

Mark offers village site for a start-up

Darren Slade



A BUSINESSMAN who bought a distinctive shop unit in a Hampshire village is using it to grant an opportunity to other would-be entrepreneurs.

Mark Powell says he wants to offer people a chance to bring their business dreams to life.

He is asking people to write down their ideas about what could be done with the former Elise's Tea Rooms in Botley High Street.

"I'm not well-educated so I don't want people to think they have to write a business plan and be all official," he said.

"I'd much rather meet the person. That's more important to me."

Mr Powell is a director of a Southampton business Wessex Cleaning Equipment and owns properties of his own.

He snapped up the shop unit when he saw it was on the market through estate agency Clarke Mews.

"I go past this building so much. It used to be a tearoom and originally I thought I'd like to do a tearoom but actually I thought, that's just my blinkered view," said Mr Powell.

"I thought it would be quite interesting to see what people came up with.

"I've had a couple of people get hold of me via the estate agents and they're coming up with all kinds of ideas.

"Everybody seems to be getting interested in it."

He says he is looking for "great ideas, energy and determination" and would contribute his advice and business knowledge. He would be open-minded about ideas that would not generate rent straight away.



The property Mark Powell has acquired in Botley High Street

"I would financially support it in its infancy," he said.



Mark Powell, left, with Darcy Seal

"I'd like something I can enjoy and can help someone with. It might end in disaster but I'm more than happy to take that risk," he said.

"I think I could probably help someone. I've got something to offer.

"I don't have tonnes of time but I do have a little bit of time and a lot of people I can draw on."

Ideas so far have included a male groomer and barbers, or a sensory craft tea room.

Mr Powell, from Hedge End, learned quickly about running a business when he and his siblings inherited the family firm.

"I came into business with my brother and sister.

"It got left to us by my dad when he passed away in a car accident

23 years ago," he said.

Mr Powell is asking people to submit their business ideas in 500 words or fewer.

He will shortlist the top ideas and make contact to discuss the business plan.

Anyone interested should email ideas@27highstreetbotley.com or message him via the Facebook page 27 High Street Botley Southampton SO30 2EA.

More details are at 27highstreetbotley.co.uk

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