

# HDC Business Review

HARROGATE DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Promoting Harrogate business —The latest news from your chamber

December 2016

## Should the Stray Act be amended?

The public and business community will decide whether use of the Stray should be extended through an amendment to the Stray Act.

Nigel Avison, director of economy and culture at Harrogate Borough Council, came to our December meeting to explain the background to the current consultation and encourage as many individuals and businesses as possible to take part.

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## Airport rail halt given council backing

A proposal put forward by Harrogate Chamber five years ago is set to be adopted by Leeds City Council. The authority has included a parkway station on the Harrogate railway line in its plans for future development.

The station would serve Leeds Bradford Airport via a shuttle bus, as well as offering an extra option to commuters. Chamber transport spokesman and former chief executive Brian Dunsby welcomed the announcement.

## January meeting: Improving Harrogate

At our January meeting, we will be looking at ways to improve Harrogate to benefit businesses. One of the key discussions will be about how projects can be funded, and schemes which have been used to great effect elsewhere in the UK.

In a number of ways, towns and cities elsewhere have been able to make changes for their collective benefit. Projects which have been funded include Christmas lights, new signage, improvements to the shopping environment, and many more.

Our meeting on Monday 9th January will see representatives of other areas

explain what they have done in their towns and cities, and look at the benefits businesses might want to see brought to Harrogate.

Projects like this always benefit from being led by, or having significant input from, local businesses, so we are keen for all our members and guests to hear about the possibilities and give their views on what might be needed.

The meeting is at the Old Swan Hotel on Monday 9th January from 5.30pm. It is open to business guests, so please invite your contacts. Members and guests can register to attend on our website.

**Harrogate District Chamber of Commerce**

[www.harrogatechamber.co.uk](http://www.harrogatechamber.co.uk) — 01423 501988

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## **Traffic & Transport**

He said the current restrictions of the Stray Act mean that it can only be "enclosed" (ie parts of it in use for an event) for 35 days per year. This has to include all set-up and take-down days so, for example, Harrogate Christmas Market, which is open for four days, takes up eight days of this allowance—almost a quarter just for one short event.

There are also restrictions on the size of the land that may be enclosed for an event: just 3.5ha. Again, the Christmas Market is an example of an event that is at this size and cannot be any larger. The Tour de France, by comparison, was 15ha, but that was only allowed by special permission from Parliament.

While special permission can be granted for unusual events, the Department for Communities and Local Government has indicated it does not wish to keep granting special licences and that HBC must seek a more permanent solution if the Stray is going to be used more.

There are also restrictions on the type of event permitted. They must be for public entertainment or raise money for charitable purposes. Even the Christmas market is on the edge of what is permissible,

despite raising money for the Christmas lights and other events and causes, because they are not charities.

The council has not been permitted by the Duchy of Lancaster to put forward a proposal, but only to ask the public what they would like to see changed in the Act. However, Mr Avison indicated the council has an upper limit in mind for the number of days the Stray could be "enclosed" and it would not seek to go above that. As an example, he said the public might support expanding use of the Stray to 50 days from the current 35—a relatively small increase.

Whatever happens, there is no question of building on or reducing the size of the Stray. It remains a gift of 200 acres to the people of Harrogate and that will not be changed.

As a chamber, we want to continue to represent the views of our members. We have a short survey on our website which we are encouraging all members to complete, to enable us to do this. You will find the questionnaire at [www.harrogatechamber.co.uk/questionnaire](http://www.harrogatechamber.co.uk/questionnaire) and it will be open until Friday 13th January at 5pm.

## **New Members**

Welcome to the following businesses, which have joined us in the last month:

### **Bee Social Marketing**

John Ranby  
[www.beesocialmarketing.co.uk](http://www.beesocialmarketing.co.uk)  
01423 297009

### **Fun Training for Results**

Sally Roberts  
[www.funtrainingforresults.com](http://www.funtrainingforresults.com)  
07432 545692

### **Limelight HR**

Sally Bendtson  
[www.limelighthr.co.uk](http://www.limelighthr.co.uk)  
07939 622278

### **Marlow IP Recruitment**

Graham Marlow  
[www.marlowiprecruit.com](http://www.marlowiprecruit.com)  
01423 522838