



WHY THE SPREAD EAGLE IS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The Spread Eagle is not what you would call a trendy upmarket craft beer bar, but rather a good old fashioned 'down to earth' establishment that sells real ale and has an open and inclusive admission policy that appeals to different demographic social groups.

It is arguably the last traditional local pub left on this stretch of Walmgate that offers multiple amenities and facilities as other similar pubs in the area have closed down.

The local presence of a pub within a community is important, as expert national research confirms that outside the home the pub scores the highest of any location as a place where people meet and get together with others in their neighbourhood. "Third places" (neither workplace nor home) are crucial to the maintenance of the community and the enhancement of social capital

The Spread Eagle serves the area of Walmgate that has a lot of social housing and it serves as a local community gathering space where everyone from the surrounding community, including the vulnerable, are welcome and accepted in a non-threatening environment.

This is testified to by locals who have been attending the establishment for decades –from way back when it was legendary for its Sunday afternoon music events and free “roasties” and Yorkshire puddings, right up to present times where as a live music venue prior to Covid-19 it also provided much needed entertainment for the local community. Staging over 500 gigs with the recently departed management team – it wholeheartedly supported upcoming music acts and held auditions for X-Factor and Britain's Got Talent.

Visiting musicians, both local and regional need compact friendly venues to get themselves known and cut their artistic teeth. It is argued frequently that York needs as many live venues as possible to nurture talent as well as to entertain patrons. It is well known that a live music venue engenders a good atmosphere and behavior as people enjoy engaging with entertainment that improves mood and bonhomie. The Spread Eagle also has hosted charity events over recent years.

If this much regarded pub shuts, then a safe gathering space disappears and leaves a hole in the community for regulars that can't be duplicated by any other establishment such as a restaurant or shop. Recent research in 2017 backs up the important social wellbeing benefits that pubs like the Spread Eagle deliver: a major study by Professor Dunbar and Oxford University concluded that: - "...happy people and those who are embedded in large, well-integrated social networks





York Campaign for Real Ale

are sick less often. Directly and indirectly, pubs as venues for social communities are likely to yield significant savings on health care budgets”

The study also found that people who have a ‘local’ that they visit regularly tend to feel more socially engaged and contented, and are more likely to trust other members of their community. They also observed that those without a local pub empathetic to their needs had significantly smaller social networks and felt less engaged with their local communities.

The spacious outdoor enclosed beer garden provides an exterior space to socialise for the community – with not many outdoor areas available to gather on Walmgate – it is something that has become increasingly important during a pandemic.

As a Grade II three-storey Victorian listed building it also provides a link to Walmgate's pub heritage as most of the numerous public houses along Walmgate have long since disappeared.

This public house was first recorded in late 18C with the current building created in early 19C. The Spread Eagle has gone by the names of The Malt Shovel, The Old Malt Shovel and the Bricklayer's Arms. If Spread Eagle ceased being a public house all these benefits and heritage values that it has brought, and continues to bring, would be lost. York has a wealth of great buildings that have been maintained in line with principles of sustainability and good stewardship. It's a fundamental reason for its appeal and thriving tourist sector.

Although there is not a licensee in situ at present as far as we are aware, we have little doubt that one will be forthcoming who can carry on the great traditions of great beer, convivial atmosphere and a vibrant music calendar that The Spread Eagle has been known for over the last 40 years. The current lack of a licensee is certainly not a reason to have any doubts that this is an Asset of Community Value. Future generations of locals in the immediate Walmgate area will always need a good convivial local community pub in which to gather and we in York should continue the excellent policy of protecting our assets for current and future regulars looking for somewhere safe to meet and socialise.

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