

# Skipton Chamber of Trade & Commerce

## AGM

### MINUTES OF MEETING

**DATE:** Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> May 2014

**VENUE:** Herriots Hotel, Skipton

**TIME:** 7.45am



**PRESENT:** **Executive:** - Billy Moffat, Reid Moffat & Co Ltd – President/Treasurer, Dave Parker- STC, Hazel Maxfield (C& H Brown), Tracey Weston (Bluefin Insurance Services), Wendy Lawson - Secretary

**Members:** Brett Butler (STC), Verner Wheelock (Verner Wheelock Associates), Sharon Hudson (Craven District Council), Jo Warden (Cancer Research UK)

**APOLOGIES:** Amanda Casey, Rendezvous Hotel, Chris Fenton (Herriots Hotel), Paul Mason (Pearson Associates), David Llewellyn (Tyro Training), Felicity Green (AWB Charlesworth), Jane Ellison-Bates (Manifest Marketing), Liz Preston (Craven Safety Services), Adam Dutton (Shepherd Partnership), Katie Davison (Bizzie Lizzie's), Lyn Creasy (LYNC HR Ltd), Julian Kay (Wright Wine Company), Rob Whitehead (Armstrong Watson), Dave Overend (Skipton Co-op Funeral Services), Bill Haigh (Willie Haigh Consulting Engineer Ltd), Robert Stead (Rockwood House), Tim Forman (Tim Forman Consulting Ltd), Bev & Paul Keyworth (Clean Cut Gardening Services), Victoria Roberts (Keelham Farm Shop), Jeff Bond (Midgley Motors)

Meeting commenced at 5.45pm

#### **WELCOME:**

Billy Moffat welcomed everyone to Herriots Hotel and thanked them for hosting this year's AGM and providing light refreshments. Before proceedings commenced Billy wanted to mention members Armstrong Watson and congratulate them on receiving their award for 'Best Tax Practice in a Regional Firm' at the Taxation Awards 2015 event in London on 21<sup>st</sup> May. Other members expressed their congratulations to the firm.

#### **ITEM 1: Minutes of the last AGM 2015**

The President asked for approval of the minutes of last AGM meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2014 at Rendezvous Hotel. They were proposed by Dave Parker and seconded by Hazel Maxfield.

#### **ITEMS 2: Treasurer's Presentation:**

Billy thanked members for taking the time to attend this year's AGM. He handed out copies of the year end accounts and said that he would be happy to answer any questions arising. He introduced the accounts with the news that the Chamber had made the biggest loss in 5/6 years; however, this was due to factors such as:

- additional website change and maintenance costs
- the secretary change/handover and additional costs
- mobile phone costs (previously sponsored)
- less money raised through the Skipton Guide etc.
- extra sets of lights required to replace damaged sets from 2013

Billy explained that the exec were taking steps to see what changes could be made to turn this loss around; he reassured those present that there was still funding available (backup funds), however, they could and should not continue to be drawn upon; the Chamber needed to avoid operating at a loss.

#### **ITEM 3: Adoption of Accounts 2014 to 2015:**

The accounts presented today were adopted by Tracey Weston and 2<sup>nd</sup> Brett Butler

#### **ITEM 4: Secretary's Report and Membership Report:**

Since Lesley's handover in July, I have been coming to grips with the challenges of co-ordinating a long-established organisation, which strives to connect with its members and utilise the modern methods of communication of the 21st Century. Skipton is unique; it offers warmth of tradition and a resistance to change, however, importantly,

there is a huge generosity of spirit in the town which can be celebrated. I still haven't completed a full year yet, so I continue to gather information whilst working, and still look at how things can be learned from and improved upon, within the 16 hours per week available.

Highlights have been the generosity of assistance received with the Skipton Town Guide;

- whilst bringing all the elements together for the first time for me, and
- the wonderful, voluntary assistance received during delivery and storage. That is ongoing whilst the guides are distributed to members and outreach outlets; though must be something which is reviewed prior to the next guide, as yet again we rely heavily on that generosity of spirit and at the current costs cannot support any charged facilities for storage and delivery of the guide.

Low ebbs have been the lack of connection during promotions such as the Christmas Window competition and the lack of take up on the meetings put together specifically to engage with members.

There is a real concern moving forward that membership has dropped to a low level, certainly automatic renewals are at their lowest level for a number of years, and there is an apparent disinterest from members to engage. Perhaps there are too many organisations doing similar things, or modern times, and communication methods make people's lives over stretched; unless each and every one of our members tell us the reason, we can only guess. This time now seems to be a pivotal point to really analyse the funding levels of the Chamber and question how it can sustain current activities into the future.

In addition, there is a move of office pending, as Skipton Town Council, our current hosts, move to Skipton Town Hall. Again, we rely on the Town Council's generosity of spirit to continue with that set-up.

I remain passionate for the Chamber, for reasons of personal connection, tradition, brand of the word 'Chamber' recognised nationwide and because I **do** feel the Chamber lends offerings that other organisations do not, however, a passionate secretary and enthusiastic board, does not empower a membership less than interested in utilising what the Chamber can provide. I am realistic that things may change drastically over the next six to twelve months, and in the meantime will do what I can during my time as secretary of this long-established Skipton voluntary organisation.

#### **Membership Report:**

We have 125 members at this time; though at the end of 2015 membership year we had 129; three members have not renewed and one member has gone out of business. However, it had dropped down part way through last year and then gained ten new members since July 2014 – new businesses coming into Skipton and one long-established Skipton business with new interest in membership.

We continue to ask that members help to promote the Chamber to other businesses and colleagues; word of mouth recommendations are particularly effective. We extend an offer to members to bring a guest with them to meetings and events so that they may be introduced to the Chamber.

Judy Probst and Jo Warden are wonderful ambassadors for the Chamber and through town centre activities that we are involved in, in partnership with Skipton Town Partnership (BID) and Skipton Town Council we generate renewed interest from town centre businesses. Our latest interest in membership comes from a long-established shop on Mill Bridge and we have 6 other town centre businesses currently considering membership for this year. Our latest involvement with a town centre activity is the Magna Carta Trail, which will involve a trail around Skipton for members of the public to spot 38 shields, which have been decorated by the local schoolchildren; they will be displayed in business premises windows. Near to the shield will be a laminated letter which will form part of a 38 character phrase linked to the Magna Carta celebrations.

All this is relatively good news; however, we have questioned the value of members' meetings of late, as attendance has been consistently below 15. It takes virtually the same amount of time and effort to organise a meeting with fewer numbers as it does with 30 or 40. If meetings are not utilised, the time spent creating and sending out agendas and minutes, could be used in different ways – i.e. increased social media promoting, eNewsletters, different types of events, e.g. business fairs with stalls for members once or twice a year.

At this time, all the subscription invoices have been processed and a third of members have paid this year's subscriptions so far. I would like to thank those who have made prompt payments, the majority via standing order. Reminder statements will be sent out in June to those who still have an outstanding payment due.

It is clear that in order to sustain the Chamber we must review the annual figures and make adjustments to fees, costs and targets accordingly. As long as the Chamber is valued by members for what it offers and can continue to attract new members, it can continue; but it **must** be valued.

Wendy Lawson, Secretary

**ITEM 5: Re. Election President:**

Billy Moffat had originally accepted an interim position as President at the previous year's election, however, that had continued for the year. Billy Moffat agreed to put himself forward for election as President, however, he asked for other members to consider the position into the future, as business commitments were increasing and this would have an impact on the amount he could do as President.

Proposed by Dave Parker and 2<sup>nd</sup> by Tracey Weston. A show of hands showed approval by all members present.

**ITEM 6: Re Election of Treasurer:**

It was agreed that Billy Moffat of Reid Moffat Ltd continued his role of Treasurer for another year.

**ITEM 7: Re Election Of Executive Members:**

Amanda Casey (Rendezvous Hotel), Dave Parker (Skipton Town Council), Paul Mason (Pearson & Associates), Felicity Green (AWB Charlesworth), David Llewellyn (Tyro Training), Chris Cooper (Alan Northrop Ltd), Hazel Maxfield (C & H Brown), Tracey Weston (Bluefin Insurance Services)

A list of proposers and 2<sup>nd</sup>s is available if required.

Billy thanked the executive members for their contribution and support to the Chamber

**ITEM 8: Election Of New Executive Members:**

None proposed

**ITEM 9: Re Election of Auditors:**

Windle & Bowker to be re-elected to continue presenting the Chambers accounts.

Proposed by Billy Moffat and 2<sup>nd</sup> Joanne Warden. A show of hands showed approval by all members present.

**ITEM 10: Honorariums:**

The President declined to take up their entitlement to an honorarium.

**ITEM 11: Subscriptions:**

These have remained static for the last 5 years and it was suggested that there should be an increase, which would take effect from the following membership year renewal, i.e. 2016 – 2017. The majority of subscribers to the Chamber are the lowest level membership (i.e. 0 – 4 members of staff £50), therefore a discussion ensued regarding approaching bigger companies and National companies about taking up membership. Wendy was happy to allocate

some of her time to pursuing the contacts for those companies and pursuing a higher intake of the larger organisations.

There was concern that the Chamber might be suffering due to partner organisations setting up and offering similar activities; for instance, Skipton Town Partnership (BID), were an extra compulsory cost to all businesses. However, it was felt that the Chamber had different offerings, for instance the members of Chamber could work together to challenge or support Council proposals; however it required a voluntary opt-in for membership and therefore had less members and funds available.

It was proposed that subscription fees be increased as follow, effective from April 2016:

Subscription Category	Current rate (up to 2015 – 16)	2016 – 2017 rate
0 – 4 members staff	£50 per annum	£60 per annum
5 – 19 members staff	£60 per annum	£75 per annum
Over 20 members staff	£90 per annum	£100 per annum

Proposed by Brett Butler 2<sup>nd</sup> Hazel Maxfield

#### **Presidents acceptance and thanks:**

Billy Moffat thanked members for re-electing him to the role of President; he closed the formal part of the meeting and introduced Sharon Hudson from Craven District Council who wanted to provide information about the forthcoming new Cycle Race.

#### **SPEAKER: SHARON HUDSON (Craven District Council)**

##### **SKIPTON CYCLE RACE Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2015**

Sharon thanked Billy for his introduction and she handed out information sheets about the cycle race. She thanked the Chamber for offering her the opportunity to present at the AGM.

Sharon explained that the Skipton Cycle Race was due to take place on the evening of Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. It is a legacy event following on from the success of the Tour de France routing though Skipton in 2014. This was the first event of its kind in Skipton, but successful events already ran for a number of years in Colne and Otley.

Sharon explained that a small surplus generated from the Tour de France had been utilised in bringing the event about and they had received sponsorship from other organisations too including The Coniston Hotel, Principle Healthcare, Superfast North Yorkshire, Skipton Town Partnership and Skipton Town Council.

More details about the event and the road closure arrangements are available on the Chamber website here:

Road Closures

and on the event specific website: [www.skiptoncyclerraces.co.uk](http://www.skiptoncyclerraces.co.uk)

Sharon explained that there would be an information evening being held the following week on **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> June**, also at Skipton Town Hall, offering businesses the opportunity to ask questions. The organiser from Velo29, who has years of experience running these type of events,

Sharon explained that they looked at the specific date to aim at attracting visitors who would take advantage of staying longer in order to stay for the Sheep Day event at the weekend. They had taken a lot of factors into consideration and were looking to create an extra opportunity for the businesses of Skipton to benefit from the extra visitor numbers created by the event.

Questions and Answers:

One member asked if shops would stay open for the evening. Sharon explained that shops were of course welcome to do so, and this event offered that opportunity, however, it was up to the individual businesses to decide that.

Another member asked about the race length (time). Sharon explained that the race took around 1 hour 20 minutes for the elite cyclists and there were 40 laps to the race.

Sharon hoped that business owners would attend the meeting being held at Skipton Town Hall the following week, where there would be more specific information available.

Billy thanked Sharon for coming along to the meeting to provide this information.

### **WORKING PARTY**

Billy spoke about the need to continue reviewing what the Chamber could offer into the future, and suggested that a working party of members be pulled together to meet up regularly to work on some possible new activities. All members present were in favour of this suggestion. Billy went on to suggest that a members' pack be introduced to offer information to new businesses (and existing) introducing them to the key partner organisations within the town. A Business Fair type of event had already been discussed at exec meetings – rather than offer regular monthly meetings, the exec felt that this type of event, once offered before by the Chamber, might prove to be more beneficial; keeping it exclusive to members of the Chamber to participate. It was agreed that this idea be pursued further during coming months.

### **AOB**

#### **Forthcoming Events**

Verner Wheelock, Acting Branch Chairman of FSB asked if he could mention about a couple of forthcoming FSB events, which Chamber members were more than welcome to attend.

#### **Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June, Yorkshire Dales Summer Barbecue at Town End Farm Shop, Airton**

Cost: £10 per person

Further details and a link to Eventbrite booking page here: [FSB Yorkshire Dales Summer BBQ](#)

#### **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July – Craven Branch meeting**

Local representatives had been invited to speak including Dave Parker (Skipton Town Council), Mary Arber (Skipton Town Partnership) and Paul Shevlin (Craven District Council).

### **PRESIDENT:**

As there was no other business to discuss, Billy Moffat thanked everyone for attending and Herriots for their hospitality and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm