



## **Are pubs the answer for isolated elderly people?**

North Yorkshire County Council's Assistant Director for Adult Social Care Operations called for pub owners and communities to work together to support vulnerable adults in rural areas. Beverley Maybury was speaking this week to a group of pub operators, community groups and local partner organisations from North Yorkshire in an event hosted by Pub is The Hub at The Fox and Hounds in Bullamoor, near Northallerton. In her presentation Ms Maybury explained that North Yorkshire County Council wants to support elderly people to stay in their own homes for as long as possible with more creative solutions. She went on to say:

“One of the major issues for older people who need the support of Adult Services is that they feel lonely and isolated. We need to think about how we offer our services differently and that might be to encourage day support provided by the local pub. A visit to the pub, combined with a good meal, made from locally sourced food, is a cost effective way to improve well being. It's local and doesn't involve lengthy travel whilst generating a real sense of belonging in a community.

David Hawksworth, owner of the Fox and Hounds in Bullamoor talked about his association with Pub is The Hub: He took part in one of the first schemes at his pub ten years ago where he created access to the internet in his pub for customers and local residents. He has several elderly people who visit the pub for lunch weekly and will even go and pick them up if they cannot get there. He added: “I realised a long time ago that we have to diversify to survive in rural areas and become the focus for our communities.”

Guests also heard from Amy Robinson from Rural Action for Yorkshire, a charity which supports sustainable rural community development and Sharon Jones from the Big Lottery Fund, which is funding the Local Community Services Champions initiative.

Pub is The Hub is appealing to more licencees in rural pubs in the county to expand their services and facilities for the benefit of people in their communities through their Local Community Services Champions scheme. Their North Yorkshire Adviser, Mike Clayton and his colleagues will now work closely with participants to facilitate the initiatives discussed. The meeting will be followed up by a support programme for licensees including half-day workshops, so that the priorities and ideas discussed can take shape over the coming weeks.

Any landlords who would like to know more about the scheme in North Yorkshire can go to [www.communitychampions.org.uk](http://www.communitychampions.org.uk) or telephone 01423 546165 for more information.

