



REVIEW

January
2004

MEETING
DATES
2004

Review of Chamber Meeting at the Pavilions of Harrogate on 7th January 2004

CONSULTATION ON FUTURE OF COUNCILS

- Economic Development Unit Business Plan 2004/05
- Service Improvement Plan for Local Economy Best Value Review
- Leeds City-Region - encompassing Harrogate?
- Unitary Status - County -vs- District Councils?
- Chamber Debate over Dinner - Friday 20/02/04

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Harrogate District Mailing is well worthwhile
- Retail and Warehouse space to let
- Recycle unwanted computers, mobiles and cartridges
- Proposed Harrogate Chamber Charity Christmas Cards
- Next Business Safari Networking Event + AGM - 05/05/04

BUSINESSES BEWARE!

- Updated Scam Check-List - don't get caught by a "con"
- Bogus Disability Access Assessors - check their credentials first
- Credit Card Commission policy problems

Future Meetings 2004

Wednesday, 4th February: The Metro, Harrogate College, Hornbeam Park

Guest Speakers are the new Harrogate Borough Council Cabinet Members for Planning and Highways who are keen to discuss and answer questions on the A-Board situation, Traffic Congestion and any other concerns for businesses in the Harrogate area.

Friday, 20th February: Ascot House Hotel, Kings Road, Harrogate
DEBATE OVER DINNER - "DISTRICT or COUNTY COUNCIL?"
(See report and insert in this issue)

Wednesday, 3rd March: Ascot House Hotel, Kings Road, Harrogate
FOCUS GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The main discussions at this meeting will be in separate breakout tables for each Focus Group to determine their action plans and priorities for the year ahead.

4 February

3 March

7 April

5 May

2 June

7 July

4 August

1 September

6 October

3 November

1 December

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President, Peter Armitage, welcomed members and guests to the first meeting of the New Year in the very comfortable surroundings of the Calder Room at the **Pavilions of Harrogate**. Thanks were extended to General Manager, Robert Whiteley, for his hospitality and complimentary room for this meeting.

Harrogate Borough Council Joint Consultation Exercise

Peter urged members to log onto the Council's web site www.harrogate.gov.uk/business to find out more about two consultation documents on which the Council are seeking the opinions of local businesses. You will find downloadable files of the following two documents.

Alternatively you can request a hard copy by e-mail (ed02@harrogate.gov.uk), fax (01423 556050) or telephone (01423 556077).

The first document concerns proposals for the town's **Economic Development Unit Business Plan 2004/05** which are being released at the first stage in the annual planning process.

The second consultation document is a Draft **Service Improvement Plan for Local Economy Best Value Review**. This has emerged from the Council's Best Value Review of the Local Economy over the past 15 months.

In both cases it is vital that our input is included at this early stage in order to influence the future policy for the town.

Please send your comments to the Secretariat for inclusion in an amalgamated report back to the Council before the deadline of **Friday, 20th February 2004**.

The feedback will be used to shape the content of the final documents, prior to formal adoption by the Council in March 2004.

Leeds: The Business City-Region

At a recent Harrogate District Economic Development Forum Meeting a presentation was made by Leeds City Council on *Leeds: The Business City - an interim prospectus for a competitive European city-region in a world class region*.

The concept of "City-Region" has come from the DTI and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, where they propose several city-regions, which are a "scaled down" version of Greater London and its surrounding regions.

They propose Leeds as a Core City supporting the surrounding local authorities, in which Harrogate & Craven could be included on the north of Leeds. This concept is parallel to proposals for the Unitary Status and the Yorkshire & Humberside Regional Assembly.

For more information **The Leeds Initiative** web site is: www.leedsinitiative.org

This is another example where members' feedback via the Chamber is vital at this early stage before the planning of splitting the local authorities in the region progresses any further.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

Updated Scam Check List

Chief Executive, Brian Dunsby, has updated and expanded the Scam Check List and a copy of this new 4-page document is enclosed with this copy of *Review*. It is worth circulating around your staff to reduce the chances of being caught out by another scam.

Members with any additional items are asked to send these to the Secretariat for inclusion in a future issue.

Harrogate District Mailing Success

We are pleased to report that one of our members was well satisfied with the response to their insert in the recent shared business mailing to the Harrogate District. Although the replies received were less than expected - one resulted in a £13,000 contract. Their investment of £250 in the mailing has been more than covered!

The next shared business mailing is scheduled for March/April 2004 - please keep a note of this in your diary and contact the Secretariat now if you wish to include an insert promoting your own business.

Retail & Warehouse Spaces to Let

Chamber member, **Ottaways of Harrogate** at 21-22 West Park, are interested in talking to suitable businesses interested in renting space within their 12,000 square feet store.

Enquiries to Ray Ottaway on 01423 566566 or e-mail sales@ottawaysofharrogate.co.uk

We have also had a letter from Festival Foods Ltd in Leeds, who offer up to 35,000 square feet of spare warehousing, packing capacity and personnel from January to August - also spare office space. They are seeking companies, ideally with a Spring/Summer/early Autumn peak, to explore the possibilities for major cost sharing. Enquiries to: Kenneth Walker, **Festival Foods Ltd**, Tel: 0113 249 5191 E-mail: Kenneth@walker4233.freeseerve.co.uk

Recycle Unwanted Computers, Mobiles and Printer Cartridges

Don't throw away your old mobile phone or computer - recycle them to help Third World countries and those less-privileged in this country with no access to information technology. Contact **The Green Organisation** Tel/Fax: **01604 810507** who will arrange to collect computers or more than 10 mobile phones. Individual phones can be posted free to:

FREEPOST, GREEN ORGANISATION.

Similarly don't throw away any spent **printer cartridges**; either drop them into **Jespers'** shop on Oxford Street or arrange for them to be collected. These are then delivered to Saint Michael's Hospice who generate funds by sorting and sending them for re-processing.

For further information contact:
Peter Jesper of Jespers The Office
Tel: 01423 877933 Fax: 01423 877946

Chamber Charity Christmas Cards

Brian Dunsby asked members for their views on a proposed Chamber Charity Christmas Card to be produced for sale to members for Christmas 2004. This could be designed by Tim Coleman of **Artlink** using his library of photographs of Harrogate and printed by **Platinum Print Ltd**, with envelopes from **Jespers** (all Chamber members.)

Past President, Mark Lancaster, said care should be taken in choosing an appropriate Charity - it should preferably be a non-political organisation that serves everyone, for example the Yorkshire Air Ambulance or Harrogate Hospital League of Friends. (*or Harrogate in Bloom? Ed.*)

In a recent Institute of Directors survey, 54% of business leaders said that when sending Christmas Cards to clients and contacts they would use Charity cards.

Members' feedback on this proposal would be appreciated - **please contact the Secretariat with your views** and also send samples of any Christmas Cards you may have received this year that you feel would be particularly appropriate in style for the Chamber to produce for sale to local businesses.

Credit Card Refund Problems

Nicki Hughes of **PetitPoint** has reported that many credit card companies have changed their commission refund policy. Members may not be aware that earlier this year many credit card companies **ceased to refund the commission charged** on sales if a refund to the customer was subsequently made. Hence, you could be effectively left with a non-sale and also be out of pocket by the amount of commission. This could be very significant on high value items.

Nicki suggests where a refund is made on an original purchase and the customer then purchases an alternative item then, where practical, it would be more economical to debit or credit the customer's card with the difference between the two purchases.

Also, payments for on-line orders processed through a shop PDQ machine are liable for special terms. Heavy penalties can be imposed if you fail to register with Visa and MasterCard if taking internet orders.

Log onto www.chipandpin.co.uk for further information on credit card security changes.

Trustee (Director) Wanted

Chamber members **Disability Action Yorkshire** are in urgent need of an additional Trustee (Director), on a voluntary basis, with strong financial knowledge and experience. They turnover £1.5 million per annum and hold an investment portfolio currently worth about £900,000. Full Charity Management training will be provided and reasonable expenses reimbursed.

Further information from Judith Oliver, Chief Executive, Disability Action Yorkshire Tel: 01423 504360
E-mail: judith.oliver@da-y.org.uk

Bogus Disability Access Assessors

A warning has been issued to take care when selecting your Disability Access Assessor and ensure they are properly Accredited. There has been one case of an Assessor who boasted he planned to hire a wheelchair to check out businesses, as the prospect of a disabled person threatening to sue would "open the chequebook".

As mentioned in Business Briefings in December 'Review' the following web sites have lots of practical advice and information: <http://www.open4all.org> or <http://www.drc.org.uk/open4all/>

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT FOCUS GROUP

Harrogate Integrated Transport Study

The Chamber's proposal that the survey be circulated to Chamber members has been agreed and this will be distributed in late January for replies in February.

Rail Passengers Committee

A copy of the Rail Passengers Committee' Guidance to Northern Rail Franchise Bidders has been received. We were pleased to see that it includes under the Harrogate Line most of the items the Chamber has in our Traffic & Transport Action Plan, Section 3.

GNER

GNER recently introduced their new Mallard Train and promoted their improved services at an event in Leeds. Chief Executive, Brian Dunsby, was invited to this event and was able to make the point that small businesses need not only the city-to-city services of London, York, Leeds and Edinburgh, but also the local connections to the East Coast Main Line. GNER should take the initiative in showing the importance of all rural service connections by including these in their timetables. They have now accepted the importance of such connections.

ARRIVA loses Northern franchise

It was recently announced by the Strategic Rail Authority that ARRIVA have lost the franchise for Northern Rail. They were on a short list with First North Western and a new outside bidder, with whom we have had previous communications over the needs of Harrogate business.

ARRIVA have expressed disappointment in view of the improvements they have achieved over the last year. They will endeavour to provide the best possible service during the remaining 10 months of the franchise.

Leeds Bradford International Airport

The recent White Paper on the future of Air Transport mentions Leeds Bradford International Airport. It states that an extension to the runway would be desirable to accommodate the anticipated growth, together with additional Terminal capacity.

DEBATE OVER DINNER

Unitary Status - An Opportunity for Change in Local Government Friday, 20th February 2004

The Boundary Committee appointed by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has recommended alternative structures of local government, replacing the present two-tier County and District Councils with a wholly unitary structure in North Yorkshire.

The Chamber is holding a debate on the subject on **Friday, 20th February 2004**, so members have time to study the issue first and then we can submit the result of the debate by the deadline of **23rd February**. The four options are summarised on the enclosed notice.

We need the full support of members for this debate in order to influence which options are put on the ballot paper for the referendum in the autumn of 2004 on whether or not to have a Regional Assembly and Unitary Status and if Unitary, which option is preferred.

President, Peter Armitage, added that both District and County Councils now accept our views more than ever due to the higher profile of the Chamber. Your positive support also helps to show that the Chambers' Officers are conveying your views.

Mark Lancaster added this was an opportunity to influence the decisions that will affect us for the next 20-30 years. This debate will give you the chance to talk to the people who will be making these decisions.

Brian Dunsby said that the Unitary Authority structure would mean either Harrogate, Craven and Richmond take over everything done by North Yorkshire County Council conversely, the District Councils are abolished and everything is controlled on a County-wide basis.

The Chamber will have a further meeting before the Regional Assembly Referendum in the autumn, inviting relevant speakers on the whole subject.

Harrogate Junior Chamber Open Evening

Harrogate Junior Chamber of Commerce are holding an open evening at Cedar Court Hotel on Tuesday 10th February 2003 at 7.00pm.

Nigel Jardine who is one of the country's leading personal development trainers, will be giving a talk on "Creating Personal Power".

For further information contact the President of Harrogate Junior Chamber, Louise Howson, on 01423 526522 or e-mail louise.howson@eu.nabgroup.com

2004 Meetings Planner

The 2004 Meetings Planner showing the proposed meetings and topics for the year ahead was tabled. Members can see this on the Chamber web site via the "Meetings Schedule" link on the home page, or ask the Secretariat to forward a copy to you by fax or post.

It is important that we receive your feedback including preferred topics for presentations, meeting formats, room layouts, etc. If you feel we can improve meetings for you, please let us have your thoughts.

NEW MEMBERS

Profit Focus Group (*Profit Improvement Consultancy*)
Eddie McDonagh, Managing Consultant
5 The Lawns, Pannal Ash Road,
HARROGATE, HG2 9AS
Tel: 540503 **Fax:** 540503
E-mail: eddiemcdonagh@profitfocus.net
Web site: www.profitfocus.com

Smith Smalley Architects Ltd (*Architects*)
Duncan Smith, Divisional Director
Craven Lodge, Victoria Avenue,
HARROGATE, HG1 5PX
Tel: 531100 **Fax:** 531449
E-mail: duncansmith@smithsmalley.co.uk
Web site: www.smithsmalley.co.uk

Repeat Business 'Safari' at May AGM

Following the success of the Business 'Safari' at the December Meeting, it has been agreed that the next networking event will be at the AGM in May. Please make a note in your diaries of this Members' Only event that will be held at the **Pavilions of Harrogate on Wednesday, 5th May at 17.45 for 18.15.**

NOMINATIONS FOR AGM

Management Group nominations are required before the AGM in May 2004. One third of the Management Group retires each year so nominations are sought to replace these members. If you are willing to stand or wish to nominate somebody for the Management Group, please advise the Secretariat. The Past Presidents' Group headed by Mark Lancaster will review all nominations and discuss any queries.

ACAS PRESENTATION

Let ACAS help keep you out of Employment Tribunals

David Nicholson of ACAS highlighted the benefits of a new service designed particularly for small businesses. Only available during the pilot phase to businesses in Yorkshire and London employing fewer than 50 people it aims to help firms struggling with employment problems.

Under the scheme an experienced ACAS adviser will come to the workplace to discuss issues as diverse as redundancy, absenteeism or discipline problems and give practical advice on the best ways to tackle them. In addition ACAS mediation is available to help resolve workplace relationship difficulties between employees and even to offer an external level of appeal against disciplinary decisions taken by management.

David reminded members of other free ACAS services including the ACAS Helpline where staff will give clear, practical advice over the telephone.

The Helpline number is 08457 47 47 47.

The ACAS website, www.acas.org.uk is a rich source of information and even an interactive tutorial for producing discipline and grievance procedures.

Further information on benefits ACAS has to offer contact David Nicholson - Tel: 0113 205 3828
e-mail dnicholson@acas.org

Harrogate Chamber of Trade & Commerce, PO Box 8, Harrogate, HG2 8XB

Tel: 01423 879208 Fax: 01423 870025 E-mail: info@harrogatechamber.org Web site: harrogatechamber.org

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