

February 2018

Employment for the Future

Our February meeting was an opportunity to focus on employment - and specifically, to look at growing a team in new ways.

Simon Gregory from GPS Return spoke about the advantages of employing parents returning to work after a career break.

Both mums and dads often take several years out to look after their children when young. Once they decide to return to work, they can struggle to find the right position to suit them, despite having extensive skills and experience.

Simon said he deals with many businesses which are insistent that they want a full-time person to fill a senior

role, and that taking on a returning parent is a risk. However, he shared statistics showing that part-time employees (anything up to 35 hours per week) are more productive and take fewer days off sick than their full-time counterparts.

He referred to a previous client who had struggled to recruit for a marketing position. The client could only pay £25,000 so ended up taking on a graduate, who did not last. The receptionist was then given the marketing work, but it did not work out. Finally, the client spoke to Simon, who persuaded him to try a returning parent working part-time.

Continued on p2

Congratulations

Our transport spokesman and former chief executive, Brian Dunsby, has just returned from Buckingham Palace, where he collected his OBE from Prince Charles.

It was given in recognition of his hard work for the businesses of Harrogate and beyond, from his 14 years' voluntary service at the helm of the chamber to his efforts to improve connectivity by road, rail and air, which continue today.

Brian is also the driving force behind Yorkshire Business Market and Harrogate Christmas Market. Through all this, he is supported by his long-suffering (his words!) wife Beryl, and long-serving PA Maggie Hall, both of whom joined him for the investiture, along with former chamber president Mark Lancaster.



The candidate was a very experienced marketing professional who had had a high-flying career with leading companies. She had taken time out after having children, but was now ready to return to work. The match worked out perfectly and the client found the candidate was more than able to do all the work he required while still working flexible part-time hours to suit her.

The second speaker was Steve Yardley from Hull College and Harrogate College. With many years' experience in workplace training, he shared the latest news on apprenticeships.

The clear benefit to business is that, in many cases, the government funds most if not all of the training element of the scheme and the business only has to pay the apprentice's wages. For apprentices aged between 16 and 18, the government fully funds the training,

while for those aged 19 and over, it funds 90% of the training. The training provider would take care of all of the admin to set up the role, so the employer would only need to focus on finding the right apprentice and ensuring they got the support needed to make progress.

Apprenticeships are not just for young people. Steve explained that while the youngest people on apprenticeships through the college at present are aged 16, the oldest is 67.

Chamber members gave useful examples of how apprenticeships have worked in their businesses, as well as how they have employed parents and others returning to work after a career break.

To find out more about GPS Return or Harrogate College, visit the directory page of our website where you'll find their contact details and web addresses.

Members' Forum

The Planet Jupiter Gin Festival at the Cedar Court Hotel is offering 25% off tickets to chamber members. Visit www.planetjuniper.co.uk and enter CHAM25 at the checkout. The event takes place on Friday 9th and Saturday 10th March, with a VIP option available on the Friday.

Synergy Automotive is working with Welcome to Yorkshire to encourage more people to get fit by cycling. The company is accepting donations of used bikes at its Hornbeam Park office to create a Bike Library through Yorkshire Bank. Bikes can be donated until 23rd March. www.synergyautomotive.co.uk

Xi Comms is supporting Saint Michael's Hospice by making a donation for every customer who transfers their business connectivity to them. Any business with an HG postcode using broadband, fixed telephone lines or mobile phones can benefit from their advice—and assist Saint Michael's in the process. Details on their new website, recently created by fellow chamber members Design by

Gobo: www.xicomms.com

Harrogate Golf Club is offering 14 months' membership for the price of 12, as well as free membership to juniors up to the age of 12, and great prices for those aged 13-21. The young adult membership has been extended to include anyone up to 35. For details, visit www.harrogate-gc.co.uk

DSC Chartered Accountants runs a series called the Business Development Forums, bringing together business owners and experts to discuss relevant topics and support each other. The next event will be Improving Productivity in the Workplace, with two sessions to choose from: Friday 23rd February and Friday 2nd March. Both run from 7.45-10am at the Old Swan Hotel. www.dscca.com

Steve Pepper Training Associates is offering a discount of £50 to chamber members booking on his upcoming Level 4 Food Safety courses. www.steve-pepper.co.uk

Business news

Business Awards

The **Harrogate Advertiser** Business Awards are open for entries until noon on Monday 19th February. The chamber sponsors the Best Small Business category, so please consider entering if you meet the criteria. We would also recommend looking through all the categories and submitting an entry for one or more even if you don't fit the Best Small Business requirements—it's fantastic free publicity and the awards night is always a great celebration of the best of local business. For details, visit www.jpeventsnorth.co.uk/harrogate/business-awards.

Non-exec directors

Harrogate & District NHS Foundation Trust is looking for two non-executive directors for its board. Applications are sought from people with experience of partnership working. One post is available from May, the other from autumn. Both would require around five

days per month and offer £13,000 per year. Applications close on 23rd February. www.hdft.nhs.uk

Heathrow flights

Businesses using the direct flights from Leeds-Bradford Airport to Heathrow have been disappointed to hear that British Airlines is planning to reduce the number of flights to just 10 per week each way. The revised timetable will not be convenient for anyone planning to travel for an early meeting in London. If this change affects your business, email transport@harrogatechamber.co.uk.

Yorkshire Business Market

The annual Yorkshire Business Market takes place at Pavilions of Harrogate on Monday 30th April. Stands start from £395+VAT and give you the opportunity to promote your business to around 1,000 business leaders in one day. www.yorkshirebusinessmarket.co.uk

March meeting: Digital & Cyber Crime

The next meeting on our calendar will be on Monday 12th March, at Rudding Park. The topic will be Digital and Cyber Crime and we'll have experts on hand to advise on the latest threats, as well as the best ways to protect your business.

There are very few businesses these days which do not rely, to a greater or lesser extent, on digital connectivity. Whether it's internal emails, the company website or more bespoke online software, many businesses would struggle to cope if they were a victim of cyber crime. Yet many businesses have not

taken even the basic steps to protect themselves against attack.

If you would like to know more about keeping your business safe online, sign up to our March meeting. Doors open at 5.30pm for informal networking, followed by the business from 6.15pm.

As usual, it's free for members to attend, and guests are welcome. First-time visitors are invited free of charge, or £15 for returning visitors.

Please register in advance on our website, www.harrogatechamber.co.uk.

New chamber members

The following organisations joined us in the last month. Full details can be found on the directory page of our website.

Harrogate Skills 4 Living Centre

Haydn Moorby-Davies
www.hs4lc.org.uk
01423 593719

Zero Carbon Harrogate

Jemima Parker
www.zerocarbonharrogate.org.uk
01423 569121