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'We get students in to run our pub'



Students aged 16-18 run the kitchen at The Swan in Windsor, once a week

Katie Waple

BBC News

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As pubs look to become more creative in a bid to stay open, one owner has welcomed students in to run his bar and kitchen, once a week.

The Swan in Windsor is a community-owned pub run by Mickey Foden-Andrews who says staff have to think "outside the box" to keep the pub running.

It comes after analysis of government figures by the property data company Altus Group showed more than one pub a day closed its doors for good in the UK in 2024.

The overall number of pubs has fallen below 39,000 for the first time and last year 412 were demolished or converted for other uses.

Mr Foden-Andrews says: "The British pub is the backbone of the economy.

"It's not just a place to come and have a drink - it's a place to come, meet new people and have interesting conversations."

He said it was becoming increasingly difficult to stay afloat, particularly after the increase in employers' national insurance (NI) contributions and the national minimum wage in April.

As a result, they were having to come up with new ideas.

"We do very weird and wonderful events, that you wouldn't necessarily find at a normal pub," Mr Foden-Andrews says.

A chatty café is held at the pub every Friday and both a Warhammer social group and a ukulele band regularly meet there.



MICKEY FODEN-ANDREWS

Mickey Foden-Andrews runs the community-owned pub in Windsor

He says the team was "very fortunate" to have The Green Room College based at The Swan.

The college offers 16-18 year olds the opportunity to get practical, hands-on experience, before helping them find a job in their chosen profession.

It is run by The Green Room Foundation which invested in the community group's campaign to secure the pub.

Pupils from the college run the pub on a Thursday from 11:00-14:00 and the last Tuesday of every month from 17:00-20:30.

"They run the bar, the kitchen, they'll serve you and pour you a brilliant pint,

Mr Foden-Andrews says.

"It's definitely our unique selling point having the school onside.

"We are the only pub we could find that's got this."

He explains The Swan was closed for a "very long time" and was going to be turned into flats or a supermarket, when the community stepped in and bought it.

He says: "We were looking for further investors, we got the Windsor and Eton Brewery onside, who knew that the Green Room Foundation were looking for another site.

"I think the future is going to be tough but I'm optimistic about our partnerships."

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