

BEST! bar none

Traditionally Doncaster has always been a vibrant and dynamic town.

Encouraged and nurtured by the market and trading spirit, town pubs have been a permanent and essential part of Doncaster life over hundreds of years. This has led to a



reputation of being one of Yorkshire's premier night life centres and people from far and wide still make the pilgrimage on Friday and Saturday nights to enjoy a great night out. As with any popular destination there can be huge benefits to the town and the local economy, but sometimes the sheer number of visitors can deter others from making the most of what the town has to offer.

A few years ago, the town was chosen as the place to run a pilot scheme involving pub and club doormen, where they were officially trained and licensed. In tandem with this, a local pub watch scheme came into force, where all doormen and landlords were in contact with each other and could warn each other of potential troublemakers or incidents. The scheme was an instant success, cutting down drink-fuelled violence and ensuring the pubs at least were a safe environment. Fast forward a few years to operation Alligator. This plan involved a numerous yet discreet police presence on Friday and Saturday nights to curb violence and anti-social behaviour on the streets. So far, this has also been a huge success, with incidents dropping off to almost zero. This in turn has led to a big upturn in town centre trade as more people are happier to go out feeling safer and more relaxed. The next initiative to reduce incidents even further is the Best Bar None Campaign. Launched by the Doncaster Evening Economy Partnership, the campaign aims to promote the town centre as an area of constant business,

rather than just 9 to 5 for the shops, 7 to midnight for the bars and pubs. The evening is a time when customers and visitors outside the normal shopper/drinker demographic need to be attracted to the town by ensuring there is plenty to do and enough places to eat or drink in a safe and convivial atmosphere.

The Best Bar None Campaign sets out its mandate to encourage a fresh customer base by establishing a scheme to recognize the endeavours and achievements of licensed premises in accordance with an accreditation scheme. This scheme will be open for all licensees, and hopes to create a consistent benchmark of good practice. This will mean that any business that takes part will be recognized and certified, and each year there will be an awards ceremony to honour all those who contributed to the scheme and make Doncaster a safer and more enjoyable place to visit. Those taking part and reaching the necessary standard of achievement will be awarded a plaque showing they have, and are willing to go that extra mile to ensure public safety, responsible behaviour and a commitment to quality. This in turn will help to attract a new and lively customer base, as well as lowering insurance premiums.

Although the scheme is aimed at licensed premises, the direct beneficiaries are the public themselves. The Best Bar None scheme will help to ensure that, by self policing, bars will not encourage excessive or binge drinking, thus lowering potential for disturbances or incidents. That can only make for a safer, friendlier environment for customers to enjoy themselves in. Ultimately the Best Bar None scheme will cement Doncasters growing reputation as South Yorkshire's premier nightlife destination. As the ethic and reputation grows, the image and peoples perception of the town will be justifiably raised, encouraging tourists and locals to use the town more, making it a vibrant and vital area.

