

Pub is the Hub Case Study

The Duke of Marlborough, Somersham, Suffolk IP3 4QA



BACKGROUND

The Duke of Marlborough is situated in the rural village of Somersham in Suffolk but sadly closed in 2014. There then followed a long campaign by the community to prevent the pub being de-licensed and the site turned into residential use. The community raised £300,000 to buy the pub and after a two-and-a-half-year battle they finally got the keys in February 2017, taking over ownership under a Community Benefit Society Scheme.

The pub needed superficial interior work to bring it up to modern standards and after a planned closure to complete this work, the Duke of Marlborough reopened its doors just for wet sales in the Spring of 2017. A manager and chef were appointed in September which was when the pub started opening five days a week and trade really started to improve.

The management committee had plans to diversify making the pub more community focused, and with this in mind made contact with Pub is The Hub.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Following discussions with Pub is The Hub the team decided to create a café and to introduce IT training for anyone in the community wanting to gain computer knowledge. The back room was designated as the ideal location for training so after further meetings with Pub is The Hub they began sourcing the equipment, fixtures and fittings for both projects. Then, with the help of many volunteers the rooms were redecorated and lighting, broadband and additional electric sockets were installed for the laptops and a coffee machine.

OUTCOMES

Since the opening of the Duke of Marlborough their aim has been to relieve social exclusion, and now with the addition of the café many more people are visiting the pub from the village and the wider community. Quiz nights, birthday parties, christenings and wakes have all helped to combat isolation and loneliness, and the IT training will provide the whole community with increased computer knowledge. The café is offering freshly ground coffee-teas and homemade cakes, making it a social meeting place. The fresh produce on the menu is all locally sourced thereby helping local businesses, and giving the community a healthier lifestyle. There are job opportunities for local people and many customers are walking to the pub, giving an environmental saving with less car use. These facilities and activities plus the pub's inclusive policy are making the Duke of Marlborough the hub of the village.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- Villagers pulling together to get the only pub in the village reopened
- A community with a clear objective to relieve isolation and loneliness
- Elderly and those without cars can now access services more easily
- New amenities are enhancing the cohesion and sustainability of the pub and this rural community
- Generating a positive perception of the pub, through Pub is The Hub

CAPITAL COSTS

Contribution from Pub is The Hub's Community Services Fund	£ 3,000
Applicant's contribution	7,739
Total cost of project	10,739

LICENSEE CONTACT:

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