



## case study

## equal opportunities



Objective One is  
part-financed by  
the European Union



The Objective One Partnership  
for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

### CHARK COUNTRY HOLIDAYS

Contact: Mrs J Littleton

Chark Country Holidays

Redmoor

Bodmin

PL30 5AR

[www.charkcountryholidays.co.uk](http://www.charkcountryholidays.co.uk)

### *the project*

The project has provided a farming family with an opportunity to diversify their activities and develop a more varied income base. The investment was to convert redundant farm buildings into four holiday units of holiday accommodation; one being registered as physically accessible both externally and internally (e.g. support rails, raised bed).

The Programme has invested £93,750 from the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) in the project which has a total cost of £375,000.

This project had been a long term aim of the farm owners as a means of diversifying farm income. A series of out buildings were converted into four holiday cottages incorporating one fully accessible unit. This unit is able to accommodate up to four people thus providing a flexible space for either small or large groups with access requirements. The unit fully meets the English Tourism Council's Mobility Rating Scheme (level M3 - full wheelchair access with a helper).

The economic benefit of equal opportunities is that the fully accessible holiday accommodation widens the tourism market that Chark Country Holidays can access.

### *measures of equal opportunities adopted*

#### **To enable equality of access to opportunities:**

##### **The rural economy**

The project has helped an existing agricultural business to address issues of long term economic viability and diversify its income stream into tourism. This will help safeguard the ability of the owners to both remain in business and expand whilst continuing life in a rural area.

The project has diversified the farm economy and supported the development of a new micro business.



This came at a crucial time when the future viability of agriculture was uncertain and supporting two farmers on the farm was proving a difficult task. The project has provided full time employment for the Project Manager and owner, Jenny Littleton who has withdrawn from the farm work, enabling a support farm worker to be taken on. The project has enabled Jenny to stay in work on the farm business rather than having to travel to find alternative work.

##### **Visitor access**

As part of diversifying and strengthening the farm business, the holiday cottages have been designed to benefit from as wide a market as possible through the provision of accommodation accessible to all. This enables wider marketing opportunities for the new business – hereby extending the market.

### *benefits of equal opportunities*

This project had been a long term aim of the farm owners since they moved to the farm in the 1990s. Decline of the agricultural sector meant they could not afford to complete the project themselves. The cottages were seen as a way of diversifying the income of the farm enabling the owners to continue working in agriculture and to earn an income from a different, but complementary, business – making full benefit of both the farm location and buildings.



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The now converted single storey building lent itself to an accessible holiday cottage. Jenny Littleton, the Project Manager, was aware of the Disability Discrimination Act and some of the changes in legislation and good practice that were taking place and therefore wanted to meet any requirements – both for the present and the future. It was therefore logical to include an accessible holiday unit.

It is also an opportunity to service a niche market. There are limited holiday accommodation units in the locality that cater for disabled people (as noted by visitors indicating they have found it difficult to find accessible accommodation) making this provision widen the potential tourist market. The accommodation is advertised on 8 internet sites.

There are a range of other tourist attractions in the area that are also accessible and therefore both support and complement this project. There is a potential for greater economic benefit within the local area as more services and facilities for tourists become accessible and support the accessible tourism market.

In the first full year of operation (May 2004 to May 2005), one third of bookings have required the accessible unit (five of fifteen). The number of enquiries has equalled that of bookings.

### lessons learnt

Project Manager Jenny Littleton has a few pointers for those wishing to incorporate equal opportunities within a project:

*“The information needed to ensure a building is accessible did not arrive on a plate, I did have to seek it out, but it was not difficult. All the information was available from talking to people about ideas and then sending off for appropriate information.*

*“South West Tourism and the English Tourism Council were very helpful – especially their hand book ‘ (National Accessible Scheme; for services, self-catering, hostels and campus accommodation. ETC, 2003).*

*“The only potential problem is actually the opposite of what you might expect! We have found that if all three cottages are booked and a non-disabled person asks for information about the available cottage, when they learn that it is a specially adapted cottage, they are sometimes put off.”*

However, Jenny feels that this is not an insurmountable problem. *“The benefits of an accessible cottage are*



*there for all to enjoy – there are very few obvious adaptations, in fact the adaptations are suitable for everyone and makes life easier, also the cottage is much more spacious.”*

One visitor who was not disabled and was unsure about booking the cottage has even come back for a repeat booking.

One family using the accessible unit said:

*“We really did enjoy our stay with you and hope we can return. We especially enjoyed the farm tour, Clive, it did us all good. The cottage is perfect; the best we have ever been in regarding the facilities for Peter. Once again many thanks.”*

**For more information about how you can incorporate equal opportunities into your project please contact the Objective One Partnership Office on 01872 241379 or email [objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:objectiveone@cornwall.gov.uk).**