

Pub is the Hub Case Study

Pear & Olive, Hildersham, Cambridgeshire CB21 6BU



The Pear & Olive is located in the small village of Hildersham in Cambridgeshire. Hildersham has a population of just 150, and no amenities other than the pub. The pub, previously known as The Pear Tree, had been closed for five years and the villagers had to fight to block a Change of Use application before the renowned French chef, Gael Lecolley from Normandy, and his wife Cathryn a Creative Director/Designer from California, took over and started renovating the neglected pub. Having been without a watering hole for five years the villagers were keen to see it reopen, and to their delight The Pear & Olive opened in August 2018. Gael and Cat soon established a following and within 12 months they had a thriving business. They were keen to give something back to the community for all of their support and, with this in mind, they made contact with Pub is The Hub.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Working with the Pub is The Hub regional adviser, they decided to develop a purpose-built farm shop and Cafe adjacent to the car park, which would give easy access to the more elderly and infirm. However, the initial builder only completed half the task before falling ill, and was unable to continue. The new contractors decided to start things afresh, which delayed things further so that The Pantry Farm Shop & Cafe eventually opened a year later on 1st June 2020.

OUTCOMES

Completed during spring 2020, [The Pantry](#) opened officially during the Covid pandemic so fully complies with hygiene and social distancing rules and a one-in, one-out policy. Since its opening, the shop is a great success with the villagers and the wider community supporting this venture which, in the current climate, is great asset to everyone. The Pantry provides a friendly local service to the villagers and whole community, making life easier for those who find it difficult to travel. They use local suppliers and offer fresh fruit and vegetables and locally sourced jams and honey plus artisan cheeses thereby helping the local economy. In addition there is a delicatessen service where customers can buy speciality prepared food and a seating area under a pergola leading to a patio, so that in the warmer months customers can enjoy alfresco café meals.

Many residents now walk to the shop giving them a healthier lifestyle and an environmental saving with less car use, making The Pantry and Cafe the hub of the community.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- A village pub is worth fighting for.
- Sometimes a great project requires a licensee who wants to give something back to the community.
- Local residents, particularly those without cars, can access services more easily reducing social exclusion.

PROJECT COSTS

Applicant contribution	£11,490
Community Services Fund grant from Pub is The Hub	£3,000
Total Project Costs	£14,490

LICENSEE CONTACT: Gael and Cathryn Lecolley
 TEL: 01223 890446
 PUB OWNER: Free House

For more information telephone 01423 546165 or email enquiries@pubisthehub.org.uk