

## **Co-operative pub is the best in Yorkshire**

In August 2008 the George and Dragon pub in the North Yorkshire Village of Hudswell closed its doors, seemingly for the last time, as the owners faced bankruptcy. 18 months later the residents of the village launched a community share issue and raised £200,000 from 140 members to buy and reopen the pub.

Fully refurbished and re-equipped it opened its doors again in June 2010, and has traded successfully since then. The George and Dragon was the first community pub in Yorkshire, to be established as a community benefit society and only the second in the country to use this model of community ownership. Since then almost 40 other communities have done the same, and many more, including the Kings Arms in Heaton, Bradford are currently looking to follow this model.

The pub is owned by Hudswell Community Pub Ltd, who annually elect a board of eight to ten directors. HCP Ltd run a shop in the pub and also manage allotments, an orchard and bee hives on land behind the pub. The licenced premises are let to a tenant, who runs his own business, with the board's support.

Just over two years ago the board appointed a new tenant, Stuart Miller, as our tenant. He was chosen because the board were impressed with his ambitious plans to provide quality food, sourced locally and cooked on the premises and also to provide an impressive selection of real ales. These plans have been fully realised and on the 15th September HCP members and pub users were invited to the pub to celebrate the announcement that the Campaign for Real Ale had chosen the George and Dragon as their Pub of the Year for the whole of the Yorkshire Region. In presenting the award, Ken Davie, from the CAMRA National Executive Committee, said that the fact the George and Dragon was community owned and supported by its members and other villagers, who all contributed to the warm welcome and friendly atmosphere that the pub provides, was a contributory factors in making the award.

This award means that CAMRA consider the George and Dragon to be one of the top 16 pub in the whole country and is testament to the hard work and commitment of our tenant, but also shows, beyond doubt, that this model of pub ownership is working well and can compete at the highest level. It is a great little pub and I would recommend a visit!

Martin Booth  
Secretary CCP Ltd