

Social activities held at The Bull's Head, Public House, Nailstone 1865—2020

Documentation submitted by Nailstone Parish Council to support an application to designate The Bull's Head Public House as an Asset of Community Value

March 2024



Arrow points to Bulls Head sign



1969

1. History of the building and publicans

The Bulls Head is one of a group of characterful buildings which form a distinctive entrance to the village from the west, and which make an important contribution to the Nailstone Conservation Area. The Bulls Head may originally have been two or three farm labourers cottages, and dates from the late 18th century. The distinctive eyebrow dormers are typical of the building style favoured by the Lords Howe, the owners of the Gopsall Park and Estate at this time.

By the early 19th century The Bulls Head was selling ale, and a Mr Cowlshaw may have been the first publican. In 1821 Mr Cowlshaw was replaced by Mr Wylde, and *The Book of the Moore* (1803-1863) records that ale for workers cutting meadow grass was bought from 'Wylde's' in 1827.

On 1st October 1839 a Parochial Meeting of land-owners and tithe-owners was called at the Bulls Head for making an agreement for the commutation of tithes.

WE the undersigned, being the sole Tithe-Owners within the Parishes of Nailstone and Normanton, in the county of Leicester, do, by this notice in writing under our hands, call a Parochial Meeting of Land-Owners and Tithe-Owners within the limits of the said Parishes, for the purpose of making an agreement for the general commutation of Tithes within the limits of the said Parishes, pursuant to the provisions of an Act passed in the sixth and seventh years of the reign of His late Majesty, intituled "An Act for the Commutation of Tithes in England and Wales." And we do hereby also give notice that such Meeting will be held at the Bull's Head Inn, in the said Parish of Nailstone, on Tuesday the first day of October next, at the hour of Eleven in the forenoon. Given under our hands this fourth day of September, 1839.

ROBERT CROCKETT,
E. GREEN,
THOS. HILL MORTIMER,
THEOD. F. G. GREEN,
ROBERT GREEN.

By 1865 the Bull's Head was providing meals as well as drinks, as evidenced by this report from the Hinckley Times:

NAILSTONE COLTS V. IBSTOCK.—A match between the above named clubs was played on the Nailstone ground on Tuesday last, which terminated in favour of the Ibstock players with a few runs to spare. The game being over the colts, with part of their opponents, retired to the Bull's Head Inn, where an excellent spread was provided by host Gardner in his usual good style, to which all present did ample justice.

By 1891, with Mr Gardner continuing as proprietor, the Bull's Head was being used for auctions and meetings, as evidence by this report from the Leicester Chronicle:

NAILSTONE.

OFDFELLOWS.—The Loyal Nelson Lodge, M.U., held their anniversary on Whit-Monday. The members attended church, headed by the Bagworth Brass Band, where a sermon was preached by the curate-in-charge (owing to the indisposition of the rector). Afterwards they returned to the schoolroom, where a capital repast was served by Bro. J. Gardner, of the Bull's Head. The chair was taken by W. Thorpe, Esq. (in the absence of the rector). Mr. J. A. Barrs, of the Stud Farm, Mr. D. Ward, and other gentlemen favoured the members with their presence. The usual toasts were given, and suitably responded to. On Tuesday the members and friends of the Female Friendly Society were entertained at a meat tea at the Bull's Head, where every satisfaction was given. After tea they went to the schoolroom, where a very pleasant evening was spent, dancing being the prominent amusement till ten o'clock. There were about 60 present.

The Bull's Head was a Marstons tied house from at least 1951, with two generations of the Fray family as licensees. In the 1970's the pub was bought by a property investment company, and managed on their behalf by a pub company, believed to be the Inspire Pub Co Ltd. In the late 1990's Mr Jim Bartlett became the tenant and licensee. During his tenure the pub served some basic food at first, but this ceased because the kitchen was not suitable. The owners were only prepared to pay for essential works, and would not deal directly with the licensee. From the mid 2000's until Jim's retirement in 2017 the interior and exterior fabric steadily decayed.

In 2017 the licence was taken over by Christian and Claire Bonshor. They improved the interior and gained a Level 4 Food Hygiene Rating. This team were very proactive in putting on events, and were strongly supported by the Nailstone Community Group. During their first year of operation social events at The Bulls Head raised £400 for Macmillan Cancer Support, £680 for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Fund, £310 for the Air Ambulance, and £87 for Loros.

By 2017 the only other public house in the village - the Nut & Squirrel - had closed and was being converted into a dwelling. The Bulls Head was therefore the only public amenity and meeting place left in the village, apart from the very large and cold church.

The Bulls Head was nominated as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) by the Nailstone Community Group on 1st June 2017, and registered as such by H&BBC on 23rd June 2017.

The repair and refurbishment works required to bring the Bulls Head back up to standard meant that it was difficult for the licensees to make a good living. When the Covid-19 pandemic forced the closure of the pub in March 2020, the licensees were unable to continue and handed the keys back to the owner.

A planning application for alterations to the pub building, and to erect six dwellings on land to the rear was approved on 30th July 2020 (18/01288/FUL). This application includes plans for alterations to the pub building approved on 22nd May 2018 (15/01202/FUL).

The ACV registration expired on 23rd June 2022 (ie after the statutory 5 years), and the protected period ended on 11th November 2022.

2. Regular social uses of The Bulls Head 1951-1991

Mrs Pat Fray of Nailstone has many memories of The Bulls Head:

“My father took over the tenancy of the Bulls Head in 1951. My mother and father ran it from 1951 to 1976, and then my husband and I ran it from 1976 until 1991. When we moved in, the water came from a pump, and the toilets were a pair of earth closets up at the top of the garden. It was always a busy pub because of the miners who worked shifts, and it began to decline when the pit closed.

The pub was tied to Marstons during our tenure, and when we lived there the only things I could buy that weren't Marstons were the crisps.

We had two men's darts teams, the 'A' and the 'B' which played on Monday evenings, and a ladies team. The teams all played in the Marstons Leagues. There were two pool teams who played on a Thursday evening. There were also two dominoes teams who played in the Ibstock/Coalville/Barlestone Dominoes Leagues.

The football team used to play on a Sunday morning, and would come to the pub afterwards. The cricket team used to play at Andy Crawford's field on a Saturday and practice on Tuesdays and would come to the pub afterwards. The Volvo Club from Coventry used to meet at the pub each month.

We ran coach trips for retired people from the village four or five times a year. I remember going to Pickering to ride on the train, to the Coronation Street film set in Manchester, and to the Lake District. We would go on a coach from the Reliant garage at Ibstock, and the drivers would tell us good places to stop and eat on the way. At Christmas we would hold a party for retired people, and they would all be given a present of money. These events were all paid for from 'The Tote'.

On Fridays I would go to the butcher at Dawkins abattoir at Congerstone and get a big piece of meat which would be raffled off on the Sunday evening. On Sunday evenings we also had a 'Tote'. There were barn dances at Crawford's Barn, and we used to do the catering and run the bar. The profits from all of these events would either go to local charities or go into 'The Tote'.

There were lots of charity events for local good causes, and I remember raising money for the Ferry Disaster Fund, and a baby unit at Glenfield Hospital. We also sponsored a local lad who was disabled and selected to compete in the Special Olympics at Leicester, and a party from the village went to see him run. “

Mr Barry Andrews of Ibstock began playing in the Bulls Head 'A' Darts Team in the late 1970's, and continued into the 1990's. The Darts Team played in the Barlestone League in the summer and the Ibstock & Coalville League in the winter. He showed me two darts trophies, one labelled *1981 Bulls Head Champions*, and the other *1983 Bulls Head Christmas Knock-out*, which show that there were other non-league darts competitions at this pub. Members of the Bulls Head Team would also play in competitions at other pubs, in 1975 Mr Andrews and Mr French won the pairs knock-out competition at the Spade Tree and won £100 and a silver trophy.

Mr Andrews thinks that the football team was started in the 1950's, and played on the field

next to the school. His recollection is that the cricket team was the Barton team, and they played on Crawford's Field off the Barton Lane, and were in the Barlestone League.

Mr Andrews played the drums in his spare time, and remembers that there was a piano and a drum kit kept in the corner of the pub. From the 1960's the piano was played by a lady from Ibstock, and the drums by Arthur French from Nailstone though Mr Andrews sometimes stood in for him. There were singalongs on Saturday and Sunday nights when the pub would always be full. On Christmas Day there would always be a tray of glasses of whisky and brandy on the counter for the customers.

3. Social events at The Bulls Head 1991 - 2017

The Bull's Head was popular with locals for the quality of its beer, and Jim Bartlett also ran weekend beer festivals twice a year which were very popular. There was also a large marquee at the back of the pub which was made available for parties, receptions and local events. 'Plug and play' music evenings were held monthly.

Mr Barlett's ill-health and eyesight problems meant that he became increasingly inactive, and these uses declined from about 2015.

Nailstone Parish Council held 11 monthly meetings in the Bulls Head each year from 8th November 2000 to 9th November 2017, as documented in the minutes.

Mr Roger Jones of Barton in the Beans was Captain of the Bulls Head Darts Teams and the Pool Teams from about 1995 until about 2007. The previous captain of the Darts Teams was Barry Andrews. The 'A' and 'B' Darts Teams played weekly matches in the Ibstock/Coalville League which had five or six leagues (A-F). The 'A' team was promoted up to play in the B League at one time, but then lost some good players and was demoted again. Mr Liam Hammond followed Mr Jones as Captain.

The 'A' and 'B' Pool Teams played weekly matches in the Ibstock League which had four leagues (A-D).

Mr Jones remembers the Dominoes Team, which played in the Ibstock League, and also poker and cribbage nights. He also remembers Mr Bartlett holding his birthday parties in the pub.

Mr Bob Elkin of Nailstone played in the 'B' darts team, and remembers the pool and dominoes teams and the various card nights.

4. Social uses of the Bulls Head 2017-2020

The Darts Team and the Pool Team were resurrected in 2017 and met weekly. The Bulls Head Team had their first win at The Engine, Coalville on 24th July 2019

A pop up tea room was established

Quiz Nights were held monthly, with 'Marlene's Bingo' on the same evening.

Open Mike nights were held monthly.

Regular meetings were held of

The Nailstone Community Group (weekly social meeting and monthly minuted committee meeting)

The Knit and Natter Group (fortnightly on Wednesday mornings)

The Nailstone Book Club (monthly, Wednesday evenings)

The Pudding Club (weekly to begin with, then monthly)

5. Dated special events 2017-2020

2017

Events during 2017-18 raised £400 for Macmillan Cancer Support, £680 for the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Fund, £100 for the Air Ambulance, and £87 for Loros.

July 2017—Western Bonanza evening

4th November—Ladies Indulgence Day

16th December Santa's Grotto and Winter Wonderland in the pool table room behind the bar at The Bulls Head, followed by Songs Around the Tree

20th December Free Christmas lunch for over 65's, food donated by Inghams Farm Shop

2018

21st April—Fashion Show

Mid-May—Nailstone Litter Pick began at The Bulls Head, and returned there for lunch of soup and rolls

28th May—Bank Holiday Western Bonanza

2nd October 2018 Macmillan Coffee Morning raised £400.

10th November—1940's Quiz Night

December Leicestershire Fire & Rescue Service—free soft drinks for drivers campaign

3rd December—food tasting evening

19th December—Seniors Christmas Lunch

22nd December—Santa's grotto in the pub

2019

15th May—1940s pop up tea room in aid of Air Ambulance

Mid-May—Nailstone Litter Pick began at The Bulls Head, and returned there for lunch of soup and rolls

June—food tasting day in the marquee

1st July—local food tasting event in aid of the Royal Agricultural Benevolent Fund raised £400.

12th August—Race Night in the marquee

28th September—American Tea Party (part of American Airmen commemoration events)

31st October—Hallowe'en party

18th December—Pantomime

2020

Charity sale - date uncertain

March—pub closed

Selected photographs from 2017-2020 are appended to this document.

6. Summary

Although they are a self-selected group, everyone I spoke to had fond memories of The Bulls Head and the happy and welcoming atmosphere of the licensee and the clientele. The pub was usually busy, and there was always something going on. I have no doubt that The Bulls Head was central to the social life of the community all through the 20th century and for the first decade of the 21st.

The pub then experienced a decline, but in spite of changed times it then enjoyed a renaissance from 2017 to 2020. This recent period demonstrates how the refurbished pub could enjoy a vibrant and profitable future with appropriate management.

When it re-opens - expected in March/April 2024 - The Bulls Head will be the only pub in the village, and the only other meeting places will be the church and the school. The church is big, cold and not particularly comfortable. The school hall is big and warm, but institutional, and again not particularly comfortable. Neither venue is licensed, both have limited catering facilities, and both have to be booked for a meeting. This means that any meeting held in these two venues will only be attended by members of the group in question.

In contrast, apart from the obvious increase in comfort and warmth, people attending a meeting held in The Bulls Head will inevitably be brought into contact with other members of the community and the pub staff. This social contact is crucial to the development of personal contacts and a feeling of belonging, and makes the licensee a key source of local information and advice. This is why a pub is so important to a small village like Nailstone.

Acknowledgments

I thank the Nailstone Community Group, the Nailstone History Group, Mr B Andrews, Mrs S Barton, Mr & Mrs R Elkin, Mrs P Fray, Mr A Harrison and Mr R Jones without whose help and contributions this document could not have been written.

Chris Peat
February 2024

supporting
rainbows
hospices for children and young people

BANK HOLIDAY WEEKEND

MINE BEER FESTIVAL

5 ALES } £3.50
4 CIDERS } £3.50

SUNDAY FROM 6.00

LIVE MUSIC - BBQ

01509 628000
Tel: 01509 216472
www.rainbows.org.uk
info@rainbows.org.uk
Lark Rise, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 1HG

QUIZ TIME!

6th December 8pm start
Come along to the Bulls Head and show off your skills.

Teams of 4 just £5 per team
no need for pre entry.



Nailstone Community Group presents a
Bank Holiday Western Bonanza at
Nailstone's finest saloon, The Bulls Head
Sunday 28th May 2pm till late

Fun day for all the family, lots of western games including; Tin Can alley, Splat the Rat, Lasso Challenge, Cactus Hoopla, Wanted Picture Board and lots more.....

YCC-HAW! Fancy dress is definitely encouraged & prizes will be on offer for the best outfits. Special prizes for the best dressed family.

Live music for the evening. (Plug and Play)
Afternoon cakes & Stewart's Fish & Chip van from 6pm

the bulls head nailstone

Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Service Market Bosworth
23 Dec 2018

Santa's on his way!!!
Our very own Fire service #Elves have been out today to our Local Businesses that have kindly offered to provide FREE SOFT DRINKS to the designated drivers that have been partying with them.

We would again like to thank the following for your support The Gate Hangs Well, Carlton The Bulls Head Nailstone The Dixie Arms Hotel and the The Black Horse Restaurant, Market Bosworth we are proud to have such fantastic local businesses supporting our communities.

#DontDrinkandDrive #Roadsafety
#Drivinghomeforchristmas #CommunitySpirit



WHAT'S ON

November

Sat 16th Poker Night 7-9
Mon 18th Pudding Club 7-9
Wed 20th Kait & Natter
Sat 30th Quiz Night 7-9

DECEMBER

Sat 7th BINGO 8pm
Sun 8th LEFC v Aston Villa
Sat 14th Poker 7.30pm
Mon 16th Pudding Club 7.30
Wed 18th CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON
Wed 18th Nativity 8pm



Nailstone Community Group presents a
Night at the Races
 Held at The Bulls Head Marquee
 Saturday 12th August 7pm till late
Race 1 starts at 7.30pm




Tickets £10 each to include
 entry, raffle & meal (Lasagna/Cottage pie,
 Salads & breads supplied by Ingham's farm shop)
 Family Tickets available to include upto 2
 children under 12 £25.

Please contact us on Facebook or via
 email to order tickets.
 Also available at the Bulls Head.



We meet every Thursday from 7.30pm at the Bulls Head,
 everyone always welcome to come along & join in .
 Contact us via Facebook - Nailstone community Group or
 email - nailstonecommunitygroup@gmail.com



Nailstone Community Group
Santa's Grotto
 Saturday 16th December
 2pm onwards - Bull's Head
 We are creating Nailstone's first
 magical winter wonderland in the
 marquee, open to all children & their
 grown-ups to come and enjoy.

A **VERY** special visitor will be there for all children to meet
 and receive an early gift. For the adults there will be sausage
 rolls, mince pies and mulled wine to keep everyone warm.
 Please try to visit and support us, the funds you helped raise
 at previous events made this day possible .



7.30pm following on
 from last year's first ever NCG
 event, we would love the
 2017 Songs around the village
 tree to be even bigger and
 better. If you have any special
 requests for Christmas songs
 please let us know! After-
 wards back to the pub to
 carry on the festivities.



Stud Farm Meats
 2 Jul 2019

Throwback to a fantastic evening last Monday
 at the **The Bulls Head Nailstone**.
 I was delighted to be part of a local food
 tasting event to raise funds for the farming
 charity **RABI Royal Agricultural Benevolent
 Institution**
 £400 was raised so it was a fabulous result!
 Many thanks to all of those who came along
 and showed their support.

**The Bulls Head
 Nailstone
 REVIVAL NIGHT**
 • Saturday 25th August
 5pm - Late
 stewarts Chip Van 6.30pm
 's 90's DISC from 7pm



Real Ales & Ciders
Everyone welcome
 Facebook @thebullsheadnailstone
 88 Main Street, Nailstone, cv13 0qb



GET EXCITED
IT'S
QUIZ NIGHT

Quiz Night 6th December
8pm onwards

Come along to the Bulls Head to show off your quiz skills, Teams of 4 just £5 per team no need for pre entry.

Thank you to everyone who has reserved their place at the **free Christmas lunch** for all over 65's in the village. We are now FULL! To be held at the Bulls Head on **Wednesday 20th December from Midday** with food provided by Ingham's Farm Shop. If you are no longer able to attend please let us know as soon as possible we can offer the place to someone else.

Befriending schemes have been around for a while and are supported by Age UK, these provide an older person with a link to the outside world and often acts as a gateway to other services and valuable support. Loneliness is a major issue for people in later life in the UK: 200,000 older people say they haven't had a conversation with friends or family in a month. 3.9 million older people agree the television is their main form of company. Over the past year our village has undergone a transformation in creating a sense of Community – we all have a responsibility to our friends and neighbours to look out for each other, especially in times of need. Should you need additional support please look at <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/help-in-your-own-home>



WHAT'S ON

October

19th ~ **Poker Night**

26th ~ **Children's Halloween Party** 4pm - 6pm
facepainting & party games
fancy dress competition

30th ~ **Halloween Quiz** 7-8pm
fancy dress optional
Prize for best dressed.



WARTIME LUNCH

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

HEAVENLY BODY DISPLAY

EATING FOR VICTORY
HEALTHY HOME FRONT COOKING ON WAR RATIONS

FOOD
DON'T WASTE IT

