

# Newmarket Retailers Association



**Minutes of the Retailers Meeting**  
**held on Friday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009 at 1.00 pm**  
**at the Bedford Lodge Hotel, Newmarket**

**Attendance:**

Councillor Jane Bailey – NTC  
Councillor Warwick Hirst – NTC  
Councillor Joy Uney – NTC  
Isabelle Barrett – NTC  
Vicky Bright – NTC  
Joanne Rogers - FHDC

Noel Byrne – Bedford Lodge Hotel  
Andy Hughes – Hughes Electrical  
Julie Eden – Coffee & Co.  
Patrick Cowell - Treasures  
Naz Jackson - Treasures  
Bonita Davie – Scribbles  
Denis Ferguson – My Fotoshop  
David Hopper – Golding  
Jamie Gaskin - Tindalls

Minute	Action by
<p><b>Welcome by Councillor Hirst:-</b></p>	
<p><b>Objectives:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) To increase business in the town</li><li>b) To establish a working relationship between Retailers and Town Council</li><li>c) To establish more effective working relationship between Retailers</li><li>d) To form a Retailers Association</li></ul>	
<p><b>How to meet those objectives:-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) What works and currently doesn't work in the town</li><li>b) What is the appeal of Newmarket to visitors</li><li>c) To establish a programme of events</li><li>d) Marketing of Newmarket</li><li>e) To analyse the footfall in the town</li></ul>	
<p><b>Introduction of Retailers Present:-</b></p> <p>Julie Eden from Coffee &amp; Co. raised the issue of the enforcement of A-Boards Legislation. She stated that since removing her A Board from the High Street her</p>	

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takings had been down 30-40%. This was supported by Patrick Cowell from Treasures.

The majority of retailers felt that it was unfair and had been enforced at a difficult time being six weeks before Christmas and in a recession. It was also felt that it was unreasonable to enforce the regulations without more warning and without any plans in place for an alternative solution for advertisement of the businesses in Rous Road, Crown Walk, Wellington Street and Sun Lane.

Councillor Jane Bailey sympathised with the Retailers and advised them that the decision was enforced by Forest Heath District Council, who had been working on the issue of A Boards for the last 18 months to 2 years. She explained that the regulations were there for a reason and it was out of NTC's control to do anything. She advised that it was possible for Retailers to apply for retrospective permission and pay the licence fee of £353 for 5 years and that following those 5 years if regulations had been met then Retailers would then still be able to use their A Board.

At this point Joanne Rogers, Town Centre Manager was asked to join in the discussion, she confirmed that she was unaware of the issue of A Boards legislation being enforced and agreed it was bad timing. She suggested that a Retailers Association would be beneficial and suggested several projects that she would be working on to improve Newmarket Town Centre:

- Retailing Workshops
- Upgrading the Market place – Unfortunately there are no funds available for this at this time
- Addressing the issue of dead space in the High Street (i.e. Banks)
- Promoting Rous Road, Crown Walk, Sun Street, Wellington Street

She also suggested the possibility of an amnesty on the A Boards issue until January 2010

The issue of NTC powers and legislation was raised and it was confirmed that NTC are only able to undertake support of the retailers and that its powers were limited. However, it was discussed that if a Retailers Association was set up, their voice backed up by NTC would be a step towards making a difference.

Noel Byrne fed back to the group some of the comments that he receives from guests who stay at the hotel for breaks. The overall opinion is that the High Street is not what they expected, they envisage something like Windsor or a Cotswold village, and instead they encounter a tatty and somewhat erratic offering of a high street. He highlighted that of the 20,000 or so visitors that visit the hotel annually, only 10% come for the races, obvious when you consider the number of race days.

Regarding the diversions that have been implemented Noel did comment that visitors to the races no longer pass through the town, thus not making impulse decisions to stay on afterwards and eat/drink or shop before racing, in the town. This point was also raised by some of the racecourse staff, who are equally concerned at the drop in town

**Joanne Rogers to work on these projects**

**Cllr. Hirst/Cllr Bailey to address issue of amnesty with NTC & FHDC**

usage.

A further comment that was made by Noel Byrne, was that whilst Newmarket was the jewel in the Forest Heath Crown, it was apparent from certain matters that have taken place recently, that there is no focus from Forest Heath on ways in which to positively develop the Newmarket brand. This gives off the wrong impression to everyone involved with Newmarket.

Noel also raised the question as to whether a temporary lifting of the A Board withdrawal could be implemented in order to support the local retailers at the most critical time of their trading year.

David Hopper from Golding agreed that the last 2-3 years had been difficult and that racing affects the footfall within the High Street. He also agreed that the clientele and demographic of Newmarket had changed. The overall feeling was that the Retailers felt unappreciated. They felt that they contribute a lot to the Town i.e. Late Night Shopping etc and received no support or help from the Town in return. The general feeling was of apathy and lack of cohesion and team spirit.

The Guineas was discussed and it was felt that it was deteriorating, with empty shops, uncared for areas, extortionate rents and that it was in danger of becoming a Ghost Area. Councillor Jane Bailey confirmed that the Guineas was privately owned and as such nothing could be done to enforce changes.

Ideas to improve the signage and advertising for the Town's shops were discussed and Bonita Davie presented a study she had undertaken and suggested the following:

- Finger Signs or Signs on poles mid street in keeping with the signage already in Newmarket
- Similar signage to the Guineas
- Signage on Flower Tubs and Waste Bins
- A design protocol for all A Boards within the High Street

This led onto ideas for promoting the Town as a whole and encouraging regeneration and better clientele.

### **Marketing Strategy:-**

Ideas discussed and suggested, with the idea of a Retailers Association being set up to manage them:

- a) Website (Local Secrets) – Town Council Link
- b) Leaflet - listing retailers (Town Crier)
- c) Town Signage – Discussed above
- d) Advertising
- e) Guided Tour of the town
- f) Regular town centre entertainment

**NTC to organise  
set up of  
Association**

It was discussed that a Retailers Association could implement a Brand or introduce a protocol for signage, A Boards or Window Dressing. It was stressed that a Retailers Association with the backing of NTC would have more chance of making a difference.

A vote was taken and a majority of hands were shown in favour for putting together a Retailers association for Newmarket (7 hands shown).

It was confirmed that NTC would offer full support and backing and would provide the organisation and administration for the group.

**NTC to arrange  
& advise of  
meeting date**

The following suggestions were made for participants to be invited to meetings:

- NTC
- District Councillors
- Racing Community Representative
- Police Representative
- Guineas Representative
- All Retailers
- Town Centre Manager

The first meeting of the Association to be scheduled for January 2010 (weekday after 6pm – not a Monday).

The business of the meeting concluded at 2:30 pm.

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_

Date : \_\_\_\_\_