

The Publican Customer Award

Michele and Ken are proud to see our team winning the prestigious Proud Of People award.
CARE FOR CUSTOMERS IS SECOND NATURE

How The Team at the Robin Hood in Sutton, Surrey, Puts Customers First

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THE TEAM at the Robin Hood in Sutton, Surrey, doesn't just keep the pub on top of its game - it keeps the customers on top too. Such is the way the pub's one part-time and seven full-time members of staff throw themselves into charity work and looking after the regulars, that licensee Michelle Green insists that the staff are the pub. The Robin Hood hosts regular charity auctions and raffles, weekly nights for people with learning disabilities and provides support for older and frail customers. Regulars are seen as friends rather than customers. The all-male team has even donned high heels for a night's work in the name of charity. Staff as dedicated as that are surely worthy winners of The Publican's Proud of Your People initiative. The team, whom Michelle affectionately refers to as "my boys" is the latest to claim the monthly 000 cash prize and &50-worth of Fairy products. "People come here because they can play draughts, cribbage, scrabble and read books and lots more," says assistant manager Simon Welburn, who has worked at the pub for 13 years. The pub has no pool table or games machines and is in a residential area just outside the town centre. "It's the sort of pub that ladies will come into on their own and feel comfortable and safe," he says.

Shoulders to cry on

Michelle is especially proud of the relationships the staff have forged with customers and the high level of service they provide.

"We are a community pub and the staff take their role very seriously by looking out for our older customers, being a shoulder to cry on, raising money for our local charity the Volunteer Centre, Sutton, and much more," she says. Every Thursday, learning disabilities charity Mencap holds a group event in the pub where people and their carers can socialise together. "We've got to know a lot of them over the years. They are our friends. We love them," says Simon. Customers at the pub range up to at least 90 years old, and a number of regulars are elderly and need extra support. "We look out for customers who are older or a bit frail. If we see that their drink is getting empty we'll pop across to their table and ask them if they want another one so they don't have to get up," says Simon.

"We call and keep tabs on people we haven't seen for a while. We look after them, it's a family. I mean how would you look after your elderly relatives? Care and customer service are old virtues not often found these days," adds Simon. Such a caring approach has created a customer base of fiercely loyal regulars and a constant stream of new faces. Despite this, Michelle says the pub relies on the support of the staff. "They have loyalty and care for the pub," she says.