

Monks Eleigh: Pub is finalist in community competition

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Carol and Nigel Robson outside their pub, Monks Eleigh Swan, which is a finalist in a national competition.

The owners of a west Suffolk pub, who donated a barn to be used as a community shop, say they are delighted to have made the final of a national challenge.

The Swan Inn, in Monks Eleigh, is one of just five finalists across the UK in the Britvic community pub project competition, which recognises pubs that are making a positive impact in their local area.

In 2003 when Monks Eleigh's village shop closed, Carol and Nigel Robson stepped in and offered one of the pub's buildings for community use.

Ten years on, the initiative is still going strong, with 10% of the village population volunteering to keep the business running.

Mr Robson bakes items that sell in the shop, which is also supported by Sainsbury's. Mrs Robson said: "The shop is crammed full of products and it is so well supported, both by customers and volunteers.

"We were one of the first pubs to get involved in this type of community initiative and it is very gratifying to see that it is continuing to thrive.

"We are thrilled to get so far in this competition."

The winner of the £1,000 top prize will be announced on September 4