

1 HAPPY BUNNIES AT THE CASTLE IN LUTON

CHERRIE BENNETT FBII
CASTLE TAVERN, LUTON, BEDS

We just have a lot of fun. We hold regular team meetings, which are always held away from the pub and we might go out for breakfast or do something else. We also have weekly and monthly competitions, but we don't base who wins upon sales records or targets, instead they win for having the funkiest hair that week, or being kindest to colleagues or customers.

Over Christmas, we held our happiest elf competition, where customers got to vote on who had the best outfit or who sang the best song. The winner got £100. We're planning on doing something with Bunny Hops over Easter! There's no doubt that recruitment is really hard at the moment, but we have been lucky in that two people have just joined us from a nearby pub that closed down, and the others have been here for between four and 10 years.

Cherrie, who has six staff, says she'd like to see more team members featured in BII News – which we'd be happy to do. Send your stories to the Editor: Kate. Oppenheim@bii.org.



2 SHARING IDEAS

GARTH HUGHES MBII
THE ROYAL GEORGE,
APPLEDORE, DEVON

Creating a great working environment is very important – a fun place to work, with the right remuneration. We also like to offer a diversity of opportunities to give people the chance to get involved with other projects and to be able to develop their ideas. This might be helping to plan events or offering outside catering.

Staffing remains our singularly biggest issue within the business. We're in North Devon where it's hard to find talented people... we prefer to hire people who are in their 30s to 50+, as they have a better rapport with the customers and have a pride in their work. We opened 18 months ago and have been carefully building our perfect

team, picking the best people for front-of-house and our kitchen to help us carry the business forward.

Garth says the BII HR Helpline is 'most valuable'.

TEN to ONE

Staff matters – from recruitment to creating a great workplace,

KATE OPPENHEIM SPEAKS TO 10 LICENSEES ABOUT THEIR PEOPLE

3 CALM IN ANY CRISIS!

GEOFF NORDEMANN MBII
ROYAL OAK, WEST MOLESEY, SURREY

We're a small pub on the edge of a town/village with five staff. I find that people will pop in and ask if we have any jobs going and therefore I rarely have to advertise any positions. Also, the girls

who work here bring in their friends to help out, whenever we need people. It works well.

I'm a great believer that if you look after people, they will look after you. This is my first pub, I took it on with Ei three-and-a-half years ago – I was in plumbing and heating before – but I've always worked with people and know how to behave. I like to think that I'm supportive and calm in a crisis.

I always tell my team that

nothing is ever a disaster, every problem is solvable, so they tend to come and tell me when something goes wrong or they are worried about anything. They know I always have their back.

Geoff joined the BII on entering the trade in 2016 and while he hasn't used any of the services, he knows it's there when he needs it.



4 A GOOD WORK / LIFE BALANCE IS KEY

DAREN WILKINSON MBII
LORD NELSON, LUDDENHAM,
WEST YORKS

We're a small village pub run by myself, a business partner and three part-time staff. Luckily, we haven't had to recruit for 12 months, which is good because it was hard the last

time. It took over three months, interviewing two to three people a week, before we found the right person with the same ethos and business values as ours. The skill set is out there, but people lack the conversational skills.

As we're not a large team, we don't have incentive packages or anything like that, but we like to engage with everyone on a very personal level. We want to help them achieve a good work/life balance: we make sure they take holidays regularly and, through good training, we have created a great team we can trust to look after our business for us when we're away.

Daren uses Marketplace partner David Jones Accountants. He finds being a member of the industry's professional body beneficial and says BII News is the one magazine he receives that he actually reads! Thanks Daren – that's good to hear!





5 APPRENTICESHIPS OFFERED

JO EVANS
THE STILE INN, WOLVERHAMPTON

Apprenticeships have been great for us. We work with HIT Training, they recruit for any vacancies we have and manage all the training. We take on an apprentice every year and because apprentice wages are lower, we are able to take on two people, with one of those usually staying in the business longer term. Our first apprentice has been with us now for five years.

We're a small team, so we're very hands-on, with good communication. We like to make people feel they are involved, so they share their ideas and help run our events. It all makes more engaged with the business.

Jo is the Manager of The Stile Inn, a Marston's pub leased by James Illidge MBII.

6 BONUSES FOR CHEF

NICHOLAS LE DRUILLENEC MBII
THE ACORN, POOLE, DORSET

It's a hard market for recruitment. Where we are, in Poole, there isn't high unemployment and people want the hours to suit them, such as during the school times. I do have a bonus structure for my Chef, as it's a skilled job and it also encourages him to 'buy in' to what we're doing in the business. But to be honest, with minimum wage going up, we are being squeezed. It makes it very difficult to create performance-related pay, when you're paying more for people to do the basics. Overall, it's tough working in the trade at the moment. We're a tied house and can't shop around for the best deals, although I'm very shrewd when it comes to getting the best prices on utilities, etc.

Nicholas likes the HR Helpline and says Marketplace provides a "good gauge" on price.



7 STAFF SHARE IN THE SUCCESS

CHRIS CALDWELL MBII
HORSE & JOCKEY, BILSTON, WEST MIDLANDS

We've just taken on our second pub and are in the process of building a team there, using a mix of existing and new staff. Our recruitment experience hadn't been smooth, until we started using The Caterer, which has provided us with high quality applicants. In terms of managing our teams, we run some incentives but believe the key benefits to the team are in us telling them how we are doing as a business.

People take pride in what they do and they like to see the results. From sharing with them that we've just had a record week, to the financial and guest services metrics and online reviews, we tell them all our positive results – and some of the negative as well – and we believe it creates a better workplace.

Chris has been a member of BII for four to five years and has used the helplines and Marketplace recommendations.



8 WE'RE LIKE A FAMILY

MARK GILLICK MBII
LORD ELDON INN, KNUTSFORD, CHESHIRE

We have a very strong team of eight here, in fact, I've not had to recruit for over two years – I really hope I'm not going to jinx this now! We all get along very well and work together, like a small family. Our longest serving member has been with us for 10 years. We have staff days out together and a group chat on social media, where we can talk about anything. We run a small, community pub – we're wet-led and tied to Ei – with good, regular trade and a great team of people. I feel really blessed, to be honest."

Mark hasn't used any BII benefits, but says being a member offers him peace of mind.



9 GREAT TEAM COMMUNICATION

ADRIANNE MEAD MBII
ROYAL OAK, ISLEWORTH

At the moment it is so hard to get staff – there's no one around. So it's important to make sure you have got a friendly work environment and an open line of communication, so that people can speak to you if there are any issues. We have regular meetings to address any problems and make sure everyone is up-to-speed on H&S, allergens and all their training requirements.

Above the normal, the staff get a discount on drinks and food when they visit off-duty, plus discounted food when they're at work, and if they are doing a double, they get a free meal. At Christmas, we also pay our Head Chef and Duty Manager a bonus and last year we organised for barstaff to have a night out at Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park. Our kitchen is fairly stable, our Head Chef has been with us for five years, and students, etc, often keep returning to us over the years.



10 FRIENDSHIP = LONG SERVICE

DAVID LOCKWOOD MBII
SWAN HOTEL, BLETCHLEY, BUCKS

We don't have any staffing issues. My longest serving member of staff has been here 27 years and the others 25, 20 and 14 years respectively. I've been in the pub for 28 years last December. I look after them and we're more like friends than anything else. I let them take holiday when they want and if we're shorthanded, because the football is on, or whatever, I've been here long enough to easily find people to come in to help us out.

David has taken advantage of Marketplace to find a good insurance deal.