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1. From the President

Along with my wife Sue, I was delighted to attend the recent event held by the Boroughbridge Community Charity (BCC) at the Crown Hotel, Boroughbridge on Tuesday 7th October to celebrate its 50 years. It was a gathering of many of the Charity's volunteers along with representatives from several other local organisations and groups.

It was particularly interesting to hear from former Chamber of Trade

Secretary Ian Hick explaining how the BCC started. Some 50 years ago, local GP Dr Hazel, suggested to the Chamber that they might want to consider transporting local residents who found it difficult to get to their GP and Hospital appointments. Several Chamber members did indeed start to provide such a service, free of charge of course. It simply grew from there with the Charity eventually forming and becoming a discrete group, subsequently growing into the much admired organisation it is today. It's gratifying to know that the Chamber played such a key role in those formative days.

Preparations are now well underway for Late-night Christmas Shopping on **Wednesday 3rd December**. You may have noticed that the Christmas lights have recently been installed in and around the town. Some people think it's a bit early for that sort of thing but bear in mind that the contractors supply and fit many of the towns across North Yorkshire so it takes them several weeks to complete all of the installations. The lights will not be switched on until mid/late November. A more detailed update on the event is given later in this issue, and although it's primarily an event to boost trading for town-centre businesses in the run up to Christmas it has certainly become a significant community event on the calendar too. I think it is important to reiterate that any temporary stalls are purely for Community Groups to help boost their profile and raise funds, not for business traders.

Last month I made (yet another!) appeal for new committee members. Unfortunately, that appeal has fallen on deaf ears with no-one stepping forward. There is now a real danger the Chamber will wind up at the AGM in February unless volunteers step forward. It's still not too late so please do get in touch if you're interested.

Finally, we can "look forward" (!) to Rachel Reeves' Budget next month (26th November). With inflation relatively high, government borrowing at record levels and growth pretty much non-existent, all the smart money is



on a round of further tax rises to fund more Public Sector spending, not least because Rachael herself has hinted so. Businesses bore the brunt at last year's budget and it looks like we might need to brace ourselves once again, but individuals may also be hit this time around too. The freeze on income tax allowances and thresholds (which began in 2022 and will last until 2028) means people are paying more tax (and national insurance) by stealth as they drift into higher tax brackets and a higher proportion of income is subject to tax. Reeves has said she will stick to manifesto pledges not to raise the rates of income tax, employee national insurance, VAT and corporation tax. Let's hope they don't turn out to be weasel words, but not everyone is going to be happy. Let's hope it's not just more business bashing!

2. Member News

Recent Chamber member **The Kitchen Room** is now close to opening for business at 33 Fishergate and there is an open invitation to Chamber members to pop along to the opening event. Co-owner Samantha Arsoska writes:

*"Join Hristiyan & Sam at their launch of the opening of **The Kitchen Room** - a new luxury kitchen design studio - on Saturday 22nd November, dropping in between 10am - 4pm. Throughout the day enjoy a seasonal tasting menu and live demos by chef Andrew Dickens — a celebration of locally sourced ingredients and modern British flavours. Look forward to seeing you at 33 Fishergate, Boroughbridge, YO51 9AL."*

3. Business Networking Event Retrospective



At the Chamber's Business Networking Event on **Tuesday 21st October** we had a change of speaker as Glyn Selway was unable to make it and Simon Cave (Business Support Specialist at RTC North) kindly stepped into Glyn's shoes. Simon (at left in the photo) opened by explaining the work of RTC North before handing over to Simon Richardson (at left - founder of

ITogether) who then picked up on the main topic: **"Artificial Intelligence (AI) & Cybersecurity Considerations for Small Businesses."**

Directly or indirectly all businesses are becoming increasingly impacted by these major technology developments with AI, although in its infancy, becoming all pervasive, and there have also been several high-profile Cyber-attacks on prominent businesses over the past few months. It was a very relaxed atmosphere that resulted in much discussion amongst the 10 attendees. As with most technological developments AI offers many



Some of the attendees chatting before the start of the meeting.

opportunities for small businesses, especially in terms of automation and productivity improvements, but there is also a 'dark side' where the unscrupulous may take advantage of the technology for more sinister activities. It was also clear from Simon's chat that we all need to be very mindful of cybersecurity considerations, being vigilant at all times, especially from threats delivered via email. It was a very interactive and informative session.

The final act was to make the prize draw with our two speakers doing the honours. The lucky winners were Isabel Elliott and Karen Farrer (at right). A final thanks to the Crown Hotel for hosting the event.



4. Late-night Christmas Shopping

A further reminder that the annual Late-night Christmas Shopping event, organised each year by the Chamber of Trade committee, will take place on **Wednesday 3rd December** this year. The format will be very similar to previous years, which have invariably been huge successes. We continue to be amazed at the number of people, including lots of families, turning out in support of the event each year.

The evening kicks-off with the official switch-on of the Christmas Tree



Georgey Spanswick (left) and the Mayor Cllr Pauline Phillips (right) will be performing the big Tree-lights switch-on again this year.

Lights in Hall Square at 5:30pm by our returning Guest Celebrity, Georgey Spanswick of Radio York's Breakfast Show, accompanied by the Town's Mayor, Cllr Pauline Phillips. We are fortunate to have more school choirs performing for us



again this year – Boroughbridge Primary, Roecliffe Primary, Kirby Hill Primary and Boroughbridge High. The choirs gave wonderful performances last year and we're very much looking forward to this year's offerings boosted this year by Kirby Hill's first appearance. Boroughbridge Community Choir will also be performing for us in Hall Square – and there may be others! You may even hear a Saxophone Orchestra treating us to some Festive Favourites this year!

Boroughbridge Lions will have Santa and his Sleigh on display, and we'll have a number of stalls from local Community Groups. Mike Collins' Scout group will be in Hall Square with their famous Roast Chestnuts stall, alongside the ever-popular Mulled Wine stall organised again by Boroughbridge Community Charity. Other community stalls include The Library, Grace Church and Kirby Hill Guides. Note that the Kid's Rides will not be with us this year.

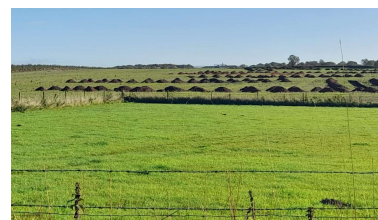
A reminder that the Shop Window Display competition theme this year is "**Winter Wonderland**" which provides a nice broad canvass for creativity, so we're hoping for lots of participating businesses. They will be competing for the much-coveted Trophy, won last year by Boroughbridge

Pharmacy. This year it will again be Georgey and Pauline with the onerous task of judging the competition.

5. Snippets

Sweet & Seasonal will be relocating from 6 Fishergate to 18 St James Square (formerly the Williamsons Estate Agents office) in early November.

We've been reporting on the various proposed **housing developments** in and around Boroughbridge in recent issues of Chamber Chat and we thought we would just share this picture of the Archaeologists now hard at work on the proposed **Gladmans site** north of Hockley Croft where they had identified an ancient Romano-British settlement extending across almost the whole site. There's certainly lots of exploratory digging going on. Either that or there are some huge moles in the area!



A huge thank-you to several Town Councillors who have recently been busy **weeding** and tidying up in the town, in particular around the Fountain in St James square and also the main bridge on the northern approach into Boroughbridge. Councillors Hynes and Metcalfe certainly look the part in their high-vis jackets at right! Their welcome efforts have made quite a difference and having the town looking tidy and attractive is good for business of course!



This also highlights the need for some more individual weeding to be carried out in the town centre. Many businesses do keep the areas in front of their premises weed free, but sadly not all do. As many businesses in the town centre are not Chamber members it's not easy to get the message out, but we would politely ask Chamber members to at least ensure their shop/business fronts remain weed free and tidy to help promote an attractive image for the town to encourage residents and visitors alike to enjoy coming into town.

... and keep up to date with the Chamber

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

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

Footnote: Please note that the various blue email and website links in this document are not live links – i.e. you cannot click on them. To use them simply copy the text and paste into your browser or email client.