

Pub is the Hub Case Study

St John Inn, St John, Torpoint, Cornwall, PL11 3AW



St John is a coastal civil parish and a village in south-east Cornwall, 3 miles south of Saltash and 1.5 miles south-east of Torpoint. The parish is opposite Plymouth, separated from it by St John's Lake and the population is almost 400 people. A few hundred metres north of St John village is an area of high ground called Vanderbands, the site of an Iron Age castle and the nearby St John's Lake is a site of special interest, designated mainly for its bird interests.

Aside from the church, the St John Inn is the only amenity in the village, and it was closed for a number of years, having seen a succession of previous owners.

In 2017, Rob and Gill Berry took on the freehold of the pub in 2017 and have become local village community champions in every sense of the phrase so that the pub has become very much the hub of the village.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Project 1:

When the owners approached the local Pub is The Hub advisor for a grant from the Community Services Fund, the plan was to create a small village shop in a purpose built shed at the side of the pub building.

Their plans were to deliver a service that would help the local people with less access to transport and to open for the hours that suited the pub's trading times and to serve the needs of the local community.

This, in the normal timescale of around three months, is not easy to achieve but when, in March 2020, the Covid-19 crisis began, the two owners accelerated their plans. Working under imminent lockdown rules and then lockdown restrictions they managed to purchase all the materials equipment to build the shop from scratch.

With the pub closed, Rob and Gill were able to get the shop up, fitted out and running within the space of just three weeks and were open in time to help supply the local community with everyday goods that were needed, whilst following the social distancing rules.

Project 2:

The second project was straight-forward in that it will give the village community and visitors access to laser printing services in the pub, saving on expense and miles travelled to print shops in Plymouth.

When the pub opens it will create more reasons to visit the local pub and to support its hard working community minded owners but while closed Rob and Gill are still able to offer printing services via email.

OUTCOMES SO FAR

At the time of writing, restrictions due to Covid-19 are still in place and the pub is still closed for normal business. However, the village of St John now has a local shop providing everyday essentials and locally sourced goods with strict social distancing rules and an honesty box payment system monitored by an APP on Rob and Gill's mobile phone. Community spirit is riding high and the shop will go some way to help fight isolation and loneliness.

With the hard work by the licensees to get this local shop ready to make a difference in during the lockdown crisis the standing of the pub in the village has risen even higher.

The printing service will be available as soon as pubs are able to re-open their doors again.

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LESSONS TO LEARN

- The foresight to see this crisis lockdown coming and to be quick to act on the project has been outstanding.
- The licensees/owners have worked hard to get this community project completed during very unusual circumstances.
- The shop opening generated wide interest from local newspapers and radio stations, with Gill giving an interview on BBC Radio Cornwall.

PROJECT COSTS

Project Costs	Shop	Printer
Contribution made by applicant	£600	£200
Community Services Fund grant from Pub is The Hub	£3,000	£1,404
Total Project Costs	£3,600	£1,604

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