

Press Release
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No Gas, No Problem, we're still cooking!

Temporary kitchen modules from Container Kitchen Systems help Putteridge Bury Conference Centre overcome utility problems

Conference Centre's are busy places designed so that delegates can get down to business without having to be troubled with the day's arrangements. Everything has to run smoothly and on time. Bookings are taken months if not years in advance so if there is a problem that threatens the scheduling of events a solution has to be found that will not inconvenience users or incur cancellations.

Putteridge Bury Conference Centre, part of the University of Bedfordshire, was up against just such a predicament in May 2007 when it had problems with the gas supply to its main catering facilities. Putteridge Bury is a converted neo-Elizabethan mansion built in 1911 in the style of Chequers. Set in picturesque parkland Putteridge Bury Conference Centre hosts conferences, corporate and social events, wedding receptions, civil ceremonies and Christmas parties.

"To carry out essential repairs the gas supply had to be cut off for eight weeks," says Ciro Ascione, Putteridge Bury Operations Manager. "We had important bookings lined up and so had to look at a way of staying open. We decided a temporary kitchen was going to be the answer and consulted Container Kitchen Systems on the feasibility of hiring one of their kitchen modules to tide us over." "Initially we expected a whole lot of inconvenience, the idea of closing the kitchen and the staff having to get used to a temporary kitchen, new equipment and a different layout wasn't very appealing," explained Ciro. "But we were surprised at how easily the whole operation went. We had to arrange an extra electrical supply but CKS advised us every step of the way, took care of the temporary gas supply and everything else to get the kitchen up and running."

He continued; "We discussed our requirements with CKS and found the standard large kitchen was fitted with all the catering equipment we needed. We didn't have to ask for any extras. The chefs and other catering staff found working in the CKS kitchen absolutely fine - no problems."

The CKS large kitchen module used at Putteridge Bury measures 8.6m x 2.85m and is designed for large-scale catering use. It has sufficient workspace for up to six chefs and the equipment included a six burner gas oven range, salamander gas grill, 1800mm electric hot cupboard, double bowl single drainer sink, three stainless steel tables, extraction system and non-slip safety flooring.

The kitchen staff put the CKS module through its paces straight away. Altogether it was in use for 40 days during which time staff prepared and cooked approximately 100 meals per day. In addition there were three major marquee events of over 200 guests - The Save the Children Charity Ball in May, plus the Business without Borders Conference and the annual University of Bedfordshire Summer Ball, both in June.

Putteridge Bury is well known for the excellence of its function menus. A typical menu consists of smoked salmon and crab parcels on grated fresh beetroot, rugola, little gems and lemon vinaigrette starter, a main course of baked breast of guinea fowl, wild and woodland mushrooms and rosemary roast potatoes with a dessert of limo cello and amaretti torte with crème fraiche quenelles.



The catering equipment in the CKS kitchen enabled staff at Putteridge Bury to continue with the usual high quality menus throughout May and June without having to compromise on food standards at all or think of alternatives while operating from the temporary kitchen.

"If we ever needed a temporary kitchen again we'd certainly use CKS," says Ciro. "The whole operation was a lot less stressful than I imagined it would be, we kept open, honoured our bookings and the staff remained smiling!"

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