

For immediate release

Victorious Joiners Arms campaigners launch project to open London's first community-run LGBTQI+ pub

Public meetings have been announced for Sat 10th March & Wed 14th March (1) to begin work on opening London's first community-run LGBTQI+ pub (2)

The Friends of the Joiners Arms (3), who fought for 3 years to protect the legacy of the legendary Hackney Road LGBTQI+ pub, are holding public meetings to include everyone who wants to play a part in deciding how to create a radical, community-run venue on the site of the Joiners Arms. This follows the trail-blazing decision by Tower Hamlets council to insist that a new development on this site must include an LGBTQI+ pub, with opening hours mirroring those of the original pub, a 25 year lease, and financial assistance for any operator.

Friends of the Joiners Arms' (FOTJA) Jon Ward said:

"FOTJA is a testament to the power we have as queers unified against a common enemy: in a fight reminiscent of David vs. Goliath, the developers expected that they would be able to demolish the Joiners Arms and redevelop the site with one solitary goal - profit. That these plans did not succeed and that Tower Hamlets supported our protests in such groundbreaking fashion demonstrates our collective strength in fighting gentrification. Now is the time to build on this success and rethink what we want out of queer spaces: with particular attention paid to elevating those voices and needs which are usually marginalized, even within our own LGBTQI+ community."

FOTJA's Amy Roberts also said:

"As excited as we were to have won planning protections for a like-for-like replacement of a late-license LGBTQI+ bar in the Hackney Road development, this victory only marked a successful end of 'phase I' - not the end of our journey. The doors of our beloved Joiners remain as closed as they first were in January 2015, and we are still without a vital queer space. Now we enter 'phase II': creating a radical organisation and working towards opening the doors of London's first community-run LGBTQI+ bar. That first pint is going to be a good one."

FOTJA's Dan Glass said

"There are already existing, successful models of community-run pubs such as the Antwerp Arms in Tottenham, or the Bevy in Brighton, and we want to use this model for the queer community, to fight back against the crisis of closures in London (4) . We are hugely grateful to the support of the Plunkett Foundation as part of their 'More Than A Pub' programme (5) which will give us the framework and assistance to create something radical, exciting and hugely necessary."

Tickets are available online at www.bitly.com/FOTJA

About Friends of the Joiners Arms

The Friends of the Joiners Arms is a campaign group seeking to create London's first community-run LGBTQI+ pub, building on the legacy of the legendary, radical pub on Hackney Road. In Oct 2017, the group secured protections from Tower Hamlets council covering the future redevelopment of the site.

The group intends to use the popular model of the community benefit society (6) to open a new Joiners Arms as London's only cooperatively owned and managed LGBTQI+ late-licence pub, whilst developing the community functions of the pub. This will be a space that provides vital facilities and support to all LGBTQI+ individuals and allies who wish to stand up for minority communities, support one another, and proactively engage in building a future free of hate and insecurity.

Contacts

Friends of the Joiners Arms

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Photos available here: <https://we.tl/HBIUAEW3DR>

Notes to Editors

- (1) The public meetings will be held on Saturday 10th March from 15.00 - 17.00, and Wednesday 14th March from 19.00 - 21.00, at Hackney Showroom, Amhurst Terrace, London E8 2BT
- (2) LGBTQI+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex
- (3) Friends of the Joiners Arms www.thejoinersliveson.com / www.facebook.com/friendsofthejoinersarms
- (4) According to UCL Urban Lab research, the number of LGBTQI+ venues in London has fallen by 58% since 2006. <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/urbanlab/research/lgbtqi-space>
- (5) More Than A Pub: The Community Pub Business Support programme is a unique two year programme established to help support community ownership of pubs in England. Its value is £3.62 million and is jointly funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government and independent trust 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 and Locality. For the first time it will offer the community pub sector access to an end-to-end support programme including capacity building and a finance package made up of loans and grants.
- (6) Community Benefit Societies are recognised business structures whose purpose is to serve the benefit of the community (rather than to benefit their members), whereby profits must be reinvested in the business.