



REVIEW

**April
2004**

Review of Chamber Meeting on 7th April 2004

**MEETING
DATES
2004**

“ENTENTE FLORALE”

- Harrogate is bidding for a gold award in this major European competition
- Success will bring invaluable publicity for both leisure and business visitors
- It is vital that all businesses demonstrate a contribution to our “quality of life”
- Be sure to look your best on Friday 23rd July when judging lasts all day!

POSTAL DELIVERY PROBLEMS

Key points from Harrogate Chamber letter to the Chairman of Royal Mail:

“The business community of Harrogate are deeply concerned about the impact of recent changes in mail delivery patterns on their businesses.

No one has raised any objections to the cessation of the second delivery, which was usually very light anyway. All of the problems have arisen as a result of the serious delay to the established first delivery. In fact, some people have suggested that it is actually the first delivery that has been terminated and everything now comes on the second delivery, as far as the timing is concerned.

Most of our businesses need their mail to be on the doorstep between 08.00 and 09.00 as it always has been. We totally reject the suggestion that we should pay extra for delivery at this time, or alternatively create more congestion by driving to the Sorting Office to collect our mail. Some of our members already pay to have their PO Box mail delivered and they strongly object to the suggestion of having to make a further payment on top.

In view of your forthcoming increase in the cost of postage, this is not a time to be drastically reducing service to your customers. This will encourage even more usage of private mail services and e-mail, to the long term detriment of Royal Mail viability.”

5 May

2 June

7 July

4 August

1 September

6 October

3 November

1 December

Future Meetings 2004

Wednesday, 5th May: Pavilions of Harrogate, Great Yorkshire Showground Members’ Networking Event + Annual General Meeting

A FREE buffet will be provided at this event, which is for **current paid-up members only.**

Wednesday, 2nd June: Ascot House Hotel, Kings Road, Harrogate Presentation by Leeds Bradford International Airport

Andy Judge of LBIA will discuss the Airport’s present and future plans
- how Harrogate and the airport can work together for business and tourism

Wednesday, 7th July: Cedar Court Hotel Legal Update - Employment Law - Back to Basics - by Berwins Solicitors

Royal Mail Delivery Problems

The local representative of the independent consumer representation body POSTWATCH, Stephen Starbuck, attended the meeting to listen to members' grievances with the recent changes in the delivery of their mail.

Chief Executive, Brian Dunsby, read out the letter recently sent to the Chairman and Chief Executive of Royal Mail, following complaints from several members. The letter is summarised on the front page. **As the response had been most unsatisfactory, the complaints had been forwarded to POSTWATCH.**

Members at the meeting notified Mr Starbuck of several specific complaints including:

- mail previously received before 09.00 a.m. is not received until late morning or even lunchtime, which affects the whole structure of the working day;
- electing to collect their own post, only to be told on arrival at the sorting office that their mail had been mistakenly taken out in the van for delivery;
- mail to PO Boxes being delayed and only being delivered after a phone call enquiring about the whereabouts of the mail - this is a chargeable delivery service provided by Royal Mail;
- first class mail is sometimes taking up to a week to arrive - both inbound and outbound;
- extra expense has to be incurred using Special Delivery to ensure mail arrives by a specific date.

The most common complaint was the lateness of the morning delivery, which was effectively received at the time the former second delivery used to be delivered. This results in delaying the start of the working day because vital items are being held up in the later delivery of mail. Also cheques are received too late in the day to be banked in time for the clearing process to commence the same day, therefore **affecting the cash flow of businesses.**

Mr Starbuck explained that two deliveries of mail are received into Harrogate Sorting Office, which take longer to sort before mail leaves the depot. This is coupled with Postmen being moved on to unfamiliar rounds, resulting in delays whilst they become familiar with these new rounds. He believed the time delay would reduce in due course with **deliveries being no more than an hour later than they previously were.**

Mr Starbuck noted members' complaints and said he would raise them with Royal Mail. He also said the letter of complaint from Harrogate Chamber had been reviewed at a national level and the points raised were taken on board by POSTWATCH and ROYAL MAIL.

Members experiencing problems with their postal services should contact POSTWATCH to raise their grievances and also send a copy to the Chamber Secretariat so an overall picture can be compiled.

Contact: Stephen Starbuck
POSTWATCH Northern England

Tel: 01274 230043 Fax: 01274 230042

E-mail: north@postwatch.co.uk

Harrogate Borough Council - consultations

The Council asked Harrogate Chamber for support for the further investment in new **breakout rooms** for the Conference Centre. This involved increased finance and taking on a new Contractor to build the breakout rooms above Exhibition Halls B and C.

The Chamber supports this project, which we know is vital for long-term viability of Harrogate International Centre itself. Therefore it should not be involved in any form of trade-off with the Royal Hall Restoration Project. **The Council voted unanimously in favour of this investment.**

In order to balance the revenue budget more funding is required and the Council have tried to overcome this by adding **extra Pay & Display parking** bays in formerly free parking areas in the town centre. We asked the Council to retain the current short stay 20 minute free parking in Cambridge Street, Cambridge Road and Prince's Street, which is useful for quick visits to the Banks in the area around.

Unfortunately, this request was not upheld and so Pay & Display Meters will be introduced in all these areas.

Harrogate Council have also voted to substantially increase the **Business Parking Permit** charges for businesses based in residential areas, despite strong objections from the Chamber and business concerned.

Their original proposal was to increase the cost of the permit from £12 to £100 a year, but they have conceded to make the permit last for two years instead of one - still an **increase of over 300% to £50 a year.**

Soroptomists - leading lights

President, Peter Armitage, has been in communication with the Soroptomists, who are trying to encourage the different groups in the town to amalgamate and organise Christmas Lights in their area.

We have provided details of the illuminated Christmas tree suppliers. With help of the Soroptomists, several areas will be blended together to give an attractive overall effect for the town next Christmas.

If you would like to be involved please contact the Soroptomists direct as follows:

Pat Shore Tel: 01423 526077

E-mail: pandjshore@btinternet.co.uk

Harrogate Business Club Luncheon

Harrogate Chamber has taken a table at the next Harrogate Business Club Luncheon on Friday, 14th May at 11.45 - 14.30 at the **Cedar Court Hotel.**

One place is still available if you would like to join the other members - the cost will be £15 per person.

Please contact the Secretariat if you would like to take up the last place at what is a very useful local networking event.

MEMBERS NEWS

The Yorkshire - refurbished

The Yorkshire Hotel, formerly the Imperial, has completed extensive refurbishment over the past 14 months, having spent in excess of £1.5 million.

They now have 80 bedrooms of 4 star quality, a 5th floor restaurant with superb views overlooking Harrogate. They have created the HG1 Bar and Brasserie with a contemporary style and a relaxed atmosphere, with an entrance from John Street.

Members wishing to 'look round' are most welcome.

For more information contact:

Nicky Turnbull, General Manager

Tel: 01423 565071

E-mail: theyorkshire@crerarhotels.com

Web site: www.british-trust-hotels.com.

Hotel du Vin

Hotel du Vin have recently launched their new **Private Events** brochure and Dining Menu. In addition to their Bistro, they now offer dining facilities in two private rooms for corporate events, private dinners or parties.

For more information contact:

Steve Watson or Ashley Burns, Hotel du Vin

Tel: 01423 856800

E-mail: info@harrogate.hotelduvin.com

Web site: www.hotelduvin.com

Pavilions of Harrogate

The current Diary of Events for the Yorkshire Event Centre and Pavilions of Harrogate was published recently and a link to their web site will be provided via the Chamber's web site shortly.

To see what events are coming to this venue, look at their web site: www.pavilionsofharrogate.com

Health & Safety Forum - representative wanted!

Harrogate Borough Council have written to the Chamber regarding a proposed Health & Safety Forum, in a similar vein to the Food Safety Forum, and would like a **Chamber representative to join the Forum** for regular feedback and input on the subject.

If you have an interest in this sector, please contact the Secretariat so that your name can be put forward to the Council.

Representatives on External Committees

If you wish to represent the Chamber officially on an external committee, please contact the Secretariat to express your interest and the nature of your expertise.

A full list of the Committees on which we are represented is available on the Chamber web site under the 'Contact us' section - or type in this link: www.harrogatechamber.org/externalcommittee.html

ENTENTE FLORALE *The Bid for Europe 2004*

Martin Wilks, Chairman of Harrogate in Bloom and also a member of the Chamber's Management Group, gave a presentation on Harrogate's bid for success in the European competition Entente Florale, in which Harrogate will be **judged on 23rd July 2004**.

The last time Harrogate was entered in Entente Florale was 1977 - so this is a once in a generation opportunity for your business to take an active part to support the town in this competition. Participation in this competition will enhance the reputation of the town, increase visitor numbers, boost the local economy and instil civic pride.

The overall aim of the competition is the improvement of the quality of life for local urban and village communities. To this end the competition fosters:

- the greening of towns and villages;
- development which is environmentally and ecologically sensitive;
- educational and communication initiatives which promote environmental awareness;
- community spirit and enhancing the quality of life;

The whole basis of the competition is 'quality of life' and how that is promoted within the town.

On 23rd July ten Judges will arrive in Harrogate and spend eight hours in the town being shown around selected areas involved in the competition. This will include breaks for meals and refreshments; Chamber members Hotel du Vin are sponsoring the Dinner for the Judges on the Friday evening. **Offers of other suitable venues on the day would be appreciated**

It is hoped that businesses will embrace the concept of Entente Florale by using the logo on stationery or displaying a Floral Trail sticker or sign to show support.

There are special categories within the competition for shops, offices and commercial premises; you don't need a large garden - window boxes and tubs all help.

Information and advice is available from:

Sue Wood, Harrogate in Bloom Co-ordinator

Harrogate Borough Council Tel: 01423 556757

E-mail: sue.wood@harrogate.gov.uk

Many sponsorship opportunities are available or alternatively you may want to offer your company's products or services free of charge in exchange for the publicity this will gain for your business.

Information on sponsorship is available from:

Sue Higgison, Marketing Officer,

Harrogate Borough Council - Tel: 01423 556787

E-mail: sue.higgison@gw.harrogate.gov.uk

President, Peter Armitage, stressed the importance of Harrogate's participation in this competition and encouraged members to become involved at whatever level they are able to. **The inherent publicity for the town from just taking part is invaluable.**

Martin Wilks, Chairman, Harrogate in Bloom

Tel: 07984 426243 E-mail: jmartinwilks@aol.com

NEW MEMBERS

Coachme Ltd (*121 Sales Coaching*)

Steve Catchpole, Director
Flat 2, Hereford Lodge, 58 Cornwall Road,
HARROGATE, HG1 2PR
Tel: 01423 522405
E-mail: stevehcatchpole@hotmail.com

Firecrest Online (*Specialist web design*)

Matt Reed, Business Development Manager
Lingerfield Park, Scotton,
KNARESBOROUGH, HG5 9XB
Tel: 01423 798408 **Fax:** 01423 798472
E-mail: m.reed@firecrestonline.co.uk
Web site: www.firecrestonline.co.uk

Houghton Associates Executive Recruitment Ltd

(*Executive recruitment*)
Richard Eggleston, Director
Franklin House, 4 Victoria Avenue,
HARROGATE, HG1 1EL
Tel: 01423 505601 **Fax:** 01423 566115
E-mail: richard@houghton-selection.co.uk
Web site: www.houghton-selection.co.uk

MillFox Limited (*Electrical contractor*)

Ronald Clayton, Director
64 Halfpenny Lane, KNARESBOROUGH, HG5 0NS
Tel: 01423 875866 **Fax:** 01423 863003
E-mail: ronald.clayton1@ntlworld.com
Web site: www.millfox.com

Richard Pedro & Company (*Pensions Administration*)

Richard Pedro, Proprietor
22 Beech Road, HARROGATE, HG2 8EA
Tel: 01423 547841 **Fax:** 01423 547841
E-mail: richard.pedro@ntlworld.com

Conservative Candidate to meet Chamber Management Group

The Conservative Candidate for Harrogate & Knaresborough, Maggie Punyer, who recently took part in the Chamber's Debate over Dinner, will be meeting with the Chamber's Management Group at their next meeting on 17th May, hosted by WBS.

If members have any points or questions they would like to be put to Maggie Punyer on their behalf please submit to the Secretariat by Friday, 14th May.

Management Group Nominations

Nominations have been invited for vacancies that will arise on the Management Group. A list of the current members and nominations received is enclosed with this Review. The election will be at the AGM on 5th May - which is open to current paid-up members only.

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Dispute resolution rules

The final version of the Employment Act (Dispute Resolution) Regulations 2004 has been approved by Parliament. The radical overhaul of dispute resolution procedures will require employers to follow a minimum three-stage process to ensure that disputes are discussed at work. Use of these procedures is set out in the draft Regulations, building on the Employment Act 2002, and all employers must have procedures in place to deal with disputes by October 2004.

To get further information and guidance, go to:
<http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/disputeresolution.htm>

New recruitment regulations

Businesses using employment agencies will be affected by the Conduct of Employment Agencies and Business Regulations 2003, which come into force on 6 April. The Regulations set a framework of minimum standards, and require businesses and employment agencies to specify the employment status of any individual who obtains work through them.

To find out more about the Regulations, go to:
<http://www.dti.gov.uk/er/agency/newregs.htm>

Chip and PIN on its way

Businesses must prepare for the imminent arrival of chip and PIN technology, which the Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) claims is the biggest change since decimalisation. Those who take card payments will have to upgrade their point of sale equipment. Those that use a terminal provided by their bank or card issuer should be upgraded automatically.

The switch to verifying credit and debit card payments with PIN numbers instead of signatures is due to be complete by the end of this year.

To read more, go to: <http://www.apacs.org.uk>

To find out more about chip and PIN, go to:
<http://www.chipandpin.co.uk/business/index.html>

Freeze on 'Cold Calling'

UK businesses will get the same right as individuals to block 'cold calling' by marketing firms from June 2004.

Businesses can opt out of direct marketing calls by contacting the Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and registering the relevant phone numbers.

Tel: 0845 070 0707 **Fax:** 0207 323 4165.

Web site: www.tpsonline.org.uk

Direct marketing firms have a legal obligation to check and comply with the TPS list before calling; failure to do so can result in enforcement action by the Information Commissioner.

Further information is available at:
www.dti.gov.uk/industries/communications/

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Printed by Enid Taylor Ltd, Harrogate Tel: 01423 567764 Fax: 01423 567765 E-mail: info@enidtaylor.co.uk