

Pub is the Hub Case Study

The Blue Bell, Whaplode St Catherine, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE12 6SN



BACKGROUND

The Blue Bell Inn is situated in a very rural village (population c.200) some 8 miles from Spalding in Lincolnshire. The owners, John and Jenny Lusher, are highly experienced Licensees and purchased the pub some 12 years ago. They have transformed a run-down property into a thriving rural business with a delightful bar area and quite exceptional separate dining facilities. The pub draws its customers from a wide surrounding community of rural villages. It is the centre for many village occasions and has been instrumental in raising considerable sums for local charities. During the winter time, the pub is regularly used by local shoots for breakfast and lunch. In the adjoining barn, there is a separate micro-brewery called the Blue Bell Brewery which not only produces a draught ale for the Blue Bell but also for other pubs in the area.

PROJECT SUMMARY

John has been able to purchase a small field which adjoins the Blue Bell car park in order to create a caravan/mobile home park. As members of the Caravan Club, they have always felt that if they were able to purchase additional land, there would be a demand for caravan park facilities. The field has been cleared and 5 hardcore standings have been created. Each standing has an electrical and TV link and there are 2 water points available. There is also in-field WIFI, and a septic tank has been built with emptying points for caravan WC's. New privacy fencing has been erected and the area has been provided with floodlights. The park has been given full Caravan Club status.

OUTCOMES

As the project was completed in the autumn of 2013, the real outcomes will not be judged until the spring and summer of 2014. However, the site has already been used and with the publicity gained from the Caravan Club, John has no doubt that this will be a successful additional venture for the Blue Bell. State of the art facilities for people using the site have been provided and the pub offers outstanding meal and bar choices. Lincolnshire County Council felt unable to support the project but PiTH had no doubt that this was a worthy case for the 'Community Services Fund'. Importantly, all the work carried out was supported by local tradesmen and suppliers.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- Enthusiastic and highly professional owners prepared to act on advice enabling the project to develop and complete quickly.
- The owners have created a very successful rural pub which is the hub of this village and the surrounding area.
- Importantly, the project has been completed using local tradesmen and suppliers.
- Lincolnshire County Council were unable to support the project but PiTH have provided £4K from their Community Services Fund.
- Support from the Caravan Club was important in advising on the necessary requirements and for future publicity.
- John and Jenny Lusher's attention to detail and enthusiasm for the Blue Bell shows what can be created in a rural location and the new caravan park has added to the quite exceptional facilities which the pub has created.

PROJECT CAPITAL COSTS (EXCLUDING VAT)

Total project costs (inc. land purchase of £15,500)	£21,300
Applicant contribution	£17,300
Pub is the Hub Community Services Fund	£ 4,000

LICENSEE CONTACT:

TEL:

John Lusher
01406 540300

EMAIL:

A20koh@aol.com

WEBSITE:

www.thebluebell.net

PUB OWNER:

Free House

PUB IS THE HUB CONTACT:

Hugh Wilson

TEL:

01423 546165

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