

July 2018

## Councillor Question Time

The future of our district and Harrogate town centre is of growing concern to business owners and residents alike, so the Chamber was pleased to welcome Cllr Graham Swift to our July meeting to give a presentation and answer questions from members and visitors.

Cllr Swift (pictured top right) detailed how Harrogate Borough Council has had to reduce its budget to below £17M, primarily through a headcount reduction, as they now receive no government grant. The council managed to save £865,000 in year one by consolidating five offices into HBC's new location.

By encouraging events such as UCI, Tour de Yorkshire and world culture events, HBC are promoting Harrogate as a destination of choice. In addition, they hope the ambitious plans for a Station Gateway to create a 'transport hub' on Station Parade, plus an event venue in Victoria Gardens will draw increased visitors to the town. Harrogate Convention Centre may be restructured to become leaner and more fit for purpose, allowing other areas of the site to be used more diversely, taking the York's Barbican as an example. As other land assets become available, such as Ripon Barracks being sold off, this will present new opportunities for housing and employment.

The Council would like to create a digital hub in Harrogate, but as they're aware that there is a shortage of suitable office space, they're looking at ways to address this. They're also looking at public Wi-Fi, and a 5G pilot scheme.

Cllr Swift said that HBC recognise they

don't get everything right. Rather than taking risks with our money, they're looking at different models of delivery for Council services not running efficiently, such as the Turkish



Baths. The benefits to becoming more commercially-minded would be the generation of greater revenue for services, as well as offering new opportunities to local businesses. Another area where they feel they fall short is communication. The Council believe the recent proposal over changes to how The Stray is used would not have been defeated had they done a more effective job of marketing the many benefits.

Like all other great companies, the Council believe that they should be focus on the one thing that drives their business, which, according to Cllr Swift, "...is to make Harrogate District a progressive and vibrant place to live, work and visit."

Following the presentation, Cllr Swift opened the floor to questions, which you can read on page 3.

The meeting also featured an update on plans for the UCI Road World Championships in September 2019—turn to page 2 for the report.

## UCI Road World Championship

From 21<sup>st</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019, Harrogate will take centre stage for the UCI Road World Championship, as all races will finish in the town. As the logistics behind an event of this type are significant, Andy Hindley, CEO of the organisers Yorkshire 2019 Ltd came along to tell the Chamber a bit more about what we can expect.

Unlike the Tour de France, women's teams also participate in the championship. There are time trials for men and women across three age groups, with competitors as young as 17 years-of-age. There will be seven starting locations covering all four counties in Yorkshire, with all races finishing in Harrogate. No prize money is awarded; it's all about the honour of wearing the rainbow jersey for one year.

It's estimated that as many as 90 countries will be represented, with 1,300 riders taking part, plus officials and clients. Around three million spectators will be roadside spread along the various routes. In addition to the spectators, add in 850 journalists, medical personnel, sponsors, and ancillary staff. It's estimated that 750,000 visitors will come to Harrogate, and unlike other tours, more people will stay in the area for the entire nine days. A fan zone will be erected on the Stray. The BBC will have live coverage of the event, either as a scheduled programme or via the 'red button'. The worldwide TV audience is expected to be 225M. The Harrogate 'brand' will be seen across the globe.

At last year's event, Bergen received a 25M Euro boost from spectators, teams, and media spending. There will be road closures (which will be announced in April 2019) but hopefully these will be managed more effectively than other cycling events in the area, where roads were closed for long periods unnecessarily. The championship should be seen as an opportunity to make Harrogate a focal point, and to get schools, clubs and the wider community involved.

### Q&A: Andy Hindley

#### **Q: Will there be races for people with disabilities?**

A: The idea is to have every class of para-cyclist racing on the first Saturday to kick off the event. We hope to have 250 athletes competing in probably six races.

#### **Q: What about getting people into work during the championship? It's not easy to get in and out of Harrogate at the best of times.**

A: Weekends will be the focus, as fewer spectators come in during the week. Races start away from Harrogate, so getting into work shouldn't be a problem, and as the races finish at 4pm, it shouldn't be too bad getting home. We're looking at more rolling stock, and at the frequency and length of trains in both directions. We don't close the circuit all day, every day. We will work with you to minimise the negative impact. We recognise there will be some security issues, but we hope to mitigate those.

#### **Q: How can business owners get involved with the specific opportunities?**

A: It's understanding what happens with the championships and how you can take advantage, e.g., opening hours, discounts, and other benefits. How do you reach the visitors and get them into your shop?

#### **Q: Our staff work shifts getting out to vulnerable people in the community. What's in place to help us?**

A: We're already working with hospitals and the ambulance service. It's on our radar and it's high priority. We have a chief medical officer.

#### **Q: Will Harrogate be on lockdown for the nine days, or rolling closures? It affects every type of business in Harrogate.**

A: We're not using the entire circuit every day. We won't close a road until

we absolutely have to. Barriers will be placed and removed as necessary. It won't be locked down from 5am to 6pm every day.

**Q: When do you start marketing our town?**

A: Part of our website is dedicated to Yorkshire and can absolutely help you publicise Harrogate. Cyclists generally

have disposable income.

**Q: What's the set up and breakdown schedule? Is there a time frame?**

A: Our team will be in Harrogate for a couple of months before it starts. Some cycling teams do reccy trips. Putting in the infrastructure will start three weeks before the start. Road repairs will be done well before the event.

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**Q&A: Cllr Graham Swift**

**Q: Are we going to get a park and ride facility going?**

A: We've done a number of studies into road movements and the biggest problem is people moving around the town. The park and ride schemes in Whitby and Scarborough all lose money. It needs to be good value. Where would we place it? It's not a cure for congestion problems. We're capable of building events without it.

**Q: Are you going to revisit the Stray Act?**

A: The immediate answer is no. We were very disappointed with the result.

**Q: The Stray is looking a bit unkempt and there are weeds in the town centre. You need to address this.**

A: We spend a lot of your money on our

parks programme and we'll look into this.

**Q: You need to sort the parking programme. You could put underground parking under the Stray. Have you done a study into this?**

A: Our car parks aren't full; they're not even open at night because not enough people want to use them. How do we get more cars off the street and into car parks?

**Q: What's the council doing for affordable housing? Why was the 'right to buy' money sent back to the government?**

A: We're taking over 246 houses. We want to negotiate better with developers to build smaller homes for first-time buyers. We offer 'shared ownership'. The 'right to buy' scheme must be match funded, but we weren't able to use it.

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***Thank you to Marian Farrar and the team at St Aidan's High School for hosting us in the Constance Green Chapel again. For more details about their meeting and event facilities, or opportunities for businesses to engage with the school, call Marian on 01423 885814.***

**August meeting: Business Safari**

Our August meeting is the Business Safari: Team Games and Puzzles. It will see groups of chamber members work together to solve challenges and beat the other teams in the room for the overall prize.

Each round is designed to challenge the teams in different ways, calling on everything from maths skills to logic and even practical abilities. The key is to work together and draw on the different skills within your group.

It takes place on **Monday 6th August** in the Queen's Suite of **Harrogate Convention Centre** (accessed via Entrance 3 on Kings Road). Limited places—book via the website.

Safari nights are usually for members only, but on this occasion we're opening the doors to guests of members too. If you have a contact who would like to attend, please ask them to email [ceo@harrogatechamber.co.uk](mailto:ceo@harrogatechamber.co.uk), and to mention the name of your business.

## Business News

**Harrogate Healthcare Facilities Management** is looking for two non-executive directors to assist with its work for Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust. The company began commercial operation in March 2018 and is keen to hear from anyone with leadership or entrepreneurial skills, with strong local business connections and experience at a senior level in relevant areas, such as logistics or hospitality. A salary of £4,400pa is on offer in exchange for approximately one day's work per month.

For more details, contact Lyn Parsons on at [lyn.parsons@hdft.nhs.uk](mailto:lyn.parsons@hdft.nhs.uk) or 01423 554423.

**Harrogate BID** has recently sent out its latest news to all levy-paying businesses qualifying for a vote on its proposals. If you have not received this information, visit [www.harrogatebid.co.uk](http://www.harrogatebid.co.uk) to find out more. The plans are progressing well for a vote towards the end of this year so please ensure you are fully informed in time to cast your vote.

**Harrogate Dramatic Society** is looking for sponsors for its upcoming season, which includes the world premiere of a play about the women's suffrage movement. If your business could support the group, or you'd like more information

about advertising in brochures (20% discount for chamber members), get in touch via the website: [www.hds-online.co.uk/contact-us/](http://www.hds-online.co.uk/contact-us/) Please mention Chamber 18 in the subject.

It may still be July, but the annual campaign to raise funds for the **Christmas lights in Harrogate** gets under way in just few weeks. The team of volunteers from Harrogate at Christmas needs to raise in the region of £30,000 to light up the town centre and draw visitors to town in a vital trading period for local shops, restaurants, cafes and more.

The launch date is on **Friday 7th September**, when Stray FM will host **How Big Is Your Bauble?**, a fundraising day which sees all donors allowed to get on air and give a plug to their business in exchange for their contribution. Lots of chamber members take part every year; please consider chipping in again, or even for the first time. Visit [www.harrogateatchristmas.org](http://www.harrogateatchristmas.org).

Don't forget—**Harrogate Christmas Market** takes place from Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th November with a focus on Yorkshire products and produce. If you'd like to take a stall, or support in another way such as volunteering as a Market Maker, find more details at [www.harrogatechristmasmarket.org](http://www.harrogatechristmasmarket.org).

## New members

Welcome to the following businesses, which have all joined us in the last month. You can find their full details on the Directory page of our website, or introduce yourself if you see them at an upcoming meeting.

### Claro Court Business Centre

Chris Robbins  
[www.ccbc.co.uk](http://www.ccbc.co.uk)  
01423 527827

### Eneas Investment Ltd

Helen McDevitt  
01423 7704373

### Harrogate BID Ltd

John Fox  
[www.harrogatebid.co.uk](http://www.harrogatebid.co.uk)  
01423 540541

### Kettlesing Gin Ltd

Richard Thompson  
[www.singgin.com](http://www.singgin.com)  
07944 065559

### Simon Benn Ltd

Simon Benn  
[www.simonbenn.co.uk](http://www.simonbenn.co.uk)  
01423 359379

### The Vicarage

Robin Craven-Griffiths  
[www.thevicarageharrogate.com](http://www.thevicarageharrogate.com)  
07909 566586