**NORWICH CRAFT BEER SHOP SELECTED AS EAST OF ENGLAND START UP LOANS AMBASSADOR**

**Saul Press has gone from delivering beers on his bike to setting up the UK’s “smallest off-licence” to now owning his own craft ale shop in Norwich**

·     Saul Press, founder of Beer Hatch in Norwich, announced as East of England Ambassador

·     Start Up Loans Ambassadors, which celebrates top entrepreneurial talent, has been running for a decade

·     This year it recognises 14 small businesses from across the UK as inspiring examples of UK start-ups supported by the programme

·     The Start Up Loans programme has delivered more than £1.27bn of funding to over 125,000 businesses since 2012

Saul Press, founder of Beer Hatch, a craft beer shop in Norwich, is among 14 business owners announced today as a Start Up Loans 2025 Ambassador.

Since 2020, Saul has used two Start Up Loans of £1,500 and £6,000. During the pandemic, Saul found himself out of work and decided to take out his first loan to set up a beer delivery company. He delivered the beer orders on his bike, selling excess draught beer and ales that pubs were struggling to sell due to lockdowns.

As the lockdown restrictions subsided, Saul opened the ‘UK’s smallest off-license’– selling beer from a disused telephone box in Norwich. Due to the success of the pop-up shop, Saul used a second Start Up Loan to open his own craft beer shop in the centre of Norwich in 2023 with support from one of the Start Up Loans programme’s Business Support Partners, First Enterprise, to expand his craft beer company. The loan helped purchase six draught taps to open a small bar, and fridges to retail local beers and ale.

**Saul Press, founder of Beer Hatch, said**: “I used to work in marketing, but during lockdown I started reflecting on what I really wanted to do next. I realised my true passion was a good beer! Back then, I got on my bike to sell excess pub stock, and since then the business has gone from strength to strength. The second loan from Start Up Loans gave me the opportunity to open my own shop and kit it out with all the right equipment.

“The beer scene in Norwich is truly unmatched, drawing many visitors for beer tours and tastings. We were recently named one of the top eight independent beer shops in the whole of the UK by The Times, which was fantastic recognition. I believe people really enjoy shopping local and discovering unique beers that they wouldn’t necessarily find anywhere else.”

Now in its tenth year, Start Up Loans Ambassadors shines a spotlight on remarkable UK entrepreneurs who have turned their business ideas into reality with support from the government-backed initiative. Each Ambassador has been chosen for showcasing the determination, innovation and resilience needed to grow a small business, while inspiring others to pursue their own entrepreneurial journeys.

 In addition to 12 Ambassadors from each of the UK’s Nations and regions, two more Ambassadors have been selected from specialist groups supported by the programme who may face challenges in accessing funding elsewhere. One is from the ex-forces community and the other from the 18-24 age group.

Previous Start Up Loans Ambassadors, including NICE Drinks and UK Connect, have progressed to achieve considerable growth. The most successful scale-up business in terms of valuation that has been supported by Start Up Loans is sportswear brand Castore, which is valued at approximately £1bn.

The 2025 Ambassadors will be introduced at a dedicated event in central London that marks the start of a year-long programme which will see them take part in a series of local and national engagements, helping inspire and encourage aspiring start-up founders to take the leap into business ownership.

**Louise McCoy, Managing Director, Start Up Loans Products, British Business Bank said:** *“*We are incredibly proud to mark ten years of Start Up Loans Ambassadors, which continues to highlight the achievements of extraordinary UK entrepreneurs who have brought their business ideas to life with the help of our government-backed programme.

“I have no doubt that Saul will encourage other aspiring business owners to bring their start-up plans to life. He has a really unique and interesting business journey starting in lockdown through to now having his own shop and being recognised by The Times.”

**Daniel Carrico, Executive Director at First Enterprise, added:** "Saul’s journey with Beer Hatch is a fantastic example of how sustained support and the right investment can help a business grow from an idea to a thriving local destination. We were proud to support Saul not just once, but twice through the Start Up Loans programme, helping him get started during lockdown and then supporting his ambition to expand. Being there for entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey is what we’re all about, and it’s been inspiring to see Saul’s vision come to life."

Since its inception in 2012, the Start Up Loan programme has delivered more than 125,000 loans to business owners across the UK, amounting to more than £1.27bn of funding. Of those loans, 40% of loan recipients have been women and 20% from Black, Asian, and Other Minority Ethnic backgrounds (not including White Minorities).

For more information and to hear more about our 2025 Ambassadors, please visit: [https://www.startuploans.co.uk/about-us/start-up-loans-ambassador-programme/2025-2026](https://protect.checkpoint.com/v2/r06/___https%3A/www.startuploans.co.uk/fgtzy-zxdxyfwy-zu-qtfsx-frgfxxfitw-uwtlwfrrjd757/-757%2A~%2A___.ZXV3MjpuZXh0MTU6YzpvOjE0MjUzMmViMzgxOTc4NDRmNDdkMmI0ZTE3NmFhZmM4Ojc6YTM2Zjo0NjU0ZGI3YWIwYzc4OWUxZTE2ZmZkMjRjNjcwMjIyZmUyN2U0NDg1NWE2M2NlYmFlNDIyNDJlMDMzZGZiZGI4Omg6RjpU)