# Samuel Smith’s closes historic Abbey pub over social media photos despite community efforts



The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey, one of the last remnants of a historic monastery, has become embroiled in controversy following its sudden closure attributed to social media activity. This 15th-century establishment, integral to the local community for centuries, was shut down by Samuel Smith's Brewery, which reportedly dismissed its managers for violating company policies regarding photography within the premises. A handwritten note affixed to the pub's door succinctly conveyed the brewery’s stance: "Closed!! Due to someone posting pictures of The Abbey on social media. Sam Smith has taken the alcohol and closed these premises."

The closure comes only months after The Abbey reopened in September 2022, following a protracted campaign led by local representatives, including Derby City Council’s Martin Repton. This campaign sought to rejuvenate the pub after a lengthy closure since 2019, during which there were deep concerns about its future viability. The local community had rallied significantly to see the establishment thriving once more, yet it appears these hopes have been dashed by a heavy-handed response to modern social media practices.

Humphrey Smith, the reclusive owner of Samuel Smith's Brewery, is known for his draconian rules. His policies are characterised by prohibitions on mobile phones, children, and more—actions perceived by some as reminiscent of a bygone era. The sentiment towards Mr Smith is mixed; while many regard him as a skilled businessman, he is also seen as a somewhat “Dickensian figure”, imposing strict controls that can swiftly jeopardise livelihoods. Critics argue that his rigidity overlooks the evolving dynamics of modern pub culture, including the role of social media in bringing patrons through the door.

A Facebook page dedicated to documenting British pubs shared images of The Abbey just days prior to its closure, further adding to the intrigue. The account holders, Dale and Holly Harvey, clarified that they were invited to take photographs, claiming no prior knowledge of the impending closure. This deliberate engagement with social media seemingly contradicted the brewery’s long-standing stance against its usage within their establishments. Supporters of the pub, like Dennis Hayes—who shared his experience of being penalised for taking photos—expressed dismay at the abrupt decision, describing it as a tragedy for a venue just beginning to thrive again.

The Abbey, originally part of the Augustinian Abbey of St Mary, is not only a local pub but a scheduled monument, representing a slice of the region's rich history. It is also emblematic of the broader challenges facing traditional pubs in the UK, particularly those beholden to strict operational policies. Recent months have seen several establishments under the Samuel Smith’s brand close suddenly, including pubs in Bradford and London, raising concerns about the brewery’s management practices. This trend has prompted local councillors like Alan Grimadell to pursue discussions with the brewery about the future of The Abbey, pressing for a turnaround that reflects community interests over rigid corporate policies.

As the local community grapples with this significant loss, further efforts are poised to gain momentum, promising to revive The Abbey’s legacy in Darley Abbey. The pub’s history, dating back to the 1400s, and its role as a social hub stand as a testament to the resilience of local culture, one that the community is determined to preserve even amidst corporate upheaval.

The reaction to this closure serves as a reminder of the ongoing tension between tradition and modernity, particularly in spaces like pubs—historically known as informal gathering spots for conversation and camaraderie, now grappling with the implications of a digital age. As this narrative unfolds, the townspeople of Darley Abbey are sure to continue their efforts to ensure that The Abbey remains a vibrant part of their community fabric for years to come.

**Reference Map**1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8  
2. Paragraph 2, 3  
3. Paragraphs 2, 3  
4. Paragraph 6  
5. Paragraph 2  
6. Paragraph 3  
7. Paragraph 4

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14738953/Brewery-shuts-pub-patrons-taking-photos-inside.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/news/derby-news/breakthrough-over-future-long-empty-6661934> - This article discusses the efforts of Darley Ward councillor Alan Grimadell to reopen The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey, which has been closed for over two years. Grimadell has contacted Samuel Smith's Brewery to arrange a meeting to discuss the pub's future and is seeking to find a management couple to run it. The article highlights the community's strong desire for the pub's reopening and the challenges faced in attracting new managers due to the brewery's strict policies.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-derbyshire-57682193> - This BBC News article reports on the concerns of campaigners regarding the future of The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey, Derby. The pub, dating back to the 15th century, has been closed since 2019, and campaigners fear it may fall into disrepair. The article includes statements from local councillor Martin Repton, who has initiated a petition to reopen the pub, and from Samuel Smith's Brewery, which owns the pub and is committed to maintaining it as a pub.
4. <https://ocrpubs.camra.org.uk/pubs/24> - This entry from the CAMRA (Campaign for Real Ale) database provides information about The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey, Derby. It describes the pub as a conversion of an outbuilding to the abbey, featuring contrasting rooms on two levels, including the Undercroft Bar with an open fire and an upstairs bar with a vaulted ceiling. The pub is noted for its real ale and pub food offerings and is a scheduled monument in an attractive conservation area.
5. <https://www.sixstreetsderby.org/news/vigil-abbey-pub-darley-abbey> - This article from the Six Streets Derby community website discusses a candlelight vigil organized by Darley Ward councillor Carmel Swan to raise awareness about the closure of The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey. The vigil aims to draw attention to the pub's prolonged closure and the community's desire for its reopening. The article also mentions the involvement of other Darley councillors and the ongoing efforts to protect the historic building.
6. <https://www.uknewsgroup.co.uk/councillor-to-meet-brewery-to-save-historic-abbey-pub/> - This article reports on Darley Ward councillor Alan Grimadell's efforts to reopen The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey. Grimadell has contacted Samuel Smith's Brewery to arrange a meeting to discuss the pub's future and is seeking to find a management couple to run it. The article highlights the community's strong desire for the pub's reopening and the challenges faced in attracting new managers due to the brewery's strict policies.
7. <https://www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/whats-on/food-drink/strange-old-fashioned-rules-brewery-7958547.amp> - This article discusses the strict policies of Samuel Smith's Brewery, which owns The Abbey pub in Darley Abbey. The brewery is known for its traditional values, including prohibiting mobile phones, laptops, and swearing in its pubs. The article highlights the challenges these policies pose in attracting new managers for The Abbey pub, which has been closed since 2019. It also mentions the community's efforts to reopen the pub and the ongoing discussions with the brewery.