

THE LAYER FOX, LAYER DE LA HAYE, COLCHESTER, ESSEX, CO2 0JH - COMMUNITY HUB



BACKGROUND

The Layer Fox is situated in Layer De La Haye, approx 4 miles outside Colchester. The village has a vibrant community with a mixed age population. When Jinjer Adams took on the running of pub in May 2009, she had beginner's optimism, enthusiasm and bags of energy. An accountant by trade she was a regular customer before it became apparent that the pub was about to fail and close. With financial support from a local benefactor, Jinjer and her daughter Zoe took on the pub to bring it back from the brink. The revival of some good old fashioned hospitality, great cask beer and quality food breathed life back into The Layer Fox and the business took a huge step forward.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Ever mindful of her surrounding community, Jinjer realised she was only scratching the surface in terms of the pub's community potential. Following a visit from her local Pub is The Hub adviser, to assess the potential to develop new services, Jinjer started working closely with Essex County Council and Essex Rural County Council to get a project started. But it was Jinjer's enthusiasm to provide the community with the services that were lacking that has made them work. The intention was to provide limited Post Office services, with sales of stamps and parcel collection/ drop-off etc. Alongside this, they wanted a delicatessen selling local meats and cheeses, and an ATM plus Pay-Point. In addition a library facility was set up within an area in the restaurant which now forms part of a small coffee shop; with free 'Wi-Fi'.

OUTCOMES

This has had a positive impact on the pub and brought benefits to the local community; the introduction of the Post-Office Counter, a Cash Machine and PayPoint for bills, top ups, TV license, gas/electric cards, supply a much needed facility with the nearest Post Office an 8 mile round trip. The 'Deli', plus book-swap and coffee shop with soft seating and Wi-Fi provide a community meeting point, something that was lacking in the village; with some new external signage ensuring that these new services were promoted to the passing traffic. More recently, a weekly Weight Watchers class has been established, and the community services and facilities have been extended to include a charitable recycling facility for clothes, shoes, ink cartridges, and mobile phones.

This has created a busy village hub, central to the comings and goings of village life: Collecting fresh milk; Mums meeting after the school run for coffee; pensioners popping in to pay bills and pick up fresh bread – all before the lunchtime. Local suppliers have a new outlet for their products – from dairy, vegetables and meat to chilli oils and jams – and there are benefits in reduced fuel bills for locals. Footfall has also increased in the pub, resulting in some additional sales.

The Pub is the Hub adviser, through the Local Community Champions scheme funded by the Big Lottery, worked with local organisations including the local authority and rural community council, to help develop this complex project and source grant funding and support.

LESSONS TO LEARN

- An excellent proactive licensee without which none of these projects would have started.
- Business plans that proved the viability of these projects.
- Identifying the village needs which the pub now provides.
- Support from the local community and the Parish Council
- Local authority backing and a small amount of capital grant funding.

PROJECT CAPITAL COSTS (EXCLUDING VAT)

Total project capital costs	£10,000.00
Applicant contribution	£5,000.00
Essex County Council Retail Enterprise grant contribution	£5,000.00
Essex Rural CC helped with financing the free to use ATM provided by 'Your Cash'	

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Community Champions

Case Study

