

Pub is the Hub Case Study

THE KINGS HEAD VILLAGE SHOP, APETHORPE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



BACKGROUND

The Kings Head is a delightful pub located in the Northamptonshire village of Apethorpe. The pub serves the local population and surrounding rural area. There is no shop in Apethorpe or the closely adjoining villages of Wood Newton and Fotheringley. Also there is no village hall and village meetings are held in the Kings Head. The pub had been closed for some time before being bought by the villagers themselves and re-opened. Stephen Wells was employed as manager and subsequently bought the pub. The purchase was completed in 2008 and the Wells have established a very successful pub and restaurant business. With the villagers having run the pub, the support for a shop was considerable and contact was made with the Northants Rural Action Partnership to see if funding could be sourced through their Leader Programme. Stephen Wells decided to go ahead with the project even though Northants County Council was not able to provide funding because the project did not meet their minimum project cost of £10,000.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Initially the idea was to provide the shop in an adjoining barn which linked with an outside courtyard terrace and the pub. However, on reflection it was decided to convert the small games bar into the village shop and provide a coffee bar in the shop as part of the project. The existing bar was adapted to receive a refrigerated counter the remaining area being divided for sales items and seating. The shop is perfectly located being directly accessible from the front entrance to the pub and from the courtyard at the rear. The counter also links directly with the main lounge bar making supervision easy and convenient. The shop sells a range of local produce as well as “impulse” items also sourced from local producers.

OUTCOMES

This is a unique little project. The commitment of the local community to the Kings Head persuaded Mr and Mrs Wells to purchase the pub and develop it into a genuine hub for this lovely rural village, providing pub, shop and village meeting place. The project has been carried out with style and imagination using furniture such as antique dressers and tables to display sale items and at the same time creating a cosy and inviting coffee area. The shop sells mainly local produce so there is a rural pub project involving the entire community. Stephen and Julia Wells are the driving force behind the pub's success and have invested their own capital to further enhance the Kings Head role as the hub of the village of Apethorpe.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- Great commitment from the villagers of Apethorpe.
- High quality licensees.
- An eye for detail and strong catering ability but above all a desire to make the pub the hub of the village.
- The low cost of the project shows that pub based shops can be effectively developed
- Make sure that the location of the shop is correct and fits well with the layout in the pub so as to integrate well into the business

PROJECT COSTS

The owners provided all the funding for this project which was circa £5K

LICENSEE CONTACT: Mr Stephen Wells Tel: 01780 470627

PUB OWNER: Mr Stephen Wells

PUB IS THE HUB CONTACT: Mr Hugh Wilson Tel. 01423 546165