



REVIEW

March
2004

MEETING
DATES
2004

Review of Chamber Meeting at the Ascot House Hotel, 53 Kings Road, Harrogate on 3rd March 2004

Future of Local Government for Harrogate

- Debate over Dinner votes strongly against a Regional Assembly for Y&H
- Borough and County Councillors clarify options for a Unitary Authority
- Voting favours Option 2 - three unitary authorities including Harrogate & Craven
- Full results and speeches now on our web site: www.harrogatechamber.org

7 April

Focus Groups Updated for 2004

- Business Development - new business introductions and effective networking
- Promoting Harrogate - first objective is to win gold award in Entente Florale!
- Town Centre Improvements - improve town environment for residents and visitors
- Traffic & Transport - measures to help employees, customers and visitors
- To join any Focus Group just e-mail or fax the Secretariat

5 May

2 June

7 July

Local Business/Council News

- Disc Parking Zone Reductions - will your business be affected?
- Disability Discrimination Act - new sources of information and guidance
- A-Boards Illegal - County Council Committee refuses a licensing scheme
- School Run Congestion - Chamber clarifies proposals to reduce congestion
- Business Watch Security Alert - Worms & Con Tricks Update

4 August

1 September

6 October

Future Meetings 2004

3 November

Wednesday, 7th April: Ascot House Hotel, Kings Road, Harrogate
Entente Florale - how your business can help Harrogate win gold

With judging on 23rd July, the support of all local businesses is vital to the town's success

1 December

Wednesday, 5th May: Pavilions of Harrogate, Great Yorkshire Showground
Members' Networking Event + Annual General Meeting
A FREE buffet will be provided at this Members' Only event

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

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

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Is altruism dead?

President, Peter Armitage, was recently invited to give a talk about the business community and involvement in Harrogate to members of St Peter's Church. His talk notes consisted of "*Is altruism dead? Discuss*".

This subject sparked an interesting discussion with the Church group, who wanted to get involved and help, especially being a Church that is in the centre of town.

One area where they could help may be in disputes between "traders" and the Council, where they could be consulted for an impartial opinion of the concern.

Debate over Dinner

The debate over "*The Future of Local Government for Harrogate - District or County?*" at the Ascot House Hotel on 20th February produced the following voting response from the 37 present.

To the question: "*What is your opinion of the proposed Elected Regional Assembly for Yorkshire & Humberside?*" the resulting ballot was:

FOR = 7 AGAINST = 26 NOT SURE = 4

The voting results on the four options for Unitary Status, should it be elected in the Autumn, was:

Option 1: ONE unitary authority comprising the County of North Yorkshire (including Selby) - **9 votes**

Option 2: THREE unitary authorities based on pairings of the existing districts of Craven & Harrogate, Hambleton & Richmondshire and Ryedale & Scarborough. - **19 votes**

Option 3: TWO unitary authorities:- one based on Craven plus Harrogate and a new North Riding of Yorkshire comprising Hambleton, Richmondshire, Ryedale and Scarborough - **3 votes**

Option 4: TWO unitary authorities:- one combining Craven, Harrogate, Richmondshire (Yorkshire Dales) and one combining Hambleton, Ryedale, Scarborough (North York Moors). - **2 votes**

Not sure = - 4 votes

(In each of Options 2, 3 and 4, Selby would be integrated into the East Riding of Yorkshire.)

A full report including the speeches is available on the Chamber's web site: www.harrogatechamber.org - by clicking the link on the home page.

The evening provided a lively and sometimes heated debate although the resulting vote was overwhelmingly against a Regional Assembly for Yorkshire & Humberside. It was pointed out that there are 4 million voters in the whole of Yorkshire & Humberside, only 400,000 of those are in North Yorkshire so our views may be out-voted.

Peter Armitage stressed that the Chamber needs to be aware of what is happening as the planning of the Unitary Status options and ultimately a Regional Assembly progresses. He reiterated that it is **vital we have an input as the plans are being formulated.**

Allens of Harrogate close

Long-running family business Allens of Harrogate have now closed, as you may have read in the local press, after trading for 124 years.

Allens have been Chamber members for many years, represented by Director, Diana Wright, currently a Vice-President of the Chamber.

The President said members of the Chamber wish her well in whatever direction her career path takes next.

Disc Parking Zone Reductions

A recent Parking and Waiting Order published in the Harrogate Advertiser on 20th February included a **proposal to abolish several free Disc Parking Zones** and replace them with Pay & Display Zones.

Chief Executive, Brian Dunsby, has submitted the Chamber's **objection to these proposals** on the grounds that some of these particular streets are needed for out of town businesses making quick visits to the adjacent Banks and Building Societies.

The streets in question are **Cambridge Crescent, Cambridge Road and Prince's Street** where currently it is possible to park free of charge for a short stay of 20 minutes.

Members' views on these proposed changes are invited to add weight to the Chamber's objection. A full list of all the proposed changes in Parking & Waiting No. 4 Order 2004 can be provided on request to the Secretariat.

NEW FOCUS GROUP

A major part of the March Meeting consisted of the breakout into Focus Groups. President, Peter Armitage, explained that the Focus Groups have been evolving in the two years since they were formed as they reached objectives and also as new objectives were perceived.

The need for a **new Focus Group** to cover the promotion of Harrogate outside the town has been recognised and as the objectives of the Law & Order Focus Group are now adequately covered externally by the Night Time Environment Group, it was decided to replace this with the new "**Promoting Harrogate - Business & Bloom**" Focus Group, led by Martin Wilks and assisted by Mark Lancaster.

The initial focus is the **Entente Florale** competition in which the town of Harrogate is participating and will be **judged on 23rd July 2004.**

Members are encouraged to support this in any way they can to attempt to achieve success in this "Champion's League" of Floral competitions! You can find out more about this in the section dealing with discussions and objectives of the Promoting Harrogate Focus Group.

The April meeting will focus on the town's bid for success in this competition, which would ultimately benefit all businesses in and around the town from the resulting publicity focusing on the town and bringing in more business and leisure visitors to the area.

Business Development Focus Group

Brian C Haines, Focus Group Leader

The evening's discussion for this regenerated Focus Group started by reviewing the Terms of Reference and scope and agreed on the following:

Identification of new business introductions and effective networking to bring about new income, cost savings, learning from others and sharing best practise.

All agreed that they should target effective business leads and potential partnerships for mutual benefit. Most involved on the evening expressed the view that there should be more regular and focussed sessions that would be more relaxed than BNI approach but to become an effective routine.

The following members introduced themselves, their companies/business proposition and their target market/lead generation requirements:

Brian Haines, COMMPETE Limited

Richard Burns, Callplan Solutions Ltd

Michael Thorn, Moor Edge

Cecilia Trehy, Perpetua

Mark Hunter, wbs

Chris Knight, Comega

Howard Crawshaw, TC Tanning Services

Stephen Clint, Netspace

The group then debated how the Chamber could improve image and sign up more members. The following is a summary of the brainstorming exercise that will be developed over time:

1. Very good attention to detail and high quality administration/communication
2. Good local/district knowledge shared
3. More encouragement needed of interaction business to business
4. Good direct marketing service – more to be aware
5. Need to build Web Site Links imminently
6. "Victorian" image to live down/overcome
7. Much better value than BNI [c£500 p.a.]
8. Suggestion that "Success Stories" should be shared/published
9. Mailshot to top 3,000 businesses
10. Put Chamber Directory online?
11. Tap into Stephen Clint's ideas on e-mail marketing?
12. Look at potential to discount services member to member?
13. Identify/list again what you get for your membership – good value perceived
14. Influential body and could be more so!
15. More attend Focus Group evenings and Business Safari sessions than other events
16. Define further press coverage/media relations; set up regular column/slot?

Further comments and suggestions to:

Brian C Haines brian_haines@commpete.com

Traffic & Transport Focus Group

Brian L Dunsby, Focus Group Leader

At the request of Cllr. Julian Sturdy, Cabinet Member for Highways, this Focus Group meeting concentrated on identifying key junctions that are causing most of the traffic congestion. A number of ideas were noted, which should improve the efficiency of traffic flow at these junctions without jeopardising pedestrian safety.

1. Woodlands Junction - Wetherby Road/Hookstone Drive/Hookstone Chase.

- Allow a longer two-lane queuing section by removing central bollards on the approach to each junction
- Permit left filter traffic from Wetherby Road north and south

2. Wetherby Road Parking

- Total ban on parking during working hours on both sides of the Wetherby Road from Woodlands to Empress Roundabout (Cars parked for quick visits to the hospital or school stop two commercial vehicles passing.)

3. St John Fisher - Hookstone Drive/Oatlands Drive

- New lights inefficient and dangerous
- Multiplicity of lights confusing for everyone
- Reverse traffic flow through school drive and allow it to filter in
- School exit light is not responding to presence/absence of traffic

4. Royal Hall Junction - Parliament Street/Kings Road/Crescent Road

- Need to restrict "crossing" traffic
- Make Kings Road one way from Parliament Street towards Cheltenham Crescent with permanent filter eastwards
- Stop Ripon Road traffic turning into Crescent Road - utilise Swan Road and Springfield Avenue for traffic previously crossing from Kings Road into Crescent Road and vice versa
- Remove traffic lights, except for pedestrian crossings

5. Nidd Vale Corner Junction

- Leeds Road/Hookstone Road/Leadhall Lane

- Inefficient timing of traffic lights: morning rush hour queues down Almsford Bank
- Need right filter out of Hookstone Road into Leeds Road northbound at rush hour
- Remove central bollard near Beech Avenue, extend two-lane queuing for right turn option
- Remove red light following green filter into Hookstone, allowing filtering when road is clear
- Lights not linked to pedestrian crossing
- Remove parking area to give longer 2-lane approach on Hookstone Road
- Pedestrian crossing timing too slow and not detecting absence of pedestrians
- Need 30mph reminder signs on Leeds Road southwards

6. Sainsbury's Junction - Wetherby Road/Yorkshire Showground, etc.

- Replace traffic lights with 2-lane island
- Need new 2-lane exit from tip leaving existing access for 2-lane entry only
- Forest Lane/Rudding Lane junction dangerous: temporary island worked well - make permanent

7. Woodfield Junction - Skipton Road/Kings Road/Woodfield Road

- Replace traffic lights with two mini-roundabouts
- Optimise pedestrian crossing timing

8. Puffin pedestrian crossings

- New crossings have not been optimised
- Fail to detect pedestrian who does not wait for the light
- Crossing time is too long for normal pedestrians
- Camera should be adjusted to detect if a longer time is needed for slow pedestrian
- Pedestrian crossings close to major junctions cause repeated stop-starts and accidents

Further comments and suggestions to:
Brian L Dunsby bdunsby@ntlworld.com

Town Centre Improvements Focus Group

Granville Simpson, Focus Group Leader

The following are observations drawn from the evening's open discussion on ways of improving the Town Centre. The Group felt they should take on a single, but nevertheless, ambitious task that would work towards a better Town Centre for visitors and residents alike.

That idea was to look at the directional signage and assess how helpful this was for visitors at the moment and look at whether improvements were needed.

They started from the premise that Harrogate town centre was a **Shopping Centre without a roof**. That comparisons should be made with our own shopping centre with what would typically be found in an out-of-town shopping centre, with regard to on-street information. For instance, where to eat, where are the banks, key specialist shopping and food shopping, etc.

Many of the Group felt that Harrogate would benefit if they could get retailers to identify areas within the town that could offer some cohesion, such as the Montpellier Quarter. The areas they thought might well have a link to each other are as follows:

- Cambridge Street/Oxford Street/Beulah Street
- Cheltenham Mount/Lower Station Parade/Commercial Street/Cheltenham Parade
- Station Pde/Station Bridge/Albert Row/Sunwin House
- John Street/James Street/ Princes Street/Princes Sq

By this approach retailers within these areas could take possession and promote the individuality of their particular area. The Montpellier Quarter's success could be used as a template with particular reference to signage.

The town as a whole would benefit from clearer/simplified town maps. Clear information should be made available at visitor points of entry, such as Rail/Bus Stations and Car Parks.

A well-informed visitor is likely to be a happy visitor and would surely spread the word as to what a welcoming town Harrogate is.

Further comments and suggestions to: Granville Simpson Granville@simpson4113.freeserve.co.uk

Promoting Harrogate Focus Group

Martin Wilks, Focus Group Leader

The immediate focus for this new Group is to encourage businesses throughout Harrogate to support the town's entry in **Entente Florale 2004**, the "Champion's League" of Britain in Bloom!

This is a once in a generation opportunity to achieve international recognition for Harrogate and an essential part of the success must come from the business community.

The following steps were outlined for the run up to the Judging of this competition on **23rd July 2004**.

- Cohesive strategy for business community to enable companies to get involved and participate through Sponsorship and competition entry
- Use of Entente Florale logo to reinforce corporate approach - to be useable by companies on their headed paper, e-mail, etc.
- Further promotional use of Entente Florale logo e.g. franking of mail; back of parking tickets; Bus tickets
- Encourage Harrogate web sites to promote Entente Florale
- Use of promotional video at bus station and on buses
- Harrogate Lapel Badge - Harrogate Tulip or Rose

Once the competition work is completed, the Focus Group will divert its attentions to Promoting Harrogate itself. This will need an exploratory meetings with Harrogate International Centre, A-Group of hotels, Small Hotel and Guesthouse Association, Restaurants, Bars, Taxis, local traders' groups, etc. to identify the future purpose of a Marketing Forum to promote Harrogate.

This marketing group could unite the current individual groups and create a town-wide initiative to promote Harrogate as a Conference, Tourism and retail destination. It could include a joint private and public sector funded group which corporately promoted the town and incorporated many of the individual marketing projects currently undertaken by the individual concerns. The framework for such a group needs further discussion at a future meeting.

Further comments and suggestions to:
Martin Wilks jmartinwilks@aol.com

Worms & Con Tricks Update

A copy of the most recent Business Watch Security Alert No. 12 was circulated to members present. This was e-mailed to members at the beginning of March highlighting the dangers of the latest viruses and worms affecting computers. If you have not received a copy by e-mail, or would like a hard copy for your records, please contact the Secretariat.

Access Committee Meeting

Philip Morris, Director of Larchfield Manor Nursing Home, attended the recent Access committee meeting representing Harrogate Chamber and reported as follows.

Members are reminded that the **Disability Discrimination Act comes into full force in October 2004**. Most improvements inside a building do not need planning permission but could need building regulations. Outside improvements, for instance onto a pavement, do require planning permission. If a building is listed then there are other problems that could arise.

John Kirkman who is the Chief Building Control Officer at Harrogate Council gave an excellent speech to the meeting. He would be very happy for anyone with queries to contact him on 556597. John Goss, Chairman of Harrogate & District Access Group is also available for advice on 323123.

Harrogate Council have an excellent document which is an extract from the building regulations concerning access - called **approved document M**. Copies can be obtained from Richard Evans on 556681.

Alterations to a building are only part of the regulations in the Act - **Discrimination against any person with a disability** is most probably the key phrase whether as an employer or provider of services and facilities.

Kimberley Hotel achieves IIP recognition

Harrogate Chamber sends their congratulations to the team at **The Kimberley Hotel**, who have just achieved their **Investors in People Award**.

The Kimberley changed hands 2½ years ago and during that time has seen myriad changes fuelled by investment in the hotel bedrooms and public areas, as well as behind the scenes. The management company is committed to a continued investment programme, which it feels is vital in the fast changing hotel sector.

All at the hotel are committed to The Kimberley being the best hotel of its class in Harrogate, providing a warm welcome in a central location at value for money prices. The award reflects the ongoing determination of all who work there to continue taking the business forward to achieve these aims.

Contact: Denna Garrett, Kimberley Hotel,
11-19 Kings Road, Harrogate, HG1 5JY
Tel: 01423 505613 Fax: 01423 530276
E-mail: denna@thekimberley.co.uk

AGM Nominations

The Chamber's AGM takes place on **Wednesday, 5th May** and nominations are requested for the Officers and Management Group. **Please send suggestions to the Secretariat** where they will be passed on to the Past Presidents' Group for consideration.

A-BOARD DECISION

A recent news release from North Yorkshire County Council confirmed that senior members of NYCC are **backing the removal of illegal advertising signs**, which might pose a hazard to people who are blind, partially sighted, infirm or disabled. The signs - mainly 'A' Boards - constitute an obstruction as defined under the Highways Act 1980.

They say the signs can be a danger as people may trip over them, walk into them or be forced to walk on the road to pass the sign when pavements are busy.

NYCC has decided to take action to have the signs removed, initially with a notice on the offending sign warning the owner the **Council will take action if it is not removed**. Owners will have to pay £25 to retrieve their sign, or it will be disposed of.

The County Council's Scrutiny Committee has supported this decision. The Committee Chairman, Cllr. Heather Garnett, said it had been a difficult decision, but the Council has to abide by the legislation. She was confident Council officers and staff would advise businesses on permissible signs.

Harrogate Chamber enquired if NYCC had received the **request from Harrogate Borough Council to introduce a licensing scheme for 'A' Boards**.

Apparently this had **not** been taken into consideration.

Businesses affected by this decision are asked to inform the Secretariat.

School Run Congestion

It would appear our original suggestion for changing school start/finish times has been misinterpreted or misunderstood by North Yorkshire County Council's Area Committee Meeting on 19th February. This misinterpretation also appeared in the local press.

The Chamber did not suggest that school hours be staggered between different schools. We suggested **all** local schools may consider commencing their working day a little later than at present, say between 09.15-09.30 with a corresponding later finishing time between 15.30 and 16.00.

Everyone recognises that traffic congestion on the main arterial roads of Harrogate is particularly bad between 08.30 and 09.00 on weekdays. Severe traffic delays occur at major junctions during the early morning rush hour period.

Many people have commented on how much easier the traffic flows during school holidays, indicating that it is the combination of business traffic and school traffic that causes the excessive congestion in the morning. The same problem does not arise in the late afternoon because schools finish much earlier than businesses.

NEW MEMBERS

Call Plan Solutions Ltd

(Business Communications Specialists)

Richard Burns, Director

Sovereign House, Market Flat Lane, Scotton,
KNARESBOROUGH, HG5 9JA

Tel: 08707 707707 Fax: 08707 707708

E-mail: richardburns@callplansolutions.co.uk

Web site: www.callplansolutions.co.uk

Harrogate Homeless Project Ltd (Homeless Project)

Liz MacKenzie, Project Manager

7 Bower Street, HARROGATE, HG1 5BQ

Tel: 566900 Fax: 566900

E-mail: authorisedpeople@aol.com

Travelodge * (Budget Sector Hotel)

Alan Finnemore, Sales Development Manager

Oxford House, Oxford Road, THAME, OX9 2AH

Tel: 0121 521 6635 Fax: 0121 521 6681

E-mail: alan.finnemore@travelodge.co.uk

Web site: www.travelodge.co.uk

The *Harrogate Travelodge Opens on 7th April 2004

at The Ginnel, Harrogate, HG1 2RF

Tel: 08700 850950

Membership Renewals

The Membership year ends on 31st March and we would like to thank the members who have returned their update forms from last month's Review. Can we remind other members to **return the Membership Update Form as soon as possible** (now available on the web site) even if you think we already have the information! **Please post/fax back by 27/03/04.**

THANK YOU.

WEB SITE ENTRY URGENT REMINDER!

It is important that we are notified of **your web site address** so this can be included on the Chamber's web site - **over half of members have not provided a web site address.** Members' telephone and e-mail address will also be included on the web site. **Please advise us immediately if you do NOT wish this information to be published for your company.**

Shared Business Mailing

An information sheet is enclosed with this Review detailing the **REDUCED costs** of the next shared promotion opportunity mailing to all Harrogate businesses on our database.

Due to the success of the last mailing we have been able to reduce the cost of this mailing, with thanks to Platinum Print and Paperworks for their help.

We expect the total number mailed to be about 3,000 - for less than 7p each! Inserts needed by **9th April.**

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Harrogate Business Survey

All local businesses are asked to complete a questionnaire on expansion plans and problems that was inserted in the latest issue of "On Location". Your response will help HBC decide on future land allocation for industry in the District.

E-mail: judith.cameron@harrogate.gov.uk

New Tax Definition of R&D

Trade & Industry Secretary, Patricia Hewitt, recently published new guidelines on the definition of Research and Development for tax purposes. They come into force in April and clear up grey areas in the original definition to make the criteria easier to understand for business. R&D tax credits apply to development work just as much as research, and to new or improved processes as well as new products.

See: www.dti.gov.uk/support/rd_guidelines.htm

The Government gives grants for R&D to companies who want to develop prototypes or innovative products and processes. Information on this and other grants available to businesses at: www.businesslink.gov.uk

Flexible Working Requests

A survey by Prima Baby magazine in association with the DTI Work-Life Balance Campaign, shows that 17% of mothers have exercised their right to ask for flexible working, and nearly a further 40% intend to ask.

Employers must ensure they are up to speed with their new obligations under the Flexible Working Regulations 2002, which came into effect last April.

More information at: www.flexibility.co.uk

New Asbestos Rules

The Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002 will come into force on 21 May 2004 with immediate effect. Non-compliance with the Regulations is a criminal offence and may result in a fine or imprisonment. It is vital that all businesses ensure that they are fully compliant with their new obligations under these Regulations, before they come into force. A guide to the Regulations is at:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/managetasbestos.pdf

Late Pay problems for Small Business

Late payment continues to be a problem for small businesses more than 5 years after the Government brought in legislation to try and curb it. Recent research found small businesses are at the mercy of large firms who take an average of nearly 2 months to make payments. The research has triggered calls for legislation to 'name and shame' persistent offenders.

See: <http://217.34.213.209> and click on the article 'Culture of late payment shows no signs of abating'.

For help and advice go to: www.payontime.co.uk

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