

Pub is the Hub Case Study

The White Horse, Shaston Road, Stourpaine, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 8TA (Shop)



Background

Owned by Hall & Woodhouse, The White Horse is a typical Dorset roadside village pub, which dates back to the early 18th Century. The pub has an inglenook fireplace and two dining rooms, one of which opens onto the decked patio area outside. Chris Sargent, the Landlord, has been at the pub for 11 years and in May 2011 he converted spare space in a corridor room into a small village shop, utilising a separate front entrance.

The shop was opened during a personal visit by Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall.

Project Summary

The shop has been run since opening by its manageress, Julie Rawles, whilst the bars are run by Mandy Tulk. Despite its small space, the shop manages to provide a wide range of most essentials for local village residents and acts as a social hub, illustrating that the pub building can be one of the finest forms of convenience stores there is!

Outcomes

As well as supporting the essential services for a mixed village, Chris has supported other community facilities, such as:

- 'Cops in the Shop', where the local police publicise a regular surgery for residents on police issues.
- Each week the local vicar hosts a surgery to meet with parishioners.
- The White Horse run a book exchange/swap library.
- They also provide a prescription collection point each week for over 20 residents in the shop.

Lessons Learned

- There were no local grants available in Dorset, which meant that the Landlord had to provide most of the development costs with the proposition being supported by the owners, Hall & Woodhouse.
- A great partnership has developed between the Landlord and his staff, to support their various local activities.
- Recognising that coming to live in a village can often feel like 'intruding' and a location with a variety of services can help to introduce and settle new residents.
- Most villagers now say they don't know what they would do without the facilities provided by The White Horse.

Future Challenge

Whilst the shop is on the village roadside, the main challenge faced in keeping it viable is how to increase new business by encouraging and attracting passing trade.

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