



Your thoughts: Village Feedback on the Pub

Comments and suggestions from a selection of villagers on the subject of saving the Seven Stars

Village Feedback

Save the Stars: Feedback collected from the village.

What would make you come more?

Summary:

- *Food to include simpler/cheaper options. Lunch time menu, bar snack menu; not too expensive, but good quality; lighter/ kids options,*
- *More Events: quiz, wine tasting, curry night, fish and chip night*
- *Longer Hours: weekend breakfasts, morning coffee/croissants, weekend afternoon tea (school run)*
- *Other: wifi, coffee area, "host" who makes people feel welcome*

Would come more with more variation in menu and price points.

More events, with more notice.

Sunday breakfast with papers. Coffee croissant, full English

Events. Music

Better food ie not too expensive, but not something I could cook at home.

Really good food that is good every time. Doesn't have to be fancy, but good quality and home-made.

For some people in village, food is too expensive.

Little function room

Pub quiz and supper

Afternoon cream teas at the weekend

Fish and chips night

Cheaper lunches eg Abingdon Arms in Beckley soup and sandwich

Cheaper simple good food

More reasonably priced good food

Less expensive, but still quality food

Newspapers and milk for sale at weekend

More basic food – wholesome, not too pricey

Changed lunch menu

Morning afternoon coffee/tea

Family oriented menu

Not a gastro pub: more flexible menu, soup + sandwich lunches

More variety in menus

Coffee at 11 onwards

More modestly priced meals (£12-£10) mid week

Varying menus

Sunday night opening

7 days a week opening

Summer BBQ events

Light, low cost snacks – especially lunchtime

Different identity to Mole ie not cordon bleu

More midweek social activities eg jazz, quiz

Cheaper menu choices – specials at lunchtime and sandwiches; £6-£8 lunch meals, bar snacks menu

Consistent Landlord/lady behind bar welcoming drinkers as well as diners

Sandwich soup type menu for lunchtime walkers

Cheaper menu

Friendlier welcome

Music

Accessible menu

Cheaper, well cooked simple meals

More space to sit and have a drink/ bar snack

Pub quiz

Cheaper food

Light lunches, salads, light calories

Village Feedback

Lot of people go to the Waterfront Café in Benson because it has good cheap food, drinks and atmosphere

Lunch food: soup, sandwiches, pies all done VERY WELL

Mid week meals

Child friendly food

More adjustable dinning space

Affordable "Mums" for lunch

Light lunches and bar food

Wider range of beer

Affordable meals

Locally brewed ale

Curry evening!

Events - Paella evening/garden party/games

Summer BBQ

Cheaper menu

Family friendly

Really good pub food: not too basic, but good home made

Lunch time bar snacks

Kids options

Better tables/chairs

Cheaper menu mid week evenings

Open 7 days/week and evenings

Good simple food at cheaper prices as well as the fancier food

Light lunches, pub grub, good beer and good company. Good meet and great – eg Sean.

Lower drink and food prices

Larger portions

More atmosphere (described by some as soulless and like All Bar One)

Sunday roasts at £9-11 price point

Good quality but reasonable cost food – not as expensive as the Mole

Good well kept local ber

Really good local beer, well maintained and fresh

A space to drink that beer and also sit down for a drink only...not to feel that it is a restaurant primarily

Using local produce

Quick lunches under £10 so could pop in for lunch

A range of price points so could go in for different reasons at different times

Improve the garden

A very different menu, which had a good mix of traditional English meals, plus a suitable childrens menu. The sort of thing I'm thinking of is ham, egg & chips, bangers and mash, fish pie, cottage pie, sandwiches & bagettes, soup, salads, fresh breads, plus some of the usual heavyweight dishes – steaks, fish, etc. Also a selection of specials.

Change the ambience

Cheaper food option with less preparation/wait time sausages and mash, pies, lamb shank or stew etc. Play ground in the garden would make me a daily attendee I imagine. currently go to Little Milton for playground and coffee. A Saturday and Sunday brunch menu would also be great so we could get out the house have brunch, read papers and let children charge round the garden.

We would use it more (and did so) when the food was slightly cheaper (although this was only with Olly as the food was so good).....I didn't eat there much with the last people. We might attend special events and maybe even hold book club there if it was open on a monday (our book club day).

we would use it more if there was cheaper "pub grub" especially during the week at lunch time - so we could just nip in for a quick sandwich.

A childrens menu / Sunday

lunch, somewhere we would be welcome to go for a family meal. Lower prices, classic food well done (I love scampi and chips..)

Being able to go for a coffee and read the papers having dropped off at school. Playground in the garden?

Squashy sofas and roaring fire to go for a drink and gossip with a few friends.

Village Feedback

Themed nights are great but difficult with small children. What about themed nights that include an early bird part for those who want to come at 6pm and go to put the children to bed, leaving the less encumbered people to party on?!

Think the evening meal food is exceptional quality, however a more varied/changing menu would encourage us to use it more. Plus at lunchtime and more off peak times a more basic menu (soup, sandwich, burger etc) would be very handy. It's not a pub you can nip along to for a simple bite to eat.

I think the pub might benefit from a more 'internet' business cafe in the morning shift with cheaper food sandwiches etc. I know I'd use it in this capacity

Although Ollie is a fantastic chef and we have had some really fantastic meals, we can't afford to eat there too often. We would like to see a bit more variety on the menu and some simple food, especially for kids. I also feel the pub would be used more at lunchtimes if there were some light lunches, such as soup and a roll, sandwiches, jacket potatoes etc.

Good quality but lower price food

A very different menu, which had a good mix of traditional English meals, plus a suitable childrens menu. The sort of thing I'm thinking of is ham, egg & chips, bangers and mash, fish pie, cottage pie, sandwiches & bagettes, soup, salads, fresh breads, plus some of the usual heavyweight dishes – steaks, fish, etc. Also a selection of specials.

The inside of the pub needs a complete revamp to change the ambiance, increase the covers and make it generally more friendly and welcoming.

If there was a plan to provide more traditional, reasonably-priced meals. The village has The Mole for high-end meals - what we need is somewhere you can go for a bite to eat without it costing a fortune. Also, if there was a basic shop available - bread, milk, papers, for example

- Area for drinking only
- Good evening pub grub, Pie/Pasty & Chips, Sausage & Mash, Burgers, Fish & Chips, ham, egg & chips, Pizza
- Cheap easy to eat lunches Jacket pots, sandwiches, cream teas,
- Feeling you can pop in after you've been for a walk (ie with wellingtons and slightly weathered clothes)
- Dog friendly

Child friendly, dog friendly, good English pub grub at reasonable prices, more space just for drinkers, would go for morning/afternoon coffee and cake or light lunch/snacks, nice garden also helps, availability of basics such as milk, bread.

What would put off?

Summary

- *Loud music/karaoke*
- *Games machine/dartss*
- *TV*
- *Bad food*
- *Bad service*
- *Barless restaurant*

Loud music

Music

Dancing

Fruit machines

Fancy Lights

Bikers

Kareoke

TV sport

Unfriendly unwelcome bar staff

Long wait for food/poor service

Juke boxes

Indifferent food

Bad service

Village Feedback

Kareoke
TV
Boozy atmosphere
Lack of space
Lack of proper bar
If it becomes a restaurant rather than a pub
Kareoke etc
Too elaborate a menu and expensive wine
Fruit machines
TVs
Darts
Any kind of games machines (snooker ok)
Intrusive pop music
Bikers
Heavy drinking
Poor food
TV sport
Loud music
Not another Mole: too gastro
Anti-child
TV sports
Fruit machines
Loud music
Restaurant masquerading as pub
Lack of bar area
Lack of variety menu
Poor price points
Too much like Mole
Too expensive
Rude staff
If pub became restaurant that didn't welcome people who just wanted a drink
High food prices
If no longer used by locals
Bad food
Games machines
Juke box
Darts
A fine dining experience
High prices
Not another Mole
Bad food
Too upmarket
Juke boxes
Games machines
Games machines
High prices
Juke boxes
Games machines
Music
Bad food – ie not home made
Very expensive food and drink
Too food oriented ie nowhere for locals to drink
Food that was too basic
Menu that never changed
Going back to a substandard food offering (Carrie and Ollie have raised the bar)
TV
Games machines
Rubbish food
Over priced food

Village Feedback

expensive food and unfriendly publican who lacks people skills.

If the food was dire , expensive or non existant we would use it less. Friendly staff are important too.

we would probably not use it less than twice a week unless there was no food at all. Then it would just be Friday nights.

If it carries on as it is

If the food quality reduced to the level of the previous ownership. After several attempts we just had to stop going, despite wanting to support it. Also, the formula of good food, great service works, with the occasional event (beer festival, quiz night). If we went back to continual theme nights and gimmicks that would be a turnoff. Going down the Carey, Sunday chaos route would also be not what we would like to see.

Lowering the standard of food/ deterioration of the interior.

If it becomes more of a resturant than a meeting place. Arguably it was becoming very similar to The Mole which is more a restaurant than a pub.

No changes – whilst the food was reasonable, I felt it did not represent good value for money and therefore had given it up!

- Pricey, over fancy meals

Restaurant style food which is expensive, does not seem beneficial to try and compete with The Mole

Other ideas

Leaflet drop science park

Get custom from science park eg xmas lunch

Wifi coffee place to think work during day

Small bar separate or away from main eating area

Simple food during the week; more ambitious during the weekend

Meal deals eg: Themed meals; 2/3 courses + wine drink

More events like beer fest

Links to local events eg cricket, book club, Green events

Shop, post office

Quiz

Shop (newspaper, fesh veg, fresh meat, beked bread and cakes)

Mother and kids offering after school (3pm). Cakes, tea.

Develop outdoor option

Shop

Build conservatory at back

Sub let upstairs

Morning coffee for Mum's

Post Office drop off collection

Playground

Community allotment use

Wine tastings/private diners

Morning coffee for Mums

Shop, newspapers

Shop for milk, bread, eggs

Post Office, local produce shop

Marketing to all local office workers

Wind turbines x3

Utilise outside/ back bar for events

Coffee shop/newspapers

Rock music

Café

Shop

PO

Occasional entertainment

Shop

Village Feedback

Would like to see Simon and Liz back

Would not like to see Simon and Liz back

Toilets need moving urgently

Separate dining room

Playground

Saturday and /or Sunday village Brunch would be great, long tables with people sitting where there is room. Log fires and Sunday papers

Themed "bring a dish" evening once a month – would come for some people's cooking - would spread the word within the village if you knew a friend was cooking that day, could be fundraiser for pub improvements

A room that could be booked for village events/meetings like the book clubs/Linda's wine club/ the garden club/ wreath making/summer sales of surplus allotment produce perhaps or arts and crafts/ exhibitions of local work for example a Baldons Artweeks exhibition with teas...

Also for those of us who might prefer a (really nice) cup of tea or coffee with a bit of cake and a newspaper at the weekend, perhaps that could be fitted in too...

Eating area opening out onto the back garden with lots of light, french doors, plus a child friendly garden (with playground).

Village shop, meeting rooms, function facility

Children's playground in garden

1. Courses. If the pub was less a gastropub and more simple it would be possible to run fun weekend and evening courses in the kitchen around bread baking, butchery, sausage making, and carving etc. I also think that we could look to develop opportunities for young school leavers to gain qualifications in food hygiene, food preparation, customer service, and others. This could diversify the income stream of the pub provide opportunities for young people and provide stream of staff.

2. Baldon House is looking to make better use of its grounds and walled garden. I would like to link it to the pub and provide fresh produce including pig meat locally reared. This could also provide further training and employment opportunities for young people in horticulture/animal care.

3. Play ground. The village needs a play ground. Currently I see other parents at Dorchester, Little Milton and Stadhampton play grounds all using local shops and cafes for kids/adult refreshments. Parents use the pub car park for school drop offs and pick ups walking over the green, if the pub had a playground and coffee shop I am certain people would use it. It would also become an option for kids tea easing the afternoon pressure on parents while raising the profile with outside village users.

4. Drinkers Bar. I understand the pressure of squeezing in the food tables to maximise revenue, but if we could create a more welcoming cosy drinkers corner where people can chat, read, play on iPad etc on chesterfields and comfortable chairs it would bring more occasional trade in and more patronage from me. It might also make a suitable place to put Jack memorabilia in 'Jacks' corner.

5. There should be a long term plan to build accommodation a few well priced rooms would bring in extra revenue for very little effort and help repay the mortgage on a quiet day.

we think a music night every so often would be great idea - in the past there have been disco type nights which were brilliant

Nothing revolutionary right now. Maybe once we get sight of the current P&L there will be areas of opportunity that are apparent, however I understand that this is already under analysis.

One obvious piece is realising some more economies of scale now that peak meal periods are running at capacity. I appreciate that this would need investment but getting the back room up and running again for these times could help drive the profit margin at fairly low investment.

Also, maximising volume during off peak periods by a more simple menu that retains the quality but focuses more on simplicity (see point b). This would ensure that the payroll is productive.

Maybe some opportunity to target small discounted groups for these periods.

As we know the pub would benefit from an extension at the rear to create a larger restaurant overlooking the garden increasing the number of covers/profits which could be used for functions/weddings etc this would also enable the existing space to be reconfigured into a bar area and casual dining.

The pub has an amazing location (the one most important factor for such a business) and I think it is missing a trick by not exploiting the Green and garden as well. Sadly, my vision needs lots of new capital so is probably impractical. I would have have the eating area opening out onto the

Village Feedback

back garden with lots of light, french doors, plus a child friendly garden (with the beloved village playground!). For the pub to have a future, it must attract people from outside the community and have a minimum of 70 covers (plus lots more outside in the summer). People will come in their hundreds if there is excellent, basic food readily available and a good selection of the ales etc and sensible opening hours. In time, part of the present pub area might be changed to accommodate the village shop, meeting rooms, function facility..... It should not try and compete with The Mole, certainly not in its early days of being reborn.

We feel that it could be useful in many ways to make it centre of the village again. For instance, Post Office or parcel point, village shop or at least Sunday papers and croissant buying opening hours, day time coffee and papers, playground in the pub garden and sweet shop and ice creams for the children.

What do you use pub for now?

Really like Ollie's cooking

Like Ollie's cooking

Like Ollie's cooking. Eat 3 times per month 4+ people.

Weekend drinks with family 1/fortnight; family Sunday lunch 1/month; occasional drink 1/month

Quiz/socialising

Book club

Friday evening drinks occasionally; meal 3x pa

Occasional sat or sun family lunch; occasional supper for two

Dinner; meeting friends

Steak night

Odd drink/ see people, eat. About once a month

Meet up with people from village, take children

Socialise with friends and neighbours – especially Friday nights

Occasional meals, social drinks to meet fellow villagers

Once or twice a month with friends or family for a good lunch

A couple of times a month drinks on Fridays

Currently use pub to eat 3-4 times per month. Think food is delicious. Drink is expensive

Meeting up with friends

2x month dinner; Weekly drink

Food, quiz

Friday night drinks; steak nights; friends get together; meals with friends/ family visiting

To meet people. Sometimes Friday night is like going to a party

Once or twice a week to eat and meet friends, catch up with village and show support

Socialising, drinks

Occasional drinks, Sunday lunch, meeting friends

Catching up with friends and neighbours. Occasional spur of the moment meal.

Catching up with friends

Meeting friends and acquaintances; family meals lunch and dinner; drink without need to drive; book club

Family lunch 4x £100 pa; Dinner 12x £30 pa

2x meal and drinks; occasional other

Lunch with kids; Dinner with friends and family

Have not used the pub since the last change of management but before this probably went for a meal once a month

We use the pub quite frequently, friday nights and usually in the week for dinner or lunch.

Perhaps 2 -3 times a week sometimes more, sometimes less.

we use the pub about twice a week.

Not much currently, went there for a parents evening a few weeks ago,

but not very comfortable as sitting round a table,

we currently use it for a meal (typically 4 people+) about twice per month. Don't often just go there to drink, maybe only once a quarter.

We mostly go to the seven Stars on a Friday night or for events, such as New Year's Eve.

We use it for eating out at least once a week based on the quality of Olli's menu.

Meeting friends and as a venue for lunch or supper

Village Feedback

We have had lunch twice this year and an occasional drink – mostly with book club. I'm afraid we had given up on the pub as it is/was.

None - we have not been using the pub over the past year as we found the meal prices too high for a casual lunch/dinner - it felt as though the managers were competing with The Mole.

None

Expertise on offer?

Name	Offer
Jon Dodd	Graphic design; digital support (web, social etc)
Dan Germaine	Marketing, branding, digital, social
Linda Simpson	Wine tasting events
Peter Burke	Quizzes
Fi Webster	Wordsmith
Several	Bar/waitress
No name	Offer to bake bread
Liam McCormick	Basic DIY skills. Happy to plaster, plumb(basic level) and general labourer if renovation required
Lesley and Andreas Schillinger	Marketing
Philip Gardner	Business planning, strategy, pricing
Louise Holt	Interior design
Graham Hobbins	Finance