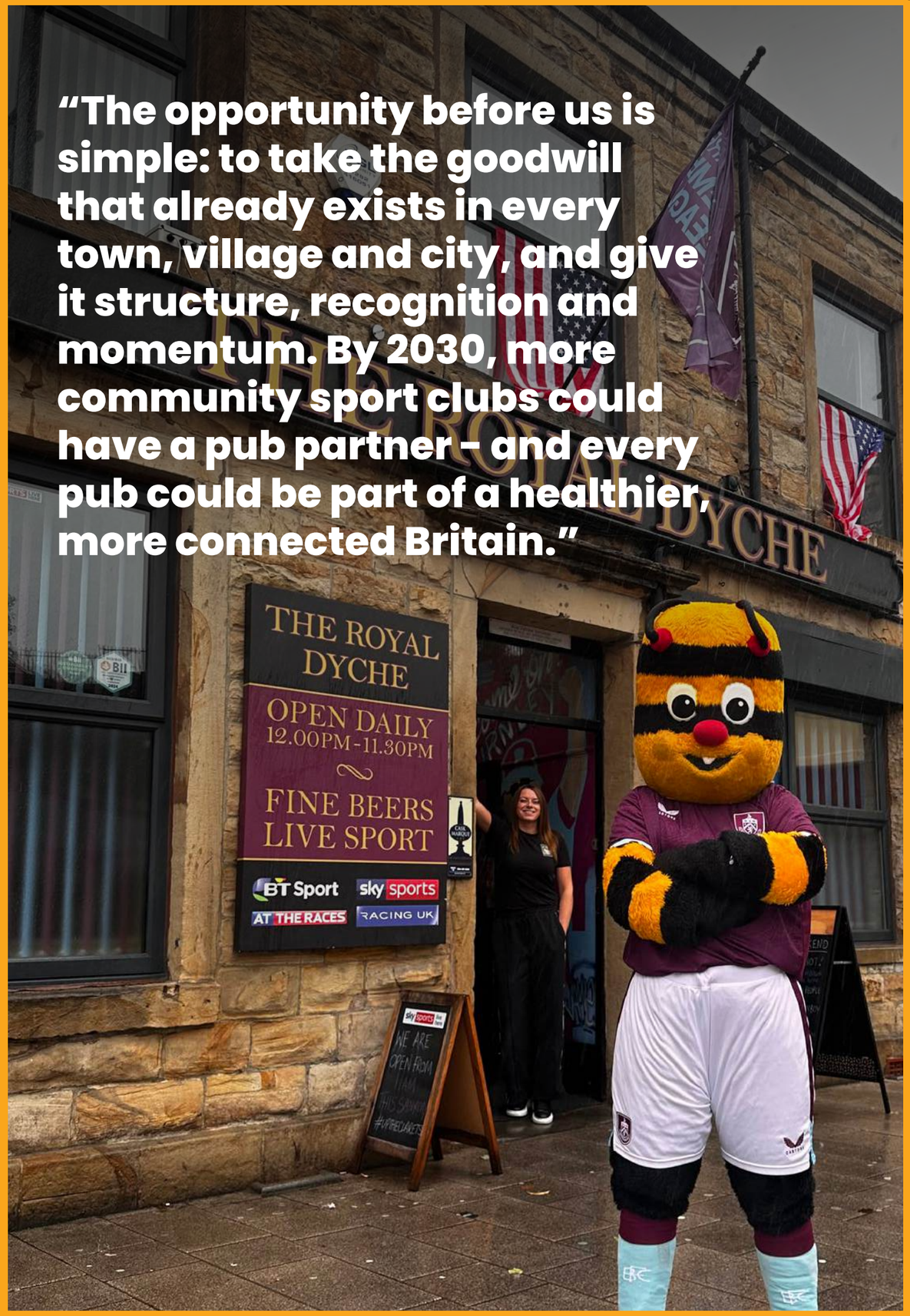
To grow the impact of pubs in supporting community sport and wellbeing, collaboration will be key. We would like to inspire industry partners, policymakers and community organisations to consider how they could work together to build on this momentum.

1. **Strengthening links between sport and community spaces**
There is an opportunity to create frameworks that connect local venues, including pubs, more closely with grassroots sport and physical activity initiatives. Shared training, simple toolkits and recognition schemes could help encourage more venues to offer their spaces for inclusive participation and celebration.

2. **Connecting with policy and local leadership**
National and local strategies are increasingly focused on tackling inactivity and loneliness by making better use of existing community assets. By recognising pubs as safe, social spaces that bring people together, future programmes could integrate them more intentionally within local wellbeing and activity plans.

3. **Supporting health and wellbeing partnerships**
Community-based approaches to health are becoming more prominent, with growing emphasis on prevention and social connection. Partnerships could see pubs offering spaces for wellbeing activities, walking groups or informal meet-ups that help people stay active and connected.

4. **Working with commercial and media partners**
Collaboration between trade bodies, drinks brands, media partners and pub companies can amplify this message and support local impact. By aligning commercial goals with community benefit, partners could help fund microgrants, share stories of positive change and celebrate the publicans who make a difference.



"The opportunity before us is simple: to take the goodwill that already exists in every town, village and city, and give it structure, recognition and momentum. By 2030, more community sport clubs could have a pub partner – and every pub could be part of a healthier, more connected Britain."

Call to action

This research presents a clear case for recognition. If the UK is to achieve its ambition for a more active, resilient and connected population, pubs must be seen as part of the nation's social and sporting infrastructure.

We invite policymakers, health leaders and industry partners to work with us to embed pubs within national and local strategies for movement, wellbeing and prevention.

Because when pubs thrive, communities move and when communities move, the nation's health and happiness grow stronger.

For Government

Recognise pubs as part of the UK's social and health infrastructure. Pubs already deliver on multiple government priorities - Levelling Up, Health and Prevention, Loneliness and Community Ownership. Formal recognition within frameworks could unlock funding and partnership opportunities.

For MPs, MSPs and MS'

Visit your local pub to see how it supports community sport.

Every MP, MSP and MS can find examples in their constituency through PubAid's Positive PUBlicity Hub. First-hand visits strengthen understanding and encourage regional recognition events. The All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group, supported by PubAid, can coordinate invitations and share best practice from visits.

For sports bodies

Partner with pubs to sustain grassroots growth. NGBs and similar organisations can develop formal "Pub Partner" schemes that recognise venues supporting inclusive community sport.

For publicans

Keep sharing your stories.

Use the Positive PUBlicity Hub on www.pubaid.co.uk to record impact - every kit sponsored or club supported adds to national evidence. PubAid will continue to curate stories and encourage its partners including the BBPA and BII to amplify them through member newsletters and relevant channels.

For sponsors and partners

Invest where impact and authenticity meet.

Brands like Guinness, Star, Punch and Sky Business have shown how community impact and brand purpose align. Future sponsors could fund microgrants, tournaments and storytelling through PubAid's platforms.

For the public

Support a pub that supports community sport. Find your nearest pub using the Useyourlocal Pub finder tool.

> **"Pubs are not an adjunct to community sport – they are part of its foundation. They fund it, host it, celebrate it and sustain it. They create belonging, connection and movement in every constituency across the UK."**

PUB AID
The positive voice for pubs

PubAid provides the proof.

Partners and those with power must help to drive the change.

Every community sport club with a pub partner.

Every pub part of a healthier, more connected Britain.

If community sport is the heartbeat of the nation, pubs are its pulse – steady, reliable and full of life.

Support from the BBPA

"Pubs are the home of sport – watching in the pub brings friends, family and fans together. Across the country our pubs champion grassroots teams, sponsor local kits, and offer space for clubs to meet, grow, and celebrate (or commiserate).

Behind every televised match or fundraiser is a publican fostering support and participation in sport that's not only good for physical health – but enriches social and cultural health. This support sparks participation, builds friendships, and gives people a reason to move, connect, and belong.

It's another way that the pub plays a role that is fundamental to our communities but is all too often taken for granted. Crushing costs mean that it's not only pubs that are threatened – but the survival of local sports groups is, too. This is why the British Beer and Pub Association is calling on government to recognise the role pubs play with meaningful reform of business rates, cutting beer duty, mitigating soaring employment costs, and cutting VAT. To do this would not only back pubs, but back sport and the people who make it possible."

Emma McClarkin OBE
CEO of the British Beer and Pub Association

www.beerandpub.com

The Final Word

Pubs have always been so much more than places to eat and drink. They are where people come together, where friendships are formed, and where communities find their heartbeat.

This research shows that pubs are also driving something even more profound, the nation's health and happiness. From funding kits to hosting walking clubs, publicans across the UK are helping millions to move more and connect well.

At a time when the country faces rising inactivity, loneliness and pressure on community spaces, this contribution could not be more important. Pubs are not only part of our social fabric, they are part of our national wellbeing.

As President of PubAid, I am immensely proud to see the scale of what publicans achieve every day, often quietly and without recognition. This report is both a celebration and a call to action: that pubs must now be recognised as an integral part of the nation's social and sporting infrastructure because when pubs thrive, communities move.

Kate Nicholls OBE
PubAid President

www.pubaid.co.uk

Pubs Power Sport Report Sponsors

This report wouldn't have been possible without the funding from Sky Business and Guinness who saw value in producing a report that demonstrates the impact between pubs and community sport. Their contribution has enabled us to create an in-depth report that shows a clear connection between pubs' support for grassroots sport and community health and wellbeing.

Guinness is synonymous with sport, a reputation reinforced by it being the official beer partner of the Premier League. Guinness also has a longstanding partnership with Six Nations Rugby, becoming the first-ever partner of the Women's Six Nations in 2019, coinciding with its Title Partnership of the men's Championship. Its support of the Women's Six Nations reflects Guinness' commitment to building a better society through diversity and inclusion, aligned with Diageo's Spirit of Progress agenda.

For the 2025/26 Premier League Season, Guinness unveiled its largest community driven sports campaign, marketing its second season as Official Beer and Official Non-Alcoholic Beer of the Premier League.

GUINNESS

We know that sport and the pub share some two key values; they're places where communities come together, and where everyone belongs. Through a variety of initiatives, such as our title sponsorship of the Guinness Six Nations or our partnership with the Premier League, we're proud to celebrate through Guinness and Guinness 0.0 the rituals and emotions of match-day, in the pub as much as in the stadium.

Deb Ralls, Marketing Director Guinness

Sky Business is the business-to-business division of Sky.

No matter the size or sector, Sky Business keeps businesses connected and customers entertained with their next generation network and unmissable live sport and entertainment.

Everything we do at Sky Business is guided by three promises. We're always innovating, it's in our DNA. Making our customers everyday easier, with next-level support and continually investing in business, with business grade commitments.

sky business

PubAid Patrons

Heineken Star Pubs and Bars

Heineken UK has a strong focus on charitable work, particularly around fostering social connections and addressing loneliness. In 2023, they raised £90,000 for the Marmalade Trust, a charity dedicated to tackling loneliness, through events like charity balls, pub quizzes, and physical challenges. Their "Brewing Good Cheer" campaign has also brought thousands of people together in pubs for communal meals and social activities. Heineken encourages employee involvement in local causes, offering up to three days of paid volunteer leave and matching donations up to £500 per person, further reflecting their commitment to UK communities.

Zonal

Zonal is a leading provider of integrated technology solutions for the hospitality industry.

By their own admission, they are customer-obsessed, but they are also community-obsessed too. Zonal is committed to the communities they serve and have been actively involved in numerous charitable initiatives, particularly focusing on youth development, mental health, and sustainability within the hospitality sector. They support organisations like PubAid and work closely with Only a Pavement Away, which helps find stable employment for people facing or experiencing homelessness, prison leavers and veterans.

Greene King

Greene King IPA launched its Proud to Pitch In initiative in 2021. The scheme donated 10p from pints and 50p from selected can packs of Greene King IPA sold to support community clubs across the UK who were able to apply for grants up to £4,000. In 2025, the scheme reached its milestone of over £1million funds given away to clubs which benefitted over 370 teams. This has enabled clubs to continue and grow, whether that's improving grounds, buying equipment, or opening up access to new participants. Proud to Pitch In has helped communities keep sport alive, inclusive, and thriving. By tying contributions directly to beer sold in both venues and retail, Greene King IPA invited pub-goers, shoppers, partners and local supporters to be part of something bigger - investing in the health, connection, and future of grassroots sports.

Camden Town Brewery, Part of Budweiser Brewing Group,

Camden Town Brewery, part of Budweiser Brewing Group, is the official sponsor of Rugby FC, one of the sport's most historic grassroots clubs. The partnership expanded Camden's Give 'Em Hells initiative, launched with Gilbert, to strengthen grassroots rugby across the UK.

The collaboration was unveiled with a creative pitch display by turf artist John Ledwidge and a community gesture offering every adult resident of Rugby a free pint. Camden is also investing in club facilities, including stand refurbishments and equipment, while planning local events to bring fans together. Rugby FC Chairman Mal Malik praised the support as "a refreshing notion for the future." The partnership reflects Camden and Budweiser Brewing Group's commitment to supporting grassroots sport and fostering community through rugby and beer.

About PubAid

PubAid is the positive voice for pubs. It was founded in 2009 by a number of senior industry leaders,tired of the negative press that pubs were constantly getting in the media.

We exist to celebrate the social contribution that pubs make to their communities, from fundraising and volunteering to supporting local sport.

We are a not-for-profit organisation funded by the pub and brewing industry. Our purpose is to gather evidence, share stories and champion the difference pubs make to communities.

Our work is guided by a simple belief: pubs are not just places to drink. They are vital community spaces.

What We Do

We keep positive news about pubs alive through our campaigns and always on initiatives.

The Community Pub Hero Awards – hosted each year in the House of Commons with the All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group, celebrating pubs that go above and beyond.

The Positive PUBlicity Hub – a digital platform of inspiring stories, searchable by region and constituency, giving journalists, MPs and the public access to the many ways pubs make a positive difference.

We are always looking for ways to raise the positive profile of pubs, and conduct activities throughout the year to maintain the conversation.

PUB AID
The positive voice for pubs

Follow us on social media

Positive PUBlicity Hub

The Positive PUBlicity Hub is the UK's home of positive pub stories. It has hundreds of positive pub stories all connected to the relevant MP in the pubs' local constituency.

Charlie's Bar: Community, Culture and Care at the Heart of Enniskillen
The Malt Shovel: Building a Sporting Legacy in Selby
Pill Harriers Sports Club: Keeping Community Sport Alive
Riverside Sports Bar: A Home for Every Fan in Newport
The Halfway Inn: The Pub That Powers Brynawel FC
Casked Ale House & Ginporium: Running Towards a Healthier Community
Whelley Sports and Community Ltd: A Beacon of Community Revival
Lichfield Sports Club: A Hub for Community Sport and Inclusivity
The Pig and Whistle: Grassroots Sports Champions
Fuller's Charity Football Tournament Scores £21,000 in Support of Special Olympics GB
Yeaveley Arms: Transforming Community Spirit with Food, Fun, and Fundraising
The White Cross Inn Cardiff: Reviving Community Spirit One Walk at a Time

Find or list your local pub sports story here
www.pubaid.co.uk/publicityhub/

Case Studies

Some of the pubs powering community sport

Find more on our Positive PUBlicity Hub

www.pubaid.co.uk/publicityhub/

Case Studies

The Malt Shovel – Selby, North Yorkshire

20 teams, 300 players, and one unstoppable community pub

Since opening in 2011, The Malt Shovel has built one of the most impressive grassroots sporting legacies of any UK pub. What began with two football teams has grown into a 20-team football club with over 300 registered players, spanning under-6s to veterans.

The pub supports football, darts, pool, dominoes, netball, cricket, and golf. It provides free hot meals after matches, funds coaching qualifications, and even maintains local pitches through a volunteer group of regulars. Its annual football gala now attracts hundreds of residents and local businesses, raising funds for charities such as Selby Hands of Hope and Macmillan Cancer Trust.

Publican Paul Dixon says the pub's role is simple: "We started with football, but what we've really built is belonging." The Malt Shovel is now recognised by regional sports bodies as a model of what community sport, powered by pubs, can achieve.

Case Studies

"Darts is all the rage and is really taking off thanks to Luke Littler. The Academy's accomplishments are recognised locally and it's viewed very positively in the community."

The Gate, Hugglescote (Star Pubs and Bars)

The Gate in Hugglescote enhanced its community standing by helping to launch a local darts academy after a regular approached the pub with the idea. The Gate has given the academy full use of its function room, raised funds and found sponsors for state-of-the-art darts boards and iPads for scoring and paid for accreditation for two coaches.

The academy quickly became a success, hosting training sessions, tournaments, and practice evenings. The Gate's operator, Nigel Underwood, said: "Darts is all the rage and is really taking off thanks to Luke Littler. The Academy's accomplishments are recognised locally and it's viewed very positively in the community."

Case Studies

The Victoria Inn – Haddington, East Lothian

Winner of the Community Pub Hero Sport Award 2025, The Victoria Inn has become synonymous with sport in East Lothian.

Landlord Craig Douglas supports multiple teams, including Haddington Women's Hockey Club and Haddington Athletic Football Club, providing both sponsorship and social space. He personally coaches junior sides and coordinates charity tournaments for the community.

Paul McLennan, Scottish National Party, MSP for East Lothian , said: "The Victoria Inn is a great example of the incredible community spirit that you find in East Lothian. It is good to recognise those who help to make sport accessible to all and Craig is part of a group of people who are doing their best in their local community to make this happen."

The award judges praised The Victoria Inn for "living and breathing community sport," with the pub described by locals as "the glue that keeps our clubs together."

"I've supported community sports for a long time from kids football and kids rugby to kids ice hockey as well as women in sport which is really important in our community. We're in a small town and everyone supports us a lot", Craig Douglas, Publican, The Victoria Inn.

"Every great team has a home ground. For thousands of community clubs, that ground is the local pub."

Case Studies

The Pig and Whistle, London (Punch Pubs)

A 2025 Community Pub Hero Sport Award Winner

The Pig & Whistle in Wandsworth provides sponsorship and financial backing to local clubs, including the Wilddog rugby squads, Earlsfield FC, a women's netball team, and a player from the Streatham RedHawks ice hockey team. The pub donates a percentage of its food sales to youth teams, helping cover equipment, uniforms, and training costs.

Its running team encourages staff and locals to take part in fitness and community events. Beyond funding, the pub serves as a social hub for clubs, hosting meetings, gatherings, and celebrations. Through financial support, active involvement, and a welcoming venue, The Pig & Whistle strengthens local sports through its shared passion for physical activity.

Find more stories on our Positive PUBlicity Hub
https://www.pubaid.co.uk/publicityhub/

Riverside Sports Bar

A 2025 Community Pub Hero Sport Award Winner

Riverside Sports Bar sponsors Newport Corinthians FC, Newport City FC, Hartridge Rugby, Newport High School Old Boys, and a young local boxer fighting for his first belt in 2025. It is an official 'Her Game Too pub' which recognises gender equal bars that provide a safe space for women to watch sport and it has hosted several 'Her Game Too' events. Daniel Harris from Riverside Sports Bar said: "We pride ourselves on being at the centre of the sporting community in Newport. We sponsor various teams and we work with all different sporting organisations and aim to create and a warm and welcoming hub for people of all ages, sizes, backgrounds. We want everyone to enjoy sport, have good food and have a good time.

Appendix

Evidence, methodology, and acknowledgements

Research methodology

- Research carried out by PubAid and KAM Research.
- A structured survey was distributed to pubs across the UK via PubAid's supporter network and the Positive PUBlicity Hub.
- 659 responses, covering a representative sample by region, ownership and size.
- Fieldwork conducted between 6th-26th August 2025.
- Respondents included freehold, leased/tenanted and managed houses (30%, 40%, 26% respectively), plus 3% franchise or other models.
- Data was weighted against the national pub population (approx. 44,000 venues, BBPA, 2024).

Partners and supporters

- PubAid extends sincere thanks to the many partners, supporters and individuals who made this report possible.
- Sky Business and Guinness – for sponsorship and logistical support.
- All-Party Parliamentary Beer Group – for championing positive pub stories in Parliament and assisting in the MP launch event for Pubs Power Sport
- Sported – for their contribution
- British Beer & Pub Association (BBPA) – for their contribution

Case study contributors

Our gratitude to the publicans and teams featured throughout this report: Their generosity, time and storytelling make this report possible - and meaningful.

References

Government and Policy Sources

- Department for Culture, Media & Sport (2023) Get Active: A Strategy for Sport and Physical Activity
- Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (2024) Community Ownership Fund Prospectus
- Office for Health Improvement & Disparities (2019) Prevention Green Paper
- HM Government (2022) Levelling Up the United Kingdom White Paper
- Sport and Social Value Research
- Sport England (2021) Uniting the Movement
- Sported (2024) Volunteer Power: The Role of Local Clubs
- Sheffield Hallam University & Sported (2022) The Social Value of Community Sport and Physical Activity
- DCMS (2020) Sport and Social Value Framework
- Women's Sport Trust (2024) Closing the Visibility Gap
- Women in Sport (2023) Reframing Sport for Women
- FA (2024–2028) Grassroots Football Strategy
- Health and Wellbeing
- NHS England (2022) Community Mental Health Framework for Adults and Older Adults
- NHS England (2019) The NHS Long Term Plan
- Industry Data and Reports
- British Beer & Pub Association (2024) Statistical Handbook
- PubAid (2009–2025) Community Pub Hero Awards Database
- Sky Business (2024) Inspire Programme Impact Report
- Diageo (2023) Sustainability and Responsibility Report

© 2025 PubAid Ltd. All rights reserved.
November 2025

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or transmitted in any form without permission, except for non-commercial educational or policy use with full attribution to PubAid.

For media enquiries or partnership information, contact:
pr@pubaid.co.uk
www.pubaid.co.uk

PUBS POWER SPORT

PUB AID
The positive voice for pubs

Unlocking the impact of pubs on community sport

sky business

GUINNESS