

Newmarket Retailers Association



Minutes of the Retailers Meeting
held on Thursday 4th March 2010 at 6:30pm
at the Bedford Lodge Hotel, Bury Road, Newmarket

Attendance:

Noel Byrne – Bedford Lodge Hotel, Steve and Josie Hall – Scribbles, Tolly Cousidine – Tolly Flowers, Audrey Lewis – Audrey’s Beauty Clinic, Martin Dwyer – Newmarket Sewing, Christine Beard – Allsquare Flooring, Kevin Pearson – Goldings, Alexa Jones – Anne Furbank, Jane Spenser – Shoe Doctor, Ben Pym – Corney & Barrow, John Briggs – Johnny Briggs & Kim Lane – Kitchens & Things, Ian Clemson – thebestof.co.uk/newmarket and Cllr. Bill Sadler – NTC & SCC.

Cllr. Warwick Hirst – NTC – Chairman Community Services Committee

Cllr. Joy Uney – NTC

Mrs. Isabelle Barrett – NTC – Town Clerk

Mrs. Vicky Bright – NTC – Assistant to the Town Clerk

Joanne Rogers – FHDC – Town Centre Manager

Apologies:

Andy Hughes – Hughes Electrical, James O’Doherty – Farthings, Jim Wood – Waitrose, David Eagle – Outsiders, Marion Green – Country Casuals

Minute

1. Welcome by Councillor Hirst: Introductions and Apologies:

2. Update on Counter Skills Competition by Joanne Rogers:

26 staff from several retailers in Newmarket will be competing in 7 scenarios i.e. Mystery Shopper etc. There has been a huge response for support with sponsorship from NTC and SCC, with several cash prizes being donated. The Awards Ceremony will be held at the Bedford Lodge Hotel on Friday 12th March, RSVP only. The Newmarket Journal has agreed to cover the event.

**Joanne
Rogers, FHDC
& Sally
Williams,
Retail Revival
Ltd**

3. Election of Committee members/Discuss their roles

It was agreed that the turn out for the meeting was poor, with only 14 retailers attending and only 5 sending their apologies. This was met with a sense of apathy and forced the retailers to ask whether they felt it was worth setting up an Association. A show of hands indicated that 12 members felt it was worth pursuing. It was agreed that

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the committee and Association would be set up and then hopefully by word of mouth, promotion and by proving that the association can have a positive effect, more retailers would join. The following retailers agreed to be members of the Retailers Association:

- Noel Byrne – Bedford Lodge
- Tolly Cousidine – Tolly Flowers
- Steve and Josie Hall – Scribbles
- Audrey Lewis – Audrey’s Beauty Clinic
- Martin Dwyer – Newmarket Sewing
- Kevin Pearson – Goldings
- Alexa Jones – Anne Furbank
- Jane Spenser – Shoe Doctor
- Ben Pym – Corney & Barrow
- John Briggs – Johnny Briggs
- Kim Lane – Kitchens & Things
- Ian Clemson – thebestof.co.uk/newmarket

With Andy Hughes – Hughes Electrical, James O’Doherty – Farthings and Marion Green – Country Casuals voicing their support when they sent their apologies.

The committee members were elected:

- Chairmen – Andy Hughes
- Vice Chairmen – Tolly Cousidine
- Secretary – Jane Spenser
- Treasurer – Ben Pym

4. Associate members and their roles

5. Retailers Association

Brainstorming Session for actions

- Topics raised at last meeting 04.02.2010:
 - Website/Leaflet
 - Guided Tours
 - Regular Town Entertainment
- Topics raised by Joanne Rogers – Town Centre Manager:
 - Late Night Shopping events
 - Street Furniture
 - Website
 - Loyalty Cards
 - Shop frontage painting scheme
 - Counter Skills
 - Footfall, Street Scene and publicity
- Items discussed for action:
 - **Open air Market** – There were concerns that the market had lost trade. This was felt to be due to the market being located in the wrong place, the roads not being closed off on market days, with no car park nearby. It was felt the profile of customers had declined with the elderly shopping in the morning and lower income families shopping in the afternoon. It was suggested bringing in higher end markets, such as French Markets etc.

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However, the Town Centre Manager advised the profile of existing customers and current trade would need to be improved before that could happen.

- **Summer Events** – It was suggested that there be a late night shopping event in the summer, as well as at Christmas and that there be regular street entertainment introduced.
- **Cohesion with the Racing Community** – It was felt that cohesion between the racing community and the retail industry be improved, as it was agreed that the racing is an integral part of the community. It was suggested that events in the High Street could be organised outside of racing to coincide with the race meetings. Examples were an event for the July Festival and events to coincide with the 2012 Olympics (tourism is expected to increase from 6-8 weeks before the Olympics to 4 weeks after, by at least 40,000). It was suggested that a speaker from the July Festival Committee be invited to the next meeting to update the retailers on their plans and what is scheduled to take place. The issue of racing traffic was also raised as an issue to be looked into.
- **Footfall** – Loss of business has been felt by all the retailers and a common belief is that this is due to a loss of footfall within the High Street. Reasons for this were raised; Car park charges and enforcement of a maximum 3 hour stay only, Lack of quality shops and big brand shops within the High Street, No department stores or big brand food shops within the High Street, Racing traffic and finally the regeneration of Bury St Edmunds.
- **Regeneration /Street Scene** – The introduction of new street signage was met with approval, it is felt that a uniform design needs to be implemented and that overall there is a need for Newmarket to establish a specific demographic and character. The issue of cleanliness and tidiness within the High Street was raised and it was suggested that this be addressed by the Retailers Association as primary action. It was advised that representatives from Forest Heath District Council and Suffolk County Council could be approached and perhaps invited to the next meeting to discuss this issue and suggest what they can do as the local authority to address the issue.

Joanne Rogers, Town Centre Manager mentioned that the town of Sheringham had been working on a Town Regeneration plan for some time and had successfully turned the Town of Sheringham around; it was suggested that the Town Clerk for Sheringham be approached to offer advice.

NTC

6. Working in Partnership - Newmarket Town Council

Finance – It has been agreed that Newmarket Town Council will award £2,000 towards promotion for the town and the Retailers Association. It was also agreed that the Town Council Officers would offer Administration support.

NTC

Joanne Rogers, Town Centre Manager confirmed that Forest Heath District Council are willing to match fund the £2,000 offered by NTC.

FHDC

It was confirmed by Cllr. Hirst that NTC's objectives and aims meet the objectives of the retailers. It was suggested that the Association that should they take a positive attitude and remain optimistic and strong, united as one

voice, then they would be recognised as a strong committee who would be consulted and who would be able to express their views and opinions to different organisations on issues of concern i.e. FHDC & Planning issues. As an Association they would be able to invite FHDC, SCC and other organisations to meetings and could, to a certain extent, influence subsequent decisions.

A strong committee could eventually with hard work have the power to change things and help develop the Retail Industry. However, it was stressed that this would be a long road and therefore they should put a long term development plan.

The business of the meeting concluded at 7:50 pm.

Next Meeting: Thursday 18th March 2010 at 6:30pm, at the Bedford Lodge Hotel
It was agreed that the minutes from this meeting and invites to the meeting to be held on the 18th March, would once again be sent out to all retailers.

The following action points were suggested for the agenda for the next meeting:

- Promotion of Retail Industry (i.e. Website/Leaflet)
- July Festival Event (to include a guest speaker from the July Festival Committee)
- Regeneration/Street Scene (info on Shop Frontage Painting Scheme)

Signed : _____

Date : _____

Asst. to Town Clerk NTC to draft agenda with new Chairman of Association

Asst. to Town Clerk to invite Guest Speakers to next meeting