# Ravensthorpe community grapples with loss of pubs and rising violence



On a warm afternoon in April, the streets of Ravensthorpe, a suburb near Dewsbury in Kirklees, are bustling with residents engaging in their daily routines. Local shops, food takeaways, and the mosque are active, contributing to the lively atmosphere. However, at the junction of Foundry Street and the often-busy Huddersfield Road, a small group of individuals chooses to gather outside a nearby off-licence, enjoying each other's company while consuming alcoholic beverages.

Among this group is Toni, 37, who has been a resident of Ravensthorpe for nearly four decades. Speaking to Yorkshire Live, she shared her insights about the changes within the community, particularly the loss of local pubs that once provided a social hub for residents. "There are no pubs now so we have to drink in the street," she explained. Toni noted that the closure of establishments such as The Royal, The Bulls Head, and The Ravey Hotel left no alternative venues for socialising, leading her and others to congregate outside the off-licence. Despite their situation, she maintained that they seek to be respectful to the wider community, although complaints often arise from property owners and local businesses urging them to move on.

Neal, another member of the group, also prefers the social interaction found in this gathering rather than remaining isolated at home. At 34, he has turned to alcohol while relying on Universal Credit for financial support. The camaraderie of the group is palpable, establishing a sense of belonging amidst the challenges they face. “We are our own group and stick to ourselves. We meet here every day,” Toni stated.

However, the narrative is not entirely benign. One member of the group, who wished to remain anonymous, revealed he is a victim of bullying, having been assaulted by local teenagers, which he attributed to his disability. He reported being attacked multiple times over the years, indicating a growing concern over safety in the area. “I'm that scared – I always get battered. I have been attacked 20 times since 2004,” he told Yorkshire Live.

Toni echoed these sentiments, stating, “People are carrying knives. I know people that have knives pulled on them.” This notion of rising violence in Ravensthorpe was further supported by accounts from other residents, highlighting issues with drug dealing, street violence, and a general sense of fear. One young father expressed his worries about the influence of drugs on children growing up in the area, saying, “Kids are growing up and seeing drugs on the street corner. That isn't good is it?”

Amid these challenges, there are also narratives of resilience and adaptation. A 42-year-old man originally from Accra, Ghana, shared how he has found a better life in Ravensthorpe within the care sector. He expressed contentment with his community ties, especially with neighbours of Pakistani heritage, and described his current life as fulfilling.

As the streets continue to reflect a mixture of vibrant community interactions and underlying social issues, residents like the young father, who called for increased police presence and recreational activities for youth, represent voices advocating for change amidst an environment struggling with substance abuse and violence. Overall, while Ravensthorpe's atmosphere offers glimpses of camaraderie, it simultaneously reveals deep-seated concerns regarding safety and community well-being.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.kirklees.gov.uk/beta/public-health-partners/jsna/pdf/KirkleesJSNAAlcohol.pdf> - This source provides insight into alcohol consumption patterns in Kirklees, highlighting areas like problematic drinking and its impact on public health. It supports the context of alcohol use in the community.
* <https://www.mecclink.co.uk/location?location=kirklees-leph> - This link offers support services for reducing alcohol consumption in Kirklees, aligning with concerns about excessive drinking in the area.
* <https://www.kirkleesinrecovery.com/services/chart-kirklees/> - CHART Kirklees provides integrated substance misuse support, which is relevant to addressing drug-related issues mentioned in the narrative.
* <https://yorkshirevoice.com/huge-spike-in-alcohol-deaths-during-pandemic> - This article discusses the rise in alcohol-related deaths during the pandemic in Yorkshire, which relates to broader concerns about substance abuse in the region.
* <https://kirkleeswellnessservice.co.uk/> - The Kirklees Wellness Service aims to support adults in improving health and wellbeing, including reducing alcohol consumption, which ties in with community health concerns.