
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...A BDM



by PCA writer

Following in the footsteps of my PCA colleagues, I too had the opportunity to accompany a pub company representative on visits to tenants in order to gain more experience of the trade and the tied relationship. I had the pleasure of shadowing Kirsty, a Business Development Manager (BDM) at Admiral. I spent the day with her as she navigated her patch in East Anglia, covering Norfolk, Suffolk, and some parts of Cambridgeshire.”

We set off bright and early, heading to the first pub on Kirsty’s list. As the BDM for 37 pubs, she aims to meet with all of her tenants every six weeks. “No two days are ever the same”, Kirsty noted, as calls and emails kept coming in from the numerous tenants she supports who were looking for answers on various queries they had.

On the road, our conversations naturally turned to the wider industry and the role of the Pubs Code. The Code was introduced in 2016 to ensure fair and transparent business practices for tied tenants and to ensure they are no worse off than if they were free of tie.

Our first stop was the Red Hart in Bodham, a quintessential local pub brimming with activity. We met with the tenant, Will, to discuss his upcoming refurbishment, which included new flooring and doors just in time for the busy Christmas period.

Kirsty and Will discussed potential collaborations with local suppliers. It was exciting to see Will, a first-time tenant, already thinking ahead to future plans, buoyed by Kirsty’s guidance and encouragement.



Red Hart, Bodham

There were a few small upcoming repairs to be completed on the premises and Will and Kirsty discussed these. It was clear that Will understood who was responsible for carrying out each individual repair and he was eagerly anticipating these jobs to be carried out.

Next, we headed to The Crown in Reepham, a bright and lively pub with a different focus—local ales and sports. Tenants Hayley and Michael were eager to show off their new pergola, which was in the process of being built and would greatly enhance their outdoor space.

The pub has a strong connection to its younger clientele, and the couple reflected on a series of events that capture that market, including pool competitions and their celebratory first year party. The pub also screens many sporting competitions on TVs around the venue and this brings in people from all ages from across the local community.

We paused here for a hearty lunch, during which Kirsty shared insights into how the pub had built a real community spirit and the tenants prided themselves on providing exceptional hospitality and good food and drink to their customers.

Kirsty reviewed key documents required to be completed by the tenant, discussed marketing strategies, and shared updates from Admiral's latest newsletter, the Admiral Post, which I was pleased to see featured a segment on the Pubs Code. The Pubs Code aims to ensure fair and lawful dealings between pub companies and their tied tenants, so it is important that tenants are aware of their rights as set out within the Code.



The Crown, Reepham

Our last visit of the day took us to Barrow in Bury St Edmunds, where we met with Ant, the enthusiastic tenant of the Three Horseshoes. Having opened his cosy village pub and restaurant in March 2024, Ant was navigating the early stages of his tenancy. Ant and Kirsty discussed the upcoming renovation plans set to transform the pub in the new year. Their conversation touched on strategies for boosting trade and developing new offerings to attract more customers.

Ant had received important documents from Admiral before he signed his contract, this is known as Schedule 1 information. It includes details on the type of tenancy on offer, information on the premises and who is liable to complete repairs and dilapidations, obligations around tied products and services and payment of rent amongst other key points. This information is in place to provide tenants with everything they need to know to make an informed decision when taking on a tenancy.



Three Horseshoes, Barrow

As Kirsty outlined the next steps in Ant's tenancy she emphasised the importance of taking independent legal and financial advice during the process, such as when taking on or renewing a tenancy or when reviewing rent. It was great to witness this as the Code places duties on pub companies at key points within the tenancy journey to advise the tenant to obtain such advice.

Throughout the day, I was aware of how Kirsty tailored her advice to meet the unique needs of each business. Her knowledge of the local market made her a useful asset to the tenants we met. It was clear that tenants had a positive working relationship with Kirsty and there were no complaints that they hadn't received their notes within 14 days following discussions as set out within Regulation 41 of the Code.

During the visits I asked each tenant if they understood the key elements of the Pubs Code, their rights and if they were clear on where they could find key information when needed, such as the PCA's website. All appeared very comfortable with the Code and it was reassuring to see the presence of the Pubs Code in Admiral's communications to tenants.

As I reflected on the day, it was clear that each pub has its own unique ambiance, and each individual tenant has their own set of needs and requirements. Understanding the specific needs of every tenant is central to the success of any BDM. It was clear that tenants were comfortable when discussing their challenges with Kirsty.

I left with a renewed appreciation for the tenants, and those who support them, to not only meet their challenges head-on but also capitalise on exciting opportunities for growth.

I would like to pass on my thanks to Kirsty and to Admiral's, Code Compliance Officer Scott Saunders for granting me the opportunity to visit these pubs.

To find out more about the Pubs Code go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/pubs-code-adjudicator>