

Objective One case study digital infrastructure



Porthminster Hotel
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The projects in the Digital Infrastructure investment cluster deliver both the roll out of broadband technology and importantly support this with business advice and training to maximise its use for business.

Modern Digital Infrastructure can be used to ensure connectivity across the globe and bring about long term improvements in business competitiveness. Key issues for Cornwall have been access to Broadband, business support to promote e-business as well as training to maximise ICT use for business, all of which have been tackled through this investment cluster.

Porthminster Hotel

One of the longest established hotels in Cornwall has benefited from Objective One investment with 2006 bookings breaking all previous records.

The Porthminster, in St Ives, is more than one hundred years old and overlooks Porthminster Beach.

In early 2006, the hotel unveiled the results of a £750,000 upgrade, with most of the rooms refurbished, some with spa baths, four poster or half tester beds or other luxurious features. At the same time, the marketing was overhauled, with a new campaign targeting key customer segments, including those looking for a romantic break, developed by marketing consultancy Brand Innovation. New branding and a website offering online booking was developed by Gendall Design in Falmouth and launched in May 2006.

Objective One support for the hotel refurbishment came from honey2cornwall and for the new online system via **actnow**. honey2cornwall offers capital investment hand in hand with expert business advice while the **actnow** project has led to the successful roll out of broadband across 99% of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly and a high percentage of business take up.

This combination of investment is working across the region to raise the quality of tourism for visitors and consequently increase year round tourism, leading to more jobs being created.

Trevor Richards, Chief Executive of the Porthminster, said: "The results have been amazing. Our bookings since May have shown an increase that has far exceeded what we dared to expect, especially out of season, which is where we particularly wanted to build business."



Trevor Richards, Chief Executive of the Porthminster Hotel, in one of the refurbished guest rooms which overlooks Porthminster Beach.

The accountancy firm Winter Rule carry out a monthly measurement of occupancy in the hotel industry. This reveals that The Porthminster achieved an increase of 19% in occupancy between May and December 2006 compared with a year ago.

Malcolm Bell, Chief Executive of South West Tourism, said: "The transformation we are seeing at The Porthminster shows just how important it is for the tourism industry to take brave steps and invest in quality. Through investing in the quality of their product and their marketing, The Porthminster has shown that great results can be achieved. We are pleased that the hotel has taken part in our brand campaign targeting the romance market. Through their innovative product development - ranging from rose petal baths to 'I love you' messages in the sky - they demonstrate a real focus on delivering a quality customer experience."

Tony Hall, Head of VisitCornwall, says "The Porthminster in St Ives is one of the Grande Dames of the Cornish tourism industry. It is wonderful to see that she is rejuvenated and facing such a bright future."

Nigel Ashcroft, Project Director of **actnow**, which invested £5,600 in the establishment of the Porthminster's new online systems, said: "We are thrilled to see that the steps that The Porthminster has taken to embrace broadband technology and the internet are helping create such great results. They are the kind of hotel that light the way for others, proving that it pays to make the internet a crucial part of your strategy."

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The Porthminster also received £25,000 towards its upgrade of the bedrooms from honey2cornwall. Ruth Vincent, honey2cornwall programme director, said: “It is fantastic that the honey2cornwall programme has been able to contribute towards the development of The Porthminster. The team at The Porthminster have certainly enhanced the quality and standard of the establishment. We look forward to providing continued business mentor support in future.”

Trevor Richards is now planning the next era of The Porthminster’s evolution. He added: “We have plans to upgrade the remainder of the rooms and make our hotel one of the best in the West. We are now on a winning track and we are not looking back.”

**For more information about actnow visit
www.actnowcornwall.co.uk.**



Trevor Richards, Chief Executive, has made the internet a crucial part of The Porthminster Hotel's strategy for a successful future.
