

Pub is the Hub Case Study

The Fox and Hounds, Banbury Rd, Charwelton, Daventry, Northamptonshire NN11 3YY



The Property

Charwelton is a small rural village with a population of 200. The Fox and Hounds was in existence in the 1600s and until recently has always been at the centre of village life. The Charwelton Village Co-operative registered the Fox and Hounds as a Community Asset and started negotiations with Enterprise Inns. Unfortunately, they were unable, initially, to raise the finances and Enterprise sold to a developer who planned to build 3 houses. In the meantime, the community had been in discussions with the Co-operative Society and through the Co-operative Model were now able to finance the project. They were given 6 weeks' notice by the developer having re-applied for Community Asset status and eventually the Fox and Hounds was purchased for £230K.

Project Summary

After the acquisition by the Charwelton Village Co-operative in the Autumn of 2013, a new and experienced licensee was granted a 20 year lease. Under the terms of the new lease, the Charwelton Village Co-operative are responsible for all external works and the leaseholder for all internal works. The community and new licensee have been involved in clearing and cleaning the pub, erecting new signage and carrying out improvements, which have included creating an attractive bar area with two open fires. Directly linked to the bar is a 40 seater dining room serving Italian food. The kitchen has also undergone full refurbishment.

Outcomes

The challenge of bringing together the community to protect, buy and re-open your village pub cannot be underestimated and the Charwelton community can be duly proud of their success. The support of the Co-operative through their "Co-operative Model" Community Ownership Scheme has been fundamental to the successful purchase of The Fox & Hounds. Equally important has been the leasing of the pub to a highly successful and experienced licensee who will now work to re-build this valuable community facility. The pub bar area opened on the 28th February 2014 and the new restaurant in early April. The restaurant has been called La Voce (which is Italian for The Fox). The Italian theme and menu adds an exciting new element to the new Fox and Hounds. The Charwelton Village Co-operative have achieved so much in the re-opening of the pub and the re-launch is the start of an exciting and challenging future which includes the possibility of a convenience shop at a later date.

Lessons to Learn

1. "If at first you don't succeed, try and try again" really does sum up this project.
2. The enthusiastic support and advice from the Co-Op in the purchase of the Fox and Hounds.
3. The Community Group had a very clear plan which was that they did not want to actually run the pub but be an essential part of its future.
4. The success in attracting a highly experienced Licensee/Leaseholder with a successful track record in the area
5. Creation of part time and full time jobs in a rural area.

Project Cost

The pub was purchased for £230,000.

The Licensee has carried out the refurbishment internally with his own funds.

The Charwelton Village Co-operative has been responsible for the cost of the external works.

With work still progressing the completed project costs are still to be finalised.

Contacts

Charwelton Village Co-operative:

Daniel Elkins

07712 895477

March 2014