



REVIEW

**April
2005**

Review of Chamber Meeting + News Update

Conservative Candidate addresses Chamber

- Organiser of major Conference and Fairs in Harrogate – understands our needs
- Problems facing Harrogate businesses – transport, traffic, skills, crime & ASB
- Regulatory burden has hit an all-time high in terms of numbers and costs
- More Vocational training is needed to meet the needs of business
- More investment is needed in the transport network and in airport expansion
- Local authorities should be able to bid for funds to tackle traffic congestion

District News

- Royal Hall secures £8 million - launches appeal for funds for full restoration
- Harrogate Borough Council restructured reducing number of Departments
- Car Park Charges up 9 - 25% - but new Pink Party proposes 20 mins FREE
- Skipton Road traffic congestion – experimental restrictions at two junctions

Chamber News

- Chamber members featured on BBC Radio 4 and Sky TV News programmes
- Members' private visit to new Queens Suite now confirmed for 29th April
- AGM Nomination List announced – with one vacancy remaining to be filled
- Harrogate's 1st Business Market attracts over 65 Exhibitors and many visitors

Next Meeting - 9th May 2005

Monday, 9th May - 16.00-19.30 at Pavilions of Harrogate, Wetherby Road

**Harrogate Chamber's 1st Business Market
followed by AGM and free buffet for members only**

FREE stand space for Members + Prize draws - BOOK BY 30/04/05

Monday, 13th June - Kimberley Hotel, Kings Road

**“Yorkshire Forward & Sub-Regional Investment Planning
- Impact on Harrogate Business”** *(postponed from 11th April)*

**by Geoff Needham, Head of North Yorkshire, Yorkshire Forward, with
Nigel Avison, Economic Development Unit, Harrogate Borough Council**

PROMOTING HARROGATE BUSINESS

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

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MEETING
DATES

2005

(Second Monday)

9 May

13 June

11 July

8 August

12 Sept

10 October

14 November

12 December

Yorkshire Forward postponed

The presentation by Geoff Needham, Head of North Yorkshire, Yorkshire Forward, with Nigel Avison, Economic Development Unit, Harrogate Borough Council will now be at the 13th June meeting at the Kimberley Hotel on Kings Road. Their presentation had to be postponed due to the General Election.

We were very pleased to welcome Maggie Punyer as a last minute replacement, accompanied by the Leader of Harrogate Borough Council, Dr Mike Gardner.

Maggie Punyer Conservative Candidate for Harrogate & Knaresborough

This is my third visit since I was selected as the Conservative candidate for Harrogate & Knaresborough in 2003. I am particularly pleased to have Mike Gardner with me and we'll be happy to take any questions together on local and national issues.

I appreciate only too well how important the work of the Chamber is and I'd like to thank you for all your efforts in raising the issues facing our local business community and certainly there are many.

For those of you who don't know too much about me, I am a Director of a publishing & exhibition company. We are Harrogate's largest event buyer and I have been bringing the Social Housing Conference to Harrogate for over twenty years and the Bridal Fairs for about eight years. Our events put approx. £7million a year into the local economy.

As business tourism is Harrogate's core business, accounting for about 6,000 jobs locally, I believe having an MP who understands this business sector can only bring benefits to the town

As I said Harrogate businesses are facing some critical local issues including:

- Poor transport links
- Traffic congestion
- Skills shortage exacerbated by rising house prices
- Lack of investment in North Yorkshire by the Govt. and its agencies especially Yorkshire Forward
- Anti social behaviour and rising crime

And that's before we even consider broader national issues currently effecting all business including:

- The decline in manufacturing highlighted again this weekend with the problems of MG Rover
- The regulatory burden which has now hit an all time high and is costing business nearly £40 billion

Remember that we now live in a country where:

- The Civil Service is the size of Sheffield,
- Whitehall bureaucracy costs every family £850 pa
- The number of tax collectors has increased twice as fast as the number of doctors & nurses
- There are more DEFRA bureaucrats than dairy farms in England

The CBI has calculated that the Government's tax increases have cost business £54 billion since 1997.

Our productivity has fallen by a third and we've slipped from 4th to 11th in the World Economic Forum's competitiveness league.

The needs and aspirations of business are at the heart of the Conservative agenda for this election and I hope you agree that we are giving you a clear choice.

Our principle policies for business are:

- A low tax and a low regulation economy. We will keep tax on business down by avoiding Mr Blair's third term tax rises that are predicted not only by us but also by every economic pundit. We will eliminate waste and unnecessary government activity. 168 public bodies will disappear and 235,000 bureaucratic posts will go.
- We will also grant small business regulatory exemptions where necessary.
- We will ensure the right skills system is available & driven by the demands of business. Much needed quality vocational training will be offered as a real choice to young people and we will ensure that integrity is restored to our examination system.
- Science and R&D will be supported because we will strip out the unnecessary bureaucracy that currently so often inhibits it.
- We recognise that efficient high quality transport services are vital. We will give the private sector the stability and confidence to invest in the transport network.
- We will also pursue a carefully co-ordinated approach to airport expansion being mindful of the environmental consequences.
- By using revenue from the James Committee savings we will establish a road safety fund to help improve dangerous roads. Local Authorities will also be given the opportunity to bid for funds to tackle serious traffic congestion. Certainly Harrogate would qualify for this.
- With regard to road haulage, currently being crippled by the highest diesel costs in Europe, we believe that an earlier date needs to be set for the introduction of the road user-charging scheme. Without it, this vital business sector will never have a level playing field.
- With regard to the ever-contentious planning system we will abolish regional planning, speed up brown-field regeneration. We will work to break down the rigid divisions in land zoning and increase the life of planning permissions.
- Finally we will establish a refocused streamlined DTI that will become a loud and authoritative voice for business concentrating on competitiveness and profitability, but which will be charged to vigorously cut the regulatory burden.

Maggie Punyer (continued)

The LibDems are pledged to introduce 40 new taxes including water tax, parking tax, a new home's tax and a business land tax and also support congestion charging which could have a severe impact on businesses and their staff. Their local income tax will cost hard working families an extra £630 a year and they will increase the top rate of tax for people earning over £100,000 to 50%. The IFS have said their policies will increase tax by £11 billion. They also want regional government that will have to be paid for and they will also sacrifice economic stability for the Euro.

Locally I believe that a Conservative MP together with a Conservative County Council and a Conservative District Council will be an effective combination to tackle some of the critical local issues.

- We will work together to get a second station in Knaresborough and push for the funding to regenerate the centre of Knaresborough.
- I support the Council's involvement with the Leeds core city initiative, as it appears to be the only way to drive Government funding into Harrogate & Knaresborough to tackle those large infrastructure issues. However working with it will not mean that we will be subsumed into a greater Leeds.
- I will campaign to get a proper inter city rail service which is so critical for business tourism. I believe that there is now a real opportunity for the Metro service from Leeds to be extended to Harrogate.
- Together we will identify solutions to ease traffic congestion and it will be my responsibility to persuade Government to fund it.
- We must also find an alternative to the Starbeck crossing that brings traffic to a halt every 20 mins.
- Our policing policies will put 49 extra officers on local streets, which will help cut crime, & anti social behaviour & make us feel safer.
- Our investment in equity share housing will also significantly increase the number of affordable local homes to help our younger generation to get on the first rung of the housing ladder and ensure that we keep them local.
- The Conservatives also recognise the importance of effective air links to this area

I have a personal objective to meet the CEO's of every hotel chain in town and encourage them to invest in their properties thus ensuring we can maintain our position as a premiere business tourism destination.

As I said at the beginning I've been working in Harrogate for many years and its sad to see that the problems that affected business 10 - 12 years ago remain unsolved. That situation can't be allowed to continue if we are to maintain and develop a vibrant local business community.

In conclusion I give you my assurance that when elected I will regularly meet our business community both collectively and individually and take up your concerns because that surely has to be one of the key objectives of a good local MP.

QUESTION TIME

Beryl Dunsby of Perlex Associates asked, as the Conservatives intend to empower Head Teachers to expel pupils, what will those expelled pupils do?

Maggie Punyer said that it is proposed that turnaround schools would be set up for those excluded pupils to receive a proper education. Harrogate has a good record on expulsions and this is not a particular problem, but in nearby cities it will be necessary to restore order to schools, to take control back and to decide on the best course of action for an individual.

Mike Gardner confirmed that there are such schools in North Yorkshire, which are proving to be a success.

John Hart of Harrogate Ladies' College asked if the Conservatives would go back to Regional Railways?

Maggie Punyer said her expertise did not lie in the transport area, but she would find out more and respond back to the Chamber. However, she felt that following GNER re-acquiring the franchise for the East Coast Mainline route, that they could not decide whether to invest confidently, as they could lose the franchise to a competitor in a few years.

Mark Lancaster of Colour It In stated, if people are to vote for the Conservative Party in Harrogate, they need to know business in Harrogate is going to be represented; he believed that business has not been represented sufficiently over the past 5/6 years.

Maggie Punyer replied that often politicians spend too much time talking and not enough time listening! She said she would try to find a solution.

Brian Coghlan, HSBC asked why the Conservatives would not sign up to the European Constitution?

Maggie said that one size does not fit all. The European Constitution would not be good for business or for our society. She said that it would leave the UK open to more interference and regulation for business.

Brian Haines of COMPETE asked what single thing would pick them out from the Opposition?

Maggie said a Conservative MP with a Conservative Borough Council and County Council could work better at all levels of government to find local solutions.

President, Peter Armitage, asked what they felt about Leeds as a Core City?

Mike Gardner answered that Leeds as a Core City is a concept that Harrogate Borough Council fully supports as a means to obtain funding to help solve many of Harrogate's problems. It is about mutual benefit and partnerships - hopefully to channel more Government funding into Harrogate, not only in support of the Conference Centre, but also the road and rail infrastructure.

Maggie Punyer admitted to initially feeling cautious about the Core City concept, but had been convinced by Mike Gardner that Harrogate would not be subsumed into Leeds as a result. Maggie feels that Harrogate's local identity is of paramount importance and an advantage of being closely linked with Leeds is that Yorkshire Forward cannot ignore us!

DISTRICT NEWS

Media spotlight on Harrogate!

Since the 11th April meeting several Chamber members have been featured on national Radio and TV programmes covering the General Election.

On Saturday, 16th April, Granville Simpson of The Rocking Horse and Chamber Chief Executive, Brian Dunsby were interviewed for **BBC Radio 4** on "The World This Weekend". Brief extracts were broadcast.

On Monday, 18th April, Harrogate was featured on **Sky News**, "Live at 5" from the terrace at the Hotel Majestic with a panel of five Harrogate residents including Chamber members: Barbara Coultas of Languages International, Michael Best of David Newton Accountants and Chief Executive, Brian Dunsby.

Harrogate Borough Council restructuring

The Chamber has received full details of the major restructuring taking place at Harrogate Borough Council. Members wishing to view this information should visit www.harrogate.gov.uk. Comments to the Secretariat.

Royal Hall appeal

Brian Haines attended the Royal Hall benefit reception supported by actor Edward Fox. **£8 million** has now been raised for major restoration work, but more is needed to fully restore the building to its former glory.

Any members wishing to help with this appeal should e-mail Di Burton at di@cicada-pr.com. Tel: H-567111

Car Park Charge Increase

The cost of Car Parks in Harrogate for over 1 hr has increased as from 4th April by between 9% and 25%.

By coincidence, the "Pink Party" are campaigning for a FREE 'pop-in' **20 minute parking 'amnesty'** for local residents only, to help encourage local shopping back in to the centre of town and give smaller shopkeepers time to load or unload their goods. Tel: 01423 500699.

Westmoreland Street/Skipton Road

As from 25th April an experimental "no left turn" from Westmoreland Street into Skipton Road (Devonshire Place) will come into operation, as part of measures being introduced in an attempt to **reduce traffic congestion on Skipton Road**.

Vehicles will also be prohibited from making a right turn from Skipton Road into Church Avenue.

This experiment will last for six months. A copy of the Traffic Order was published in the Harrogate Advertiser on 15th April. Any comments welcome.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Harrogate International Centre visit

HIC have agreed to a private tour of their new **Queens Suite** Breakout facilities for a small group of Chamber Members at lunchtime on Friday 29th April. Chamber Members interested in this visit should contact the Secretariat for final details of meeting time and place.

Nominations for 2005/06

Nominations for consideration at the AGM on 9th May:

President: Brian C Haines (Commpeete Ltd)

Vice Presidents:

John Hart (Harrogate Ladies' College)

Martin Wilks (Lords & Courtyard Restaurants)

Robert Whiteley (Yorkshire Event Centre/Pavilions)

Management Group:

Philip Broadbank (Enid Taylor)

Peter Jesper (F B Jespers Ltd)

Jo Olnier (Jo Olnier Graphic Design)

Carol Rees (pgk marketing)

Granville Simpson (The Rocking Horse)

There is one more vacancy on the Management Group open to established members of the Chamber. Please contact the President or Secretariat if interested.

MEMBERS' FORUM

Saint Michael's Hospice appeal

Saint Michael's Hospice must raise over £1 million every year to enable their work to continue. They have a busy schedule of high-profile fundraising events planned over the forthcoming months, all of which **require sponsorship** at various levels.

If you would like to help please phone Christine Norton, Fundraising Manager on 01423 878192 or e-mail cnorton@saintmichaelsospice.org

More information can be found on their website: www.saintmichaelsospice.org

Menwith Hill Proms

Chamber members are invited to help RAF Menwith Hill to commemorate the **60th Anniversary of VE Day** on **21st May 2005** at their "**Proms in the Park**".

This outdoor event will commence at 6.00pm with an orchestra performing an appropriately themed concert including (weather permitting) a flyover by a Lancaster Bomber. The evening will close with a spectacular fireworks display with special orchestral arrangement.

Tickets are £5.00 per person with no charge for children under 12 years old.

Members interested should send the full names and addresses of themselves and any guests to the Secretariat, along with a cheque made payable to "MWR Fund" **by Thursday, 28th April**.

Opportunities at Ottaway's

"West Park Pavilions" is being created by Ottaway's of Harrogate, which may be of interest to some members.

They are creating a very special shopping experience for discerning shoppers including: children's wear; pianos & sheet music; bridal wear; evening wear and the Pavilions restaurant – all by separate businesses.

They are now seeking specialists in high quality ladies' fashion; hats; accessories; lingerie and swimwear, etc. to join this innovative shopping experience.

Please contact Ray Ottaway on 01423 566566 or e-mail: sales@ottawaysofharrogate.co.uk

HARROGATE'S 1st BUSINESS MARKET

Over 65 exhibition spaces have been taken to-date with many more enquiries coming in from visitors, following the recent shared business mailing to over 3,200 businesses in Harrogate and District. Another copy of the Business Market Brochure is enclosed.

If you wish to exhibit and have not received the detailed booking form by e-mail, please contact the Secretariat urgently as we are very nearly full.

Make sure you put 9th May, between 16.00 and 19.30 in your diary and, if you are not exhibiting, come along to find out what other members do – a chance to find new local suppliers and services.

Colour-it-in are donating a prize of Exhibition Display system to the value of £500 in a business card draw. Other Exhibitors are offering prizes and free samples.

Ackrills are publishing a colour flyer on the event and will be contacting all Exhibitors to invite participation.

In order to make this event a success we need to attract visitors as well as exhibitors. Please tell all companies you do business with about the event and bring along clients – we can send you more brochures. Alternatively, please let us have their postal address and we will send a copy of the brochure to them.

At 19.30 there will be a short Chamber AGM followed by a free buffet for members only, which is kindly being provided by the **Pavilions of Harrogate**. Members need to book places (1 or 2 per Company) in advance to attend, in order to ensure everyone is catered for.

Please contact the Secretariat to indicate whether or not you will attend the AGM and buffet.

FOCUS GROUPS

Traffic & Transport

Brian Dunsby drew attention to the new NYCC Local Transport Plan, which concluded that the long outstanding proposal for a **Killinghall By Pass** would have to be scrapped due to lack of Govt. funding.

Brian spoke out at the NYCC meeting that this was not a "village by-pass" but a strategic link in the east-west chain between the A1(M) to the north, right across to the M65 on the west. A **new relief road system** was essential to relieve the existing A61 & A59 congestion.

Brian asked Mike Gardner what the Chamber could do to help Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) obtain funding from the surplus parking revenue in the town to support the new **Harrogate-Airport Bus Service**.

(Timetable enclosed) Mike responded that the Government sets limits on what HBC can do with the money. The majority should go back into parking with some going towards road safety and public transport. He would investigate the possibility of extra funding to improve the frequency of the Airport Bus Service.

One of the schemes the funding was going towards is a subsidised school bus service to avoid children being dropped off at school by car. Another is a subsidised concessionary fare system for trains as well as buses.

NEW SOURCES OF HELP

Non-Nonsense Guide to Small business Funding - getting the right finance; expanding your business; choosing loans; keep cash flowing in; are you eligible for a grant? **FREE** copy available at Chamber AGM.

Partnership Investment Finance for Yorkshire - a new source of finance for SMEs in eligible areas of Y&H which have been unable to raise sufficient funding from traditional sources. Tel: 01924 268700

STEP Shell Technology Enterprise Programme - a scheme to help small businesses to develop their business by using enterprising undergraduates to kick-start and manage new development projects. Tel: STEP 01904 433329. E-mail: arf4@york.ac.uk

NEW MEMBERS

Harrogate Business Centre (*Serviced office centre*)
Pam Binfield, Manager
Hammerain House, Hookstone Avenue,
Harrogate, HG2 8ER
Tel: 01423 873888 **Fax:** 01423 873999
E-mail: mail@hammerain.f9.co.uk
Web site: www.harrogatebusinesscentre.co.uk

Leading2Change (*Leadership Coaching*)
Stephen Phillip, Managing Director
Hammerain House, Hookstone Avenue,
Harrogate, HG2 8ER
Tel: 01423 810146 **Fax:** 01423 810066
E-mail: steve.phillip@leading2change.com
Web site: www.leading2change.com

Northern Insulation & Pipeline Stockists Ltd
(*Engineers Merchants*)
Jeremy Bent, Director
Fourth Avenue, Hornbeam Park, Harrogate, HG2 8QU
Tel: 01423 871794 **Fax:** 01423 879015
E-mail: jeremy_bent@hornbeam.co.uk
Web site: www.nipsuk.com

Photarc Surveys Ltd (*Surveyors & Mapmakers*)
Rory Stanbridge, Director
Beech House, Beech Avenue,
Harrogate, HG2 8DS
Tel: 01423 871629 **Fax:** 01423 871639
E-mail: rms@photarc.co.uk
Web site: www.photarc.co.uk

St John Ambulance (N Yorks & Teesside)
(*First Aid Training*)
Karen Bainbridge, Sales & Marketing Executive
Lumley Close, Thirsk Industrial Park, Thirsk, YO7 3TD
Tel: 01845 521910 **Fax:** 01845 526363
E-mail: karen@sja-nytdemon.co.uk
Web site: www.sja.org.uk

Waitrose Ltd (*Supermarket*)
Andy Gibbon, Manager
92 Station Parade, Harrogate, HG1 1HD
Tel: 01423 501333 **Fax:** 01423 504482
E-mail: 684_branchmanager@waitrose.co.uk
Web site: www.waitrose.com

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Free import and export information

Free trade data and statistics about UK imports and exports, provided by HM Customs & Excise, is available at the following website. Visitors can analyse the markets using trade tables, explore new business opportunities and get a picture of the strength of local import/export markets by viewing regional data. Users need to register to access the free information.

Access the site at: www.uktradeinfo.com

Amendment to Companies Law

New regulations on directors' indemnities, which amend certain sections of the Companies Act 1985, came into force on 6 April. The revision will permit companies to indemnify their directors in relation to non-criminal liabilities to third parties, and to fund directors' defence costs incurred in civil and criminal proceedings (subject to refund if judgement is given against the director or the director is convicted).

Indemnities against directors' defence costs will be possible where the action is taken by the company itself, but is settled out of court or ends in favour of the director.

For guidance on the Companies (Audit, Investigations and Community Enterprise) Act 2004, see: www.dti.gov.uk/cld/companies_audit_etc_act/index.htm

Acas revises discrimination guide

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) have revised their booklet to help businesses understand and tackle discrimination in the workplace. The revamped booklet contains a sample equality policy, along with practical checklists looking at how to prevent discrimination in business.

To access 'Tackling discrimination and promoting equality - good practice guide for employers' go to: www.acas.org.uk/publications/B16.html

Making 'ITsafe' for computer users

A new Government initiative to protect home computer users and micro businesses from viruses was launched in February. ITsafe (IT Security Awareness for Everyone) website offers free advice as well as virus and threat alerts allowing computer users to surf the net and send and receive e-mails more safely. Alerts will consist of an e-mail or text outlining specific threats and what damage they can do. Users will then be directed to clear, step-by-step advice on how to respond and maximise security on their computers.

Sign up for ITsafe alerts and read general advice at: www.itsafe.gov.uk

Tourism firms urged to move with the times

Culture Secretary, Tessa Jowell, has urged the tourism industry to meet the needs of 21st century, web-based consumers, by supporting a new £10 million on-line portal for holidaymakers in England. EnglandNet will be launched in May, providing a one-stop source of information for tourists, including details about accommodation, transport, events and attractions.

To find out more go to:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/dcms041_05.htm?month=March&properties=archive%5F2005%2C%2Fglobal%2Fpress%5Fnotices%2Farchive%5F2005%2F%2C

Portal for European business opportunities

The European Commission has created a new portal to help entrepreneurs start up overseas. The Your Europe portal provides advice about beating red tape and winning contracts in other European Union member states, as well as information about registration rules, employment laws and market research in different European countries.

Access the portal at: <http://europa.eu.int/youreurope/>

Insurance premiums to rise for firms

A change in the law that came into force in April is likely to lead to rises in liability insurance premiums for businesses. The Health and Social Care Act 2003 will make firms responsible for repaying the NHS for the costs of treating customers or employees who have successfully claimed compensation for injuries or ill health resulting from the business's activities. The upper limit that the NHS can claim back will be £34,000 and businesses are being warned to expect a 5-10% rise in the cost of their premiums as a result.

See ACCA news release at:

www.acca.co.uk/news/releases/uk/2362582?session=fffffefffffc28288ca422f376b586fa4bc2e1f4547ab8e4a2d97e5c973

Yorkshire firms take procurement forward

Regional Development Agency Yorkshire Forward is extending its Virtual Enterprise Network (VEN) to help small firms in the region compete for public sector contracts. The scheme identifies the best suppliers for contracts from a database of members, and then develops a 'virtual factory' to deliver the contract to the buyer. The purpose of the scheme is to give small firms access to contracts for which their size would normally preclude them from tendering.

Find out more about VEN initiative at www.ve-net.org

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