



REVIEW

June
2007

FUTURE MEETINGS

17.30 for
18.00 start

9 July

13 August
Safari

10 September

8 October

12 November

10 December
Safari

Review of Chamber Meeting + News Update

GROWING A NEW BUSINESS

- Winners of Ackrill's Small Business of the Year Award relate their experience
- What were the goals for the business – and what was their philosophy?
- Ten tips for growing a new business – and when choosing premises
- Business Link information & advisory service now centralised on 01904 686000
- NEW Harrogate Property Finder web site covers all commercial premises
- Update on business centres and workspace currently available in Harrogate

UNITARY BIDS - NYCC vs. HARROGATE

- North Yorkshire County Council bid is opposed by all seven of the areas MPs
- Petitions on Downing Street Website now enable everyone to express a view
- Proposal for a Harrogate Unitary Council by Alderman George Crowther OBE
- See www.harrogateunitarycouncil.info – and vote by e-mail for or against.
- Harrogate Town Centre planning consultation – impact of Station Developments

MEMBERSHIP NEWS & BENEFITS

- Harrogate Business Market expands to cover the whole of Yorkshire in 2008
- Tour of Bettys & Taylors new factory with special tasting session for members
- Leeds Chamber CONNECT Card provides discounts for Harrogate Chamber
- 0870 "premium" telephone number problems + Internet Register invoice alert
- Boston residents set us an example for demanding a bypass around the town

Future Meetings

Monday 9th July - Staff Training Opportunities & Funding

at Grants Hotel, Swan Road, Harrogate HG1 2SS - 17.30 for 18.00 until 20.00
Presentations on "Train to Gain" by the Learning & Skills Council + Harrogate College
Business Enterprises + latest news on Training Programmes from Chamber members

Monday, 13th August - Business Networking Safari No 11

plus FREE Buffet - at Pavilions of Harrogate, Wetherby Road, HG2 8QZ
Harrogate Chamber members only - Another opportunity to meet up to 50 members in
one night to exchange ideas and business cards! **PRE-BOOKING VITAL!**

PROMOTING HARROGATE BUSINESS

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

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

Growing a new Business

Sue Ferguson and Claire Sawkins, Directors of So...PR Limited, gave an interesting insight into establishing and growing their award-winning, multi discipline PR business with a national and international client base.

Sue and Claire established the company in 2001 with one part-time member of staff, which has now grown into a senior team of nine. In a 2005/06 Yorkshire Post Survey, they were recognised as Yorkshire's fastest growing small PR agency. This year they won the 2006 Ackrill Media Group Business Award for '**Best Small Business**', sponsored by Harrogate Chamber.

Sue Ferguson is a former Journalist with over seventeen years experience in public relations and Claire Sawkins has over 10 years' experience as an in-house PR/Promotions Manager. Their complementary skills have worked well together in the establishment and running of So...PR. Their vision was to be the best small PR team in Yorkshire working with clients locally, nationally and internationally, which they have achieved.

Stating that it is important to establish **clear goals**, their aims over five years were:

- Establish loyal client base
- Attract professional and loyal staff
- Grow the business steadily and sensibly
- Acquire attractive, stand-alone offices
- Achieve £500K turnover within five years
- Have fun getting there

Their **philosophy** on the way there was:

- Quality more important than quantity
- Enjoy what we do and who we work with
- Tackle issues as they arise – speak our minds!
- Work ethically and honestly at all times
- Combine strategic approach with freedom/creativity
- Managing partners service all accounts on daily basis
- Keep overheads low and pass on benefits to clients
- Form partnerships with other sector specialists for support as and when required
- Forge lasting client relationships
- Happy to work on retained or project basis
- Specialise in emergency planning and issues management

The diverse capabilities of the company include:

- Media relations
- Corporate communications
- Internal communications
- Customer communications
- Promotions and competitions
- Event management
- Crisis and issues/emergency planning
- Sponsorship
- Media training
- Copywriting

Sue and Claire's **tips for growing** a new business were:

- Use a small team of Accountants not a large firm
- Keep overheads to a minimum
- Under estimate rather than over estimate in your financial planning
- Keep bank overdraft to a minimum
- Invest time in networking
- Enter relevant awards schemes as a good source of company PR awareness
- Use of part time professional experienced staff alongside full time staff
- Create an attractive and appealing working environment
- Get the right support

When **Choosing or Moving Office** Premises:

- Plan at least 1 year in advance
- Don't get locked into a long lease
- Office Space – think of how many staff you will be recruiting in the foreseeable future

Looking back over their six years' experience running their own business, Sue and Claire found the following **beliefs important**:

- Establish loyal client base
 - 75% of business from clients had from day 1
- Attract professional and loyal staff
 - only 5% churn
- Grow the business steadily and sensibly
 - Steady increase year on year
- Acquire attractive, stand-alone offices
 - Moved to latest premises after 4 ½ years
- Achieve £500K turnover within five years
 - Yes and still growing
- Have fun getting there!

To find out more about So...PR or ask what they can do for you contact:

Sue Ferguson or Claire Sawkins, So...PR Ltd
Tel: 01423 359100
E-mail: info@so-pr.co.uk
Website: www.so-pr.co.uk

Business Link Advice & Guidance

Richard Brook, Adviser Manager at Business Link York and North Yorkshire, gave an overview of their services in the area.

Business Link York and North Yorkshire has worked with businesses in this area for 10 years. About 50% of all businesses in the area use their services each year – most of these making use of INFORMATION services through the Gateway enquiry team. This could be a specific telephone enquiry or through direct access to their website which has over 5,000 pages of information and about 600 topic-based guides.

Each year Business Link works more intensively with about 800 businesses in York and North Yorkshire. These are businesses which either want or need to grow. This includes businesses which are starting up and businesses which have been around for decades.

In the first case the reason for growth is obvious but with the more established businesses the reasons vary from the needs of a family business considering how to ensure they have a business for the next generation, through to having to respond to competitive pressure and include the exciting opportunities where somebody has a new idea, or needs to consider a new way of doing things.

In these cases it is the role of the Business Link Adviser to **DIAGNOSE the business needs** and to develop an Action Plan which the business owner can carry forward. This will often include suggesting the use of outside expertise which the Adviser will **BROKER** into the business. **Business Link services are free** and this can include help in choosing the outside consultants with whom the business will contract directly.

The diagnosis can be extended to include a comparison with other companies in the same sector and of the same size. This **benchmarking** exercise is based upon a best practice model of company performance in key areas which include customers, the business processes including those which service customers and the capability of the people employed to implement these processes. All of this supports the financial performance of a company which will need to be adequately funded both short term (working capital) and longer term (for the purchase of assets and for investment in innovation).

The work with **established businesses** can take many forms based upon very specific projects in marketing or operations and can include gaining access to the expertise of the region's universities to make the most of innovative ideas and developing new products. The work with **start up businesses** covers the same areas but is designed to be available to all and is based upon the **FIT FOR BUSINESS PROGRAMME** which covers topics such as developing your business plan and managing your finances. Business Link can also work with start ups to help them gain access to specialist business support, investor readiness programmes and potential equity investors.

In all cases Business Link is seeking to enable business performance through advice and access to cost effective business support services. Working with businesses in these ways is designed to help to achieve our goal of making York and North Yorkshire the best place to establish and grow sustainable, lasting businesses.

For help and advice for your business either ring the Gateway Number 01904 686000 or visit their website www.here4business.co.uk

Harrogate PropertyFinder website

Kathryn Daly, Economic Development Officer at Harrogate Borough Council gave a short demonstration of the recently improved Harrogate PropertyFinder website, which is developed and maintained by staff in the Economic Development Unit (EDU).

Visitors to the website can freely access the comprehensive property database and view details of almost **160 currently available commercial premises**

offering more than 767,000 sq ft of space in the Harrogate District.

Working with 79 property agents, chartered surveyors and developers, the PropertyFinder database provides a **district-wide coverage** and allows enquirers to undertake their own personalised searches for sites and premises by type (office, industrial, retail or land), location, size and tenure.

Based on their own specific requirements, enquirers are provided with a summary of each relevant property (including photo) and can also click for further information (i.e. scanned copy of the particulars) and save records into their own personalised property list for future use.

The introduction of the online database has helped the EDU reduce the cost of servicing property enquiries by 82% (Cost of servicing a property enquiry = £10.34 per enquiry in 2004/05 compared to £1.86 per enquiry in 2006/07). There has also been a 200% increase in number of businesses helped to find premises each year.

To check the latest availability of commercial sites and premises in the Harrogate District please click on www.harrogate.gov.uk/propertyfinder

If you have any queries about the service you can contact the Economic Development Unit on 01423 556077 or email propertyfinder@harrogate.gov.uk

Business Centres in Harrogate

Three Chamber Members who offer business property for sale or rent gave a brief outline of what they offer:

Harrogate Business Centre

Pam Binfield of Harrogate Business Centre spoke about the fully serviced office facilities for new start up business including in-house telephone system and internet connection. Accommodation is usually offered on flexible licence agreements from 3 months covering heating, lighting, rent, rates and cleaning with the option to expand into larger offices within the building as your company grows.

Located on the south side of the town with free parking, Harrogate Business Centre is currently the base for 32 companies offering excellent networking opportunities, with a wealth of advice on hand from financial advisors to web designers.

With 25 years in the serviced office industry Harrogate Business Centre also provides a range of virtual office services to provide the back up and support enjoyed by larger companies.

Offices are available from 100 to 750 square foot on a flexible licence agreement from £375 per month. Virtual Office services including telephone call handling, business address and mail handling starting from as little as £35 per month plus VAT.

For further information contact:

Pam Binfield, Centre Manager, 01423 873 888; e-mail mail@hammerain.f9.co.uk or visit their website www.harrogatebusinesscentre.co.uk

Evans Easyspace

Tom Stokes, Managing Director of Evans Easyspace spoke about their UK-wide provision of new small offices and workshops serving the SME market. They aim to let workspace on 'Easy-in, Easy-out' terms.

They have two centres in the area at Hartwith Way, Harrogate and Marston Business Park, Tockwith.

The centre in Harrogate is a quality fully serviced office centre ranging from 1 to 8 person offices. It is fully staffed with reception, meeting rooms, telephony and broadband and all the facilities you would expect in a fully serviced centre including excellent parking.

At Tockwith workshop units are provided ranging from 750 to 1500 sq ft.

Flexible terms offered by Easyspace allow clients to expand, downsize or move on when they want to do so. Easyspace believes that this is how businesses want to rent space rather than lock themselves into a lease with the inherent delays, costs and problems. As their name suggests, they aim to make it easy for their clients.

Easyspace now has 44 business centres open with 1 new centre being added every month.

Details can be found on www.evans easyspace.com or by using the Freephone number 0800 039 3900.

Carter Jonas

Chris Soulsby, Senior Management Surveyor of Carter Jonas and Gareth Watkinson from the Commercial Office in Leeds, deal with the sale and letting of all types of commercial property, rent reviews, lease renewals, valuations, rating and property management. Acting for a range of clients. Carter Jonas, as well as handling residential property sales, has Commercial, Rural, Town Planning, Building Surveying and Minerals sections.

In the latest Budget announcement, the commercial buildings empty rates charging system is to be altered from 1st April 2008 which it is estimated will result in the Treasury receiving up to one billion pounds in additional revenue. This is a charge levied on all empty shops, offices and warehouses. If this is not meant to be a new stealth tax it would be appropriate for the rates payable to be reduced to reflect this additional income. Significant opposition is appearing.

Chris highlighted the serious lack of small modern warehouse/light industrial units in the area which is driving rents upwards. They have daily enquiries for space within the Harrogate District, so if you have any suitable land or existing buildings they would be pleased to discuss these with you.

Carter Jonas have recently been instructed to dispose of new build offices on a for sale or to let basis in Knaresborough. They are also offering office space to let in Clarendon House on Station Parade in Harrogate, which are currently undergoing refurbishment.

Please contact John Webster on 0113 203 1063, Chris Soulsby on 0113 203 1064 or Gareth Watkinson on 0113 203 1073 for further assistance.

HARROGATE DISTRICT

Unitary Bids - NYCC and Harrogate

Brian Dunsby drew members' attention to the fact that all the seven MPs in Yorkshire have voted **against** North Yorkshire County Council's bid for Unitary Status. He urged members who had a view, either way, to visit the Downing Street website to add your name to the most appropriate petition:-

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/unitaryNYCC/>

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/KeepItLocal/>

<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/nyorksunitary/>

Brian introduced Hon. Alderman George Crowther OBE to the meeting. George was also a former Mayor of Harrogate in 1999-2000 and an advocate for the future of Harrogate. He has put together a comprehensive bid suggesting Harrogate District itself should be a Unitary Council and not be subservient to anyone so that they can maintain all the services necessary to maintain the unique qualities of life in Harrogate. Please look at this new website that Harrogate Chamber has organised:

www.harrogateunitarycouncil.info

Past President, Brian Haines, applauded George Crowther on his initiative, and asked what Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) was doing to make a counter-proposal to the NYCC Unitary Bid?

Brian Dunsby replied that HBC had held a series of meetings across the district, with Harrogate Chamber representatives being invited to one recently. HBC are working in partnership with the other District Councils to oppose the NYCC Bid. Their preferred option is currently an "enhanced" two-tier system, i.e. County + Districts.

Have your say on possible changes to Harrogate Town Centre

Harrogate Chamber was recently involved in consultations on alternative proposals for changes to the **routing of traffic** in the town centre to accommodate the development of the **Transport Interchange** between the bus and railway stations. Although specific details cannot be divulged, members with an interest in this area are encouraged to contact the Secretariat to discuss options and offer their opinions or suggestions.

Granville Simpson said these consultations again show how the Council hold the Chamber's opinion in high regard and he hoped more members would express their thoughts on any business topics, so they can be taken into account on important decisions for the town.

A letter from Granville was recently published in the Harrogate Advertiser, suggesting an alternative use as a **Tourist Information and Refreshment Centre** for the disused bath chair shelter at the top of Montpellier hill.

Majestic Hotel extension approved

A major expansion of the Majestic Hotel has been approved paving the way for a six-storey extension with 85 new bedrooms to be built, which is the first major extension planned for a large hotel in Harrogate for many years. The Chamber was consulted on the plans.

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Tour of Taylors Tea Factory

We are pleased to advise members that Bettys & Taylors Group have agreed to provide a tour of their factory, followed by tea, coffee and hopefully cake-tasting on Wednesday, 1st August at 14.30 for a small group of Harrogate Chamber members and partners

If you are interested in joining the tour please contact the Secretariat by e-mail. Numbers are strictly limited, so the first to reply will be able to secure a place.

“Yorkshire Business Market 2008”

After the recent success of the 2007 Harrogate District Business Market (with the feedback showing exhibitors would like more space and more visitors would have liked to attend) the Management Group have decided to go for growth and re-name the event the “**Yorkshire Business Market 2008**” with the aim to fill all four event rooms at Pavilions of Harrogate.

As before, Harrogate Chamber members will have priority on exhibition space and preferential terms, but in order to let Yorkshire know about what businesses are run in Harrogate, non-members will again be allowed to exhibit too. This means your business can be exposed to a much wider market than before at a very low cost.

A full report with photographs is now on the Chamber web site, whilst the local press gave excellent coverage.

If you would like **advance information** on the 2008 Yorkshire Business market, just contact the Secretariat.

CHAMBER CONNECT Card - activation

Chamber Members for 2007/08 received with the new membership window sticker for the 2007/08 year a new **CHAMBER CONNECT** Card, which is provided as a result of our affiliation to Leeds Chamber of Commerce.

This card brings a range of benefits including discounts in Fuel, National Hotels, Stationery supplies, IT equipment, Office Furniture, Office Solutions and other benefits that Leeds Chamber are developing this year.

See www.leedschamber.co.uk and click on the **CHAMBER CONNECT** link for more information and offers now available to Harrogate Chamber members. **Quote our Leeds Chamber Membership Number 701745 for activation of these CONNECT cards.**

Leeds Chamber Networking

Fiona Gilbert of Prestige Relocation strongly recommended members to go along to Leeds Chamber networking events after attending one recently and making many useful contacts.

All members (unless opted out) should receive Leeds Chamber's fortnightly E-Zine by e-mail and their LBU magazine bi-monthly. If not please ask the Secretariat.

Full details of Leeds Chamber events at: www.leedschamber.co.uk (See also article on ChamberConnect card now available to our members.)

SCAMS & SPAMS

Say No to 0870

The campaign to put a stop to high charging 0870 telephone numbers has been joined by Which? Magazine, which recently reported the use of 0870 as being a serious contender for “**Best Buy Rip Off**”!

Using this number creates a high revenue stream for organisations using it, meaning customers pay the cost of high rates on these numbers. A new 03 number will be coming out shortly utilising the cheaper rates.

Members currently using 0870 numbers should study the Which? article and consider changing their numbers.

It is possible to find some equivalent geographical numbers on the website: www.saynoto0870.com

Fraudulent Directory Invoice

Granville Simpson alerted members to a recent invoice he had received originating from Germany and offering to publicise his shop on their **UK Internet Register** for the sum of £633 per year.

This type of scam is more of a threat to larger companies whose accounts staff may pass invoices for payment. Trading Standards have issued a warning about this scam, so please ensure all your staff are aware of it. The envelope is an unusual grey colour.

MEMBERS' FORUM & NEWS

Great Yorkshire Show Tickets

The 2007 Great Yorkshire Show will take place on Tuesday-Thursday 10 -12th July from 07.30 to 19.30.

To find out more about corporate hospitality or to buy tickets visit www.greatyorkshireshow.co.uk which has a wealth of information about the show - and is winner of the **2007 Yorkshire Digital Awards for Best Not for Profit Website!**

Carers' Resource new website

The Carers' Resource in Harrogate, Craven and Airedale has launched its new website:

www.carersresource.org

The website explains the different types of support they offer unpaid carers in the area as well as those juggling a paid job with caring responsibilities at home. It also includes how local businesses can help support them.

If you want to find out more visit the website or contact Gemma Nicholson, Communications Co-ordinator on 01423 500555 or e-mail: info@carersresource.org

Eddie Brown Tours win Award

Congratulations to Eddie Brown Tours Group based in Boroughbridge, who have won a Coach Tourism Award for a high quality, innovative range of UK holidays in the UK Holiday Programme of the Year Awards 2007. They operate a fleet of 40 luxury coaches. For information see: www.eddiebrowntours.com or phone 01423 321240

Berwins Events

Berwins solicitors are running two FREE events that Harrogate Chamber members may find helpful:

“It’s what you know that makes your business special” is their second Intellectual Property Forum, of value to all businesses where their knowledge plays a part in their success, highlighting the steps businesses must take to protect these assets.

27 June at Hotel du Vin, Harrogate

3 July at The Bridge, Walshford near Wetherby

“Age Discrimination after the First 6 Months – The Practical Issues Facing Businesses” This legislation has been in force since last October and impacted on all businesses and their employees of all ages. It is wide-ranging and covers all aspects of employment. After more than 6 months, it most definitely has not gone away and cannot be ignored by businesses.

28 June at Hotel du Vin, Harrogate

5 July at The Bridge, Walshford near Wetherby

All these events have 08.00 registration for 08.30 start

All events are free to attend. To register contact CarolineDavison@berwin.co.uk or phone 01423 543109

EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Ripley Castle - Golden Oldies International Cricket Festival

Sir Thomas Ingilby has written to the Chamber asking for support from members to attract the Golden Oldies International Cricket Festival in August 2010.

Organised by Air New Zealand Holidays, approximately 800 cricketers and their wives, partners and families are expected for the cricket festival lasting a whole week. The teams play three matches, on the Monday, Wednesday and Friday: the remainder of their time is free for exploring the surrounding countryside, shopping and making the most of the local restaurant scene. A large number of teams will fly across from the Antipodes with others arriving from South Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. A strong UK contingent is also expected.

Destination Harrogate, Harrogate Borough Council, the Yorkshire Tourist Board and the Harrogate International Centre are all fully behind the bid and the town is guaranteed to get considerable benefit.

Sir Thomas is looking for support from Chamber Members to try to keep the marketing costs down in particular, help with the printing costs if any members can supply this at cost, and help getting the town into a welcoming, festival mood for that week: stickers in shop windows, banners etc.

This would be the first major international sporting festival to be held in the Harrogate District and would be here at a time when the conference centre and hotels are quiet.

Members interested should contact Martin Wilks leader of the Promoting Harrogate Focus Group, who is the Chamber’s representative on the festival committee.

Nuclear Power Consultation

Any members interested in or with a keen knowledge of the impact of **nuclear power** may like to take part in a **consultation** by the DTI. In a recent letter to this Chamber DTI say that to help the country tackle climate change and give us secure energy supplies, it is the Government’s preliminary view that it is in the public interest to allow energy companies the option of investing in new nuclear power stations. Do you agree?

For details see www.direct.gov.uk/nuclearpower2007

Business Services Update

Business Link are updating their **mailing list** for their regular newsletters which contain useful information on current business issues, new services for businesses, new web sites and other resources available to support business and future key business events. FREE copies from 01904 686000 or email: infocentre@blyny.co.uk

Waste Exchange & Disposal

A new Regional **Waste Exchange** service has been launched, allowing members to advertise material they do not want or to advertise for material they would like. See www.whywaste.org.uk or call Katie Harvey at York & North Yorks Business Environment on 01904 554541

A new **Food Waste Disposal** service is also being launched for food and drink manufacturers, large retailers, restaurants, cafes, bars and hotels More information from Debi Rowe, Waste & Envir. Services Manager at Harrogate Council. Tel: 01423 556654

Tourist Information Centre

Harrogate International Centre has appointed Helen Suckling as Visitor Services Manager with responsibility for the District’s Tourist Information Centres in Harrogate, Knaresborough, Ripon and Pateley Bridge. Helen has many years experience in the tourism sector having spent the past 7 years in Thirsk with Hambleton District Council. She sees the Harrogate area “as an exciting and cosmopolitan location, with a challenging mix of **business and leisure tourism**” and is looking forward to developing both these sectors for the District.

Holiday tourism brings significant **economic benefits** into the Harrogate District. In 2005 holiday visitor spend was estimated at £68.6m. In 2006 TIC Touchscreens recorded 19,539 enquiries, the tourism website had 265,386 hits and visitor numbers to the District’s TIC outlets was 232,746. See: www.enjoyharrogate.com

THANKS TO THE KIMBERLEY HOTEL

Many thanks to Laura Fyfe and the staff at the Kimberley Hotel on Kings Road for hosting the meeting and managing to accommodate all members and guests for what was a very well attended meeting.

For further information contact:

Laura Fyfe, The Kimberley Hotel

Tel: 01423 505613; e-mail info@thekimberley.co.uk

or visit their website at www.thekimberley.co.uk

FOCUS GROUPS

Town Centre Improvements

Granville Simpson reported that slow progress with town centre signage linking the railway station to the conference centre was being made, but was optimistic that the promised signage, including **footpath signage**, would materialise soon. At the moment this comprises large introduction signs at the railway station.

One of Granville's other aims during his year as President, with the help of David Horth of Victoria Shopping Centre, is to bring together town centre retailers into a **Retailer Forum**. This Forum could bring together both large and small retailers for a more cohesive town centre to the benefit all.

Promoting Harrogate

Martin Wilks announced that an inaugural meeting of local organisations interested in Promoting Harrogate had been held with wide support for this **new forum**, which will operate under the wing of the Chamber. Any members interested in participating or being informed about the Forum should notify the Chamber Secretariat.

Business Promotion

Stuart Pearson, leader of the Business Promotion Group, said the group would be meeting to formulate plans to promote the **Yorkshire Business Market 2008**. Any Chamber Member who would like to be involved in this by offering suggestions or tangible assistance, please contact the Secretariat or Stuart direct.

Traffic & Transport

Brian Dunsby, leader of the Traffic & Transport Group was pleased to report that GNER had added **12 extra rail services** between Leeds & London each weekday.

Harrogate Chamber has been in touch with each of the bidders for the new East Coast Main Line franchise, with the outcome to be announced later this year. We have pressed them all for a **daily return service** between Harrogate and London Kings Cross - not one way only.

Leeds Bradford International Airport has a new European service by BMI to **Lille** in France and Ryanair are launching a new service to **Shannon**, Ireland.

In view of continuing traffic problems in Harrogate, members may be interested in the efforts of residents in Boston, Lincolnshire to get a **by-pass** built to alleviate their **town centre congestion** recently brought to our attention. After their County Council and District Council failed to act, the residents formed a group called the "**Boston By-pass Independents**" and stood for the local elections. 25 out of the 32 candidates were successful, thereby gaining control of Boston Council!

This sends out a warning to any Council that ignores the traffic requirements of its residents. Harrogate needs traffic that flows and does not remain stationary - make sure you spread the word of how it can be overcome!

For the full story see Boston Bypass & Economic Growth Pressure Group web site: www.bbeg.org.uk

NEW MEMBERS

Artisan Metal (*Wrought iron fabrication*)

Peter Armitage, Proprietor
25 Woodlands Walk, Harrogate, HG2 7BB
Tel: 01423 540615 **E-mail:** pha@taureans.co.uk
Web site: www.artisanmetal.co.uk

Harrogate RUFC Ltd (*Sports Club*)

Mike Cowling, Commercial Chairman
The County Ground, Claro Road, Harrogate, HG1 4AG
Tel: 01423 566966 **Fax:** 01423 509073
E-mail: mike.cowling@ntlworld.com
Web site: www.harrogaterufc.co.uk

The Mobile Phone Surgery (*Mobile phone services*)

Alessandro de Marco, Owner
24 The Whinfields, Summerbridge, Harrogate, HG3 4JE
Tel: 01423 780346 **Fax:** 01423 780346
E-mail: a.de.marco@o2.co.uk
Web site: www.themobilephonesurgery.2u.co.uk

Opus Services Ltd (*Freelance financial director*)

John Halstead, Director
The Laurels, 2 St. Leonards Road, Harrogate, HG2 8NX
Tel: 01423 888089 **Fax:** 0871 264 3352
E-mail: jbh@opus-services.co.uk
Web site: www.opus-services.co.uk

Servius Plc (*Contract hire leasing & finance*)

Bruce Blackburn, Managing Director
22 Bower Road, Harrogate, HG1 5BW
Tel: 01423 858522 **Fax:** 01423 858533
E-mail: bblackburn@servius.plc.uk
Web site: www.servius.plc.uk

Vital Online Studio Ltd (*Web & multimedia solutions*)

Vickie Bradley, Office Manager
The Tower, 4th Avenue, Hornbeam Park,
Harrogate, HG2 8QT
Tel: 01423 855700 **Fax:** 01423 855745
E-mail: vickie@vital.co.uk **Web site:** www.vital.co.uk

Weetwood Hall (*Hotel & Conference Centre*)

Caroline Hill, Sales Manager
Otley Road, Leeds, LS16 5PS
Tel: 0113 280 6000 **Fax:** 0113 230 6095
E-mail: caroline.hill@weetwood.co.uk
Web site: www.weetwood.co.uk

WPA Harrogate (*Private medical insurance*)

Maxwell Davies, Key Account Manager
20 Oakdale, Harrogate, HG1 2LL
Tel: 01423 561262 **Fax:** 01423 526726
E-mail: max.davies@wpa.org.uk
Web site: www.wpa.org.uk/maxdavies

Yorkshire & Humberside Assessment Ltd

(*Investors in People*)
Carole Reid, Chief Executive
1 Cardale Park, Harrogate, HG3 1RZ
Tel: 01423 531133 **Fax:** 01423 531252
E-mail: creid@yhal.org.uk **Web site:** www.yhal.org.uk

Yvonne Crawford Associates (*HR Consultancy*)

Yvonne Crawford, Principal Consultant & Partner
Beechcroft, Minskip Road, Staveley,
Knaresborough, HG5 9LQ
Tel: 01423 340060 **Fax:** 01423 340709
E-mail: yvonnecrawford@btinternet.com

BUSINESS BRIEFINGS

Train to gain success

Government research shows that small firms are making the most of 'Train to Gain' skills-building initiative. Since August 2006 nearly 22,000 organisations have signed up for the scheme's free Skills Brokerage service, which offers advice on finding training that is tailored to meet the needs of individual businesses. The Government claims the service was designed with small businesses specifically in mind. It says independent evaluation shows that of the 22,000 sign ups last year, nine out of ten were at least satisfied with the service.

Find out more at: <http://www.traintogain.gov.uk/>

Construction Industry scheme

HM Revenue & Customs has published fact sheets in 12 languages to help sub-contractors understand the new Construction Industry Scheme, which took effect from 6th April. The fact sheets cover issues such as registering for the new scheme and getting paid by a contractor. HMRC says it recognises that many sub-contractors do not have English as their first language.

Visit: www.hmrc.gov.uk/new-cis/ for more details.

Fact sheets in other languages are available at: www.hmrc.gov.uk/new-cis/languages.htm

Fire safety reminder for businesses

Businesses are being warned to ensure they are complying with fire safety legislation if they are to avoid penalties of up to £10,000 or even a jail sentence. Insurer *More Than* claims many small businesses are unaware of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which came into force in October 2006. The insurance group's statistics reveal that in 2006 the average cost to a business of a fire was £26,000. It says 80% of small enterprises that suffer fires cease trading within a year.

The Government has launched a Fire Gateway website, which includes online self-assessment tools to help businesses check their progress in complying with the law at: www.fire.gov.uk

Free anti-discrimination training tool

Businesses are being offered free online training to ensure they do not discriminate against staff on the grounds of religion or beliefs. The conciliation service Acas has launched the e-learning tool on its website to help businesses put procedures in place to ensure issues around religion or belief are understood (accessing the e-learning courses requires free registration). It has also produced a booklet called 'Guidance on religion or belief and the workplace', which can be downloaded from the website.

More information and links at: www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1240

Environmental advice from BT

BT has launched a new website to help small businesses work out their carbon footprint and look at ways to reduce their impact on global warming. Based on fuel consumption and work-related travel, the online calculator works out how much CO₂ a business produces annually. The website also includes hints and tips on how smaller firms can become more environmentally friendly.

Visit: www.btplc.com/climatechange

Online workplace health tool

An interactive online health and safety tool kit was launched by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health at their Conference. The 'occupational health toolkit' has been put together to help businesses tackle illness and absences caused by occupational health issues. It will initially look at stress and musculoskeletal issues, but will be extended to include skin disorders and inhalation hazards. Access at: www.ohtoolkit.co.uk

WEEE guidance published by DTI

Guidance on the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Regulations and how they affect retailers and manufacturers, has been published on the DTI website. Take-back obligations will be imposed on retailers as well as manufacturers when the Regulations come fully into force on 1 July. The guidance explains the implications the legislation will have and will be updated as and when necessary. Download guidance at: www.dti.gov.uk/files/file37923.pdf

New minimum wage rate

The National Minimum Wage will rise from £5.35 an hour to £5.52 an hour in October 2007. The recommendation by the Low Pay Commission has been accepted by the Government. It also agreed that the rate for 18-21 year olds should increase from £4.45 to £4.60 and for 16-17 years olds from £3.30 to £3.40. The National Minimum Wage has risen by almost 30% more than inflation since it was introduced in 1999. More at: http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/N11/Newsroom/DG_066689

New skills strategy launched

The Sector Skills Council for hospitality, leisure and tourism has launched a ten-point plan to improve standards ahead of the 2012 Olympics. The programme is called 'Raising the Bar' and aims to meet the needs of employers. More than 5,000 businesses have contributed to the research the new scheme is based on. The ten-point plan will focus on management and leadership, chefs and customers service, supporting and developing staff, and making them aware of opportunities to develop their careers.

For more information visit: www.people1st.co.uk

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

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

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