



June 2021

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Changes

At the time of writing we are still not fully out of Lockdown, with a number of Covid restrictions still in place – the target date is now 19th July. That has been a huge frustration for many businesses, particularly in the entertainment and hospitality sector. The situation is still quite fluid, but vaccinations continue apace, so let's hope there will be no further delays.

It's been quite an eventful past few weeks with the media coverage we've had for local business, with Radio York (previously reported) and BBC TV Look North (reported below) both featuring our business community. There was also a recent Boroughbridge feature in the Yorkshire Post Magazine on 19th June, part of which mentioned our thriving business community, with Wardrobe, Winearray, La Tienda and the Dining Room all receiving mentions. The overall message of that feature was that Boroughbridge is a great place to visit and do business – which we all know it is, of course.

Our local MP, Andrew Jones, has also seen fit to pick out Boroughbridge in his recent Community News email. He referred to Harrogate Borough Council's latest figures for the number of empty shops on our high streets. In Harrogate itself, shop vacancy rates stand at 7.3 per cent compared to 9.5 per cent a year ago. In Knaresborough, the rate is 10.2 per cent compared to 12.6 per cent in March 2020 and **in Boroughbridge the rate is a stunning 1.5 per cent – it was 6.1 per cent a year ago.** He goes on to say "The Boroughbridge story is amazing and a tribute to this positive, community-oriented outlook. The town even featured on the BBC news described as 'Boom town Boroughbridge'; quite an accolade!" We hope to have Andrew along to see things first-hand sometime soon.

2 Member News

A very warm welcome is extended to new Chamber member The Dining Room. Many of you will know what a great place it is, situated at the top of St James Square and run by husband-and-wife team Lisa and Chris Astley. For those who don't know, the Dining Room offers all day dining, and Brunch on Sundays, from 9:30am to 5pm (1pm Sundays). Check out the website at www.thediningroomrestaurant.co.uk.

3 BBC TV Look North Comes to the High Street

Following the visit to the High Street by Radio York on 24th May, BBC Look North TV duly came along on Thursday 3rd June. The feature was broadcast on the lunchtime news that same day, followed by a slightly extended version on the 6:30pm evening local news and a shorter version

on the late news at 10:30pm – all pretty good publicity for the business community in the Town.

The visit was originally scheduled for Wednesday 2nd July, but the allocated reporter (Ian White) was diverted to a different breaking news story on the day. However, the following day veteran reporter Kathy Killick duly came along (with cameraman Rob) to do the feature. While we tried hard to encourage them to interview as many local business owners as possible, they had a tight agenda and were quite clear in what they wanted to cover – so apologies to those who did not get the opportunity to speak to camera, and also to those who were interviewed but ended up on the cutting-room floor. That's showbiz, as they say!

The exposure generated a lot of interest and comment, and it is clear that a number of recent visitors to the Town were there because they had seen the TV News item – so hopefully a number of businesses will have benefited.

In addition, local MP Andrew Jones, referred to the event in his latest District Newsletter as “Boomtown Boroughbridge.” That may be overstating things a little, but nonetheless it's great that so much interest and publicity has been generated for local businesses and the Town.

4 Welcome Back Bunting



The Town Council has advised that bunting is being distributed by Harrogate Borough Council to local businesses reopening after Covid 19 shutdowns. It's a shame it wasn't available earlier when non-essential Retail re-opened on 12th April, or when further restrictions were lifted on 17th May, but better late than never, as the final set of restrictions will hopefully be lifted from 19th July.

The Town Council is due to take delivery of the bunting on 2nd July at the Boroughbridge Tourist Information Office, so it should be available for collection from the office after that date.

5 Business Networking Event Update

To celebrate the hoped-for full emergence from Lockdown, we are holding a Business Networking event on Thursday 22nd July, 11am-3pm, at the Crown Hotel in Boroughbridge. It will be a relatively informal drop-in affair, more an opportunity for local businesses to get together for a chin-wag over a cup of tea or coffee, to share stories on the challenges of the past 15 months, discuss any current business-related issues, along with casting an eye to the future of business in and around the Town. We also hope to have experts on hand for informal chats on various business functions such as Finance, Marketing, HR/Training, Social Media, etc. Please put the date in your diary and fuller details will be circulated directly to members nearer the date.

There will also be more details to come regarding the **Race Night** (scheduled for Saturday 11th September) and the **Independents' Day** (w/c 13th September) in due course. In the meantime, Barbara Hill will be very pleased to hear from anyone who would like to 'buy' a horse or two to profile their businesses at the Race Night - call Barbara at the shop on 01423-322770.

6 Member Business Spotlight: Hair on the Square answers some key questions



Continuing the Member Spotlight feature, Barbara Hill answers some key questions on behalf of Hair On The Square. Based at 24 St James Square, YO51 9AR, in the Town centre.

Barbara can be contacted on 01423-322770 and info@haironthesquare.net. Check out the website too at www.haironthesquare.net

What led you to start a business/how did it all begin? I started the business in Leeds in 1974 as a Barber. I then opened in Knaresborough in 1984 and the finally in Boroughbridge in 1997.

What does the business do? Hairdressing!

What is your most popular product/service? Typical hairdressing services – Cuts, Colours, Perms – and not forgetting the Tea and Coffee chats!

What other local businesses do you support? I try and support all the local businesses in Boroughbridge as much as I can.

What is the best part of your job? It's all about the people.

What is the best piece of advice you would offer a new business in Boroughbridge? The key thing is to enjoy it, and basically we have a Town blessed with good people.

What is a fun/amazing fact about you or your business that people might not know? I have been doing this now for 47 years – and I still love it. Of those 47 years – 45 of them have been as a Barber!

How have you adapted your business during the current Coronavirus pandemic? We were unable to adapt the business as we had to completely close. The resulting lack of people contact was the worst part.

7 Top Tips for Business - Appraisals

Fiona Prattley of FMP Development Consultancy Limited (contact@fmpdevelopment.co.uk) concludes her mini-series of top tips for business. In this final piece Fiona takes a look at staff appraisals.

What are appraisals and are they important for a business?



Whatever the size of your business getting the building blocks right to a successful and motivated workforce is key from the moment you hire someone. You may have a brilliant brand, excellent induction process and a strong culture, but does every member of staff understand their role, the objectives they have to achieve, how they align with the company goals, and what they need to do to support the business? Having appraisals is an effective way to support this.

The purpose of appraisals (sometimes called performance appraisals or reviews) is to manage performance across the business and highlight opportunities for professional and personal development to achieve success. A good appraisal will consider the individual, the manager and the department. Appraisals whether formal or informal provide a framework for both employer and employee, to have a systematic approach to monitoring performance and employee engagement. An appraisal should reflect the employee's job, their key responsibilities, their wider participation within the team and their overall contribution (or expected contribution) to company-wide business objectives.

Appraisals are an important time to discuss employees' performance and development. It's generally a meeting between an individual and their line manager to record recent achievements and decide on future objectives. This helps maximise full potential. For the employee, it's also an ideal opportunity to put forward ideas about career development, including training and support needs. This can help them gain practical support in their career path and enjoy better job satisfaction.

Formal appraisals are usually conducted annually. This means there can be a lot of information to cover, so it's important that both employee and line manager come to the meeting well prepared.

Before an appraisal, both parties should take time to think about their objectives and complete an appropriate form with specific areas for discussion. The line manager can also gather feedback from colleagues for a more comprehensive conversation. Appraisals can look like a number of things, an Excel spreadsheet, a Word document, or even a hand-written piece of paper. Whatever format is chosen, keep it consistent across the business and stick with it!



However, don't just do appraisals once a year just to tick a box. People are an important asset in a business; it's important to ensure that they are engaged with the business, and ensure they feel empowered to be part of a bigger picture, on an ongoing basis. By just doing appraisals annually and leaving them in a filing cabinet all year, it will likely lead to a longer discussion, and a longer meeting. The more regular appraisals are done, the easier and quicker they become. If they form part of regular one-to-ones, then there isn't the same need to diarise appraisal meetings, they become part of the regular 'work in progress' catch up. Encourage open dialogue throughout the year, as this can help address issues as they arise and prevent problems from escalating. 'Doing appraisals' doesn't need to be scary. The less we think of appraisals as a 'doing' activity, the more they become part of our management style, the easier they become.

Line managers are responsible for the appraisal process. The line manager is responsible for understanding the objectives and goals of the department they manage, the individual team members within it, their contribution, their skills and what they individually need to achieve to deliver the objectives of the department. The employee needs to feel engaged with the process and understand that their personal development is important to the business which feeds through to their performance and the overall performance of the business.

During the appraisal, the line manager should:

- Assess performance
- Provide feedback about the employee's progress, including positive reinforcement for tasks done well
- Suggest areas for improvement and provide access to resources, training ideas or mentoring schemes that could help
- Encourage honest feedback from the employee. Is there specific training they need?

Following an appraisal, employees should be given a copy of their appraisal report so that they can carry out actions and track progress throughout the coming year.

Appraisals are ultimately a conversation. Conversations can either be formal and set within a formal environment, or they could be in the local coffee shop. Wherever you choose, choose somewhere away from the day-to-day environment, away from the wider team and somewhere you can converse clearly and openly.

To summarise, appraisals are important conversations to align employee's outputs, performance and personal development with the business strategy. Appraisals should feel like an effective use of precious time. One of their aims, after all, is to improve business performance. Keep it simple. This includes making forms easy to complete, using straightforward systems and minimising paperwork.

8 Roundabout Sponsorship Changes

A number of local businesses, including some Chamber Members, have been sponsoring the Roundabouts around the Town for a number of years. The Town Council has recently implemented a new business model for their sponsorship and maintenance, which of course is their prerogative, but it has not found favour with everyone. Some existing sponsors have signed up to the new arrangements while others have declined to do so.

The marketing to find local sponsors for the remaining ones is underway by CP Media (a Halifax-based company). You may have noticed that blank green signs are in place on some of the roundabouts currently, awaiting their new sponsorship.

Time will tell if the change is beneficial, but the Council argues this is a not-for-profit proposition; the objectives being:

- More impressive, fully maintained roundabouts (in some cases).
- Consistent, new signage to welcome visitors to the Town and advertise the Sponsors' businesses.
- Sponsors get a better roundabout in their name, maintained for them by a professional local landscaper and they do not need to worry about insurance.
- The Council builds a Community Fund for re-investment in the community with part of the revenues generated. The roundabout sponsors will apparently be involved in the decision making for this.

... and keep up to date with the Chamber

News Items are regularly posted to the Chamber website (www.boroughbridgect.co.uk), we Tweet (@BoroughbridgeCT) and post on Facebook (@BoroughbridgeCT) too.

Make sure you follow and check out these channels for regular updates, useful alerts and information.