# Wigtown community celebrates reopening of historic pub



Celebrations have erupted in Wigtown, Scotland, following the successful reopening of a historic pub that had faced the threat of being converted into residential flats. The former Plough Inn, which boasts over 200 years of history with its first licence granted in 1795, was saved by local residents after it closed in 2022, a casualty of the economic conditions exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Craig Hamnett, the chair of the Wigtown Community Inn community benefit society, expressed his relief at the pub’s revival. He remarked, "It closed in 2022 and was in good condition, but market conditions meant that there wasn't much interest in privately purchasing or leasing the pub," during an interview with BBC Scotland News. He further explained that plans to convert the establishment into flats would have resulted in the loss of a cherished community asset.

Hamnett, originally from Stockport and a resident of Wigtown for seven years, noted that the area can feel like "a forgotten place in Scotland." He became involved in efforts to save the pub with a vision of benefiting the entire community, stating that it was vital not just for the pub to succeed as a social hub, but also to support local businesses through increased visitor footfall.

The Wigtown community, rallying together, undertook a significant fundraising effort, supported by South of Scotland Enterprise, which enabled them to purchase the building for £330,000. They took possession of the keys on Valentine's Day, a symbolic date for the community's love for their pub. Contributions from a community share issue amassed over £30,000, underscoring the local dedication to the project. Recently, the pub reopened to positive feedback from patrons.

"We know that we're just at the start of a very long road," Hamnett acknowledged as he shared details about the future plans for The Wigtown Ploughman, the new name of the establishment. Efforts are underway to enhance the accommodation facilities and renovate the kitchen to offer an improved food experience for visitors. Hamnett expressed optimism about the establishment's potential, commenting that the first nights had been an "incredible success" and highlighted the importance of rekindling community connections through socialising.

In his vision for the future of The Wigtown Ploughman, Hamnett hopes the pub will operate seven days a week, providing a venue for locals and drawing in visitors from across the UK to Wigtown, which is famously known as Scotland’s national book town. He provides detailed guidance for those wishing to visit, adding, “It's pretty easy to find us from down south, head north, turn left at Gretna, turn left at Newton Stewart, and the whole of the Machars peninsula awaits you.”

As Wigtown welcomes its revitalised pub, its community spirit stands testament to the collective efforts of its residents, aiming to enhance local culture and economy.

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

## References

* <https://wigtown-cbs.co.uk/faqs/> - Corroborates the efforts of the Wigtown community to save The Plough Inn from being converted into residential flats, highlighting the local support for maintaining it as a community asset.
* <https://wigtown-cbs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/The-Plough-Inn-Business-Plan-and-Forecast-13-5-2024.pdf> - Supports the historical context of The Plough Inn, including its closure and the community's plans for its restoration.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wigtown> - Provides background on Wigtown being known as Scotland's national book town, which is relevant to the pub's potential to attract visitors.
* <https://scotland.org.uk/explore/towns/wigtown> - Highlights the cultural and economic significance of Wigtown as a town, which aligns with the pub's role in enhancing local culture and economy.
* <https://southofscotlandenterprise.com/> - Involvement of South of Scotland Enterprise in supporting community initiatives like the purchase of The Plough Inn.