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**Aldershot Community Pub Limited awarded support from More Than A Pub:
The Community Pub Business Support Programme**

A campaign to save a much-loved Aldershot pub from closure has been awarded support from More than a Pub: The Community Pub Business Support Programme.

Aldershot Community Pub Limited (ACPL) has been formed by local people and customers of The White Lion pub which is on Lower Farnham Road on the east side of the town. Customers and local residents will receive a package of specialist business advice and a £2,500 bursary from More than a Pub, a programme established to help support community ownership of pubs in England. Its value is £2.2 million and is funded by Power to Change. It is being delivered by Plunkett Foundation in collaboration with Co-operative & Community Finance, Key Fund, the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA), Co-operative Mutual Solutions, Pub is the Hub, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Locality.

“We’re delighted to have been awarded support from More than a Pub,” said Phillip Duke, Chair of ACPL. “the support will enable us to keep The White Lion as a pub and develop a range of new activities and uses to suit the needs and aspirations of our community. The pub already has a loyal group of customers, attracted by locally brewed real ales, good company and a welcoming vibe. Many of these people are coming forward to support the campaign with their ideas and skills as well as with much needed finance.”



The White Lion is currently up for sale and last year, Aldershot Civic Society recognised the importance of the pub and ensured that the pub became registered as an Asset of Community Value (ACV) by Rushmoor Borough Council. This allows a local community interest group six months to make an offer to buy the pub, before other offers are considered. Aldershot Civic Society supported the coming together of local people to explore setting up a community pub and continues to support the efforts. The ACPL made an offer on 14th May and all

those involved in the campaign are itching to hear the outcome. Many people have already pledged to buy community shares in the pub and there is great enthusiasm to secure The White Lion’s future as a successful business and social hub. The members of the ACPL are currently finalising their business plan and waiting to have their bank account finalised so that they can raise further funds. Covid-19 has presented quite a challenge to the campaign but the people involved are certain that the community pub will be more vital than ever when we eventually return to normal life.



Plunkett Foundation's James Alcock, Executive Director for Plunkett, said: "We're so pleased to be able to support Aldershot Community Pub who are working hard to make sure their community can benefit from everything that having a thriving local pub brings. Pubs that are owned and run by the community are so much more than a place to buy a drink; they provide important social spaces and services for local people, and are central to their community's sense of place and identity."

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