

The Tour de Yorkshire: How can your business benefit?

The Tour de Yorkshire was top of the agenda at our April meeting, when Welcome to Yorkshire joined us at Ridding Park to discuss all their plans for the upcoming three-day event at the end of April.

Peter Dodd explained that the second day is the one which will affect our members directly, running from Tadcaster our into the Dales before finishing in Harrogate. As with the Tour de France in 2014, the finishing line will be on West Park, with the spring coming up Parliament Street.

As three years ago, this is a great opportunity to raise the profile of the Harrogate district with a major televised sporting event. Welcome to Yorkshire provides media packs to journalists, so they can share stories and history about local landmarks, organisations and businesses with their viewers.

Both the women's and men's races will conclude here in the morning and the afternoon respectively, which means the road will be closed for most of the day. However, the rest of the route will be



Crowds enjoying the 2016 Tour de Yorkshire. *Picture: Welcome to Yorkshire/SWPix.com.*

subject to a rolling road block, so there should be much less disruption than in 2014.

James Gilroy from NYCC said the whole scale of the event is smaller, with a publicity caravan of just 15-20 vehicles compared to the 160 of the Tour de France. This enables a much shorter period of closures for most of the route.

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April meeting: Business Safari

Our famous Business Safari returns in April, offering members the chance to meet and get to know up to 48 new contacts in one night. This 'speed networking' event has been hugely popular since its inception and demand is always high, so book your place now to avoid missing out!

It takes place at the Cairn Hotel on Monday 10th April. A buffet will be available from 5.30pm, with the Safari beginning at 6pm. There will be a break for refreshments in the middle, before the final rounds begin.

To book, visit our website and click on the link on the home page, then fill in your details.

PLEASE NOTE: Places are limited for this event and we usually have a waiting list. It is therefore frustrating when people who have booked fail to turn up, meaning someone who was keen to attend misses out. Please tell us if you book and then find you can't make it—we may be able to fill your place even at very late notice. Thank you.

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Diversions will be in place to direct traffic around the route, and bus companies are being consulted to establish alternative routes.

A new one-way system will be set up around Albert Street and Raglan Street, while controls around Tower Street will be changed, to enable vehicles to get in and out of the town centre without using Parliament Street or West Park. The closures will be much less extensive than for the Tour de France and the clear message will be that Harrogate is open for business.

There will be disruption, and much of it is to ensure safety. This was emphasised by Sgt Nick Widdowson from North Yorkshire Police, who said security must be a priority to keep both participants and the public safe. The aim is to ensure that, no matter where people go, they have a consistently safe and enjoyable experience.

Full details of timings and road closures are available on the NYCC website at www.northyorks.gov.uk/tour.

In Harrogate, there will be a spectator zone on West Park Stray, with big screens and areas for performances by local acts. The zone is open from 5-10pm on Friday 28th April, 9.30am-10pm on Saturday 29th April, and 10am-6pm on the Sunday. It will show all of the stages on big screens.

This is an ideal chance for businesses to get involved, with stands around the area. The deadline for applications passed shortly after the meeting, on Friday 17th March, but we hope to see some chamber members represented in the fan zone.

Q&A

Mike Procter: Is there a lack of involvement from businesses and organisations and do you need more information about what they're doing for you to pass on to the media?

PD: Every year we are overwhelmed by the things the business community and other partnerships have done. This year is no exception. We have the blue and yellow branding which businesses can engage with too. We have plenty of stories to share, but we are always keen to hear about more.

Tony Handley: The Spotty House (made famous in the Tour de France when the white house was covered in red polka dots) will be blue and yellow this year. We have had visitors from China, America and across Europe and they all say they have seen it on TV. It is incredible. Those films are repeated and it becomes a destination. What cycling has done for Yorkshire, and what Welcome to Yorkshire has done, is amazing.

Sandra Doherty: This is our opportunity to be known as a welcoming town. When I was in New York, I was standing at a crossroads looking lost, and someone came up to help give me directions. It makes a real difference to how a place is perceived.

Michael Newby: Visit Harrogate is also working hard to promote the area, the event and local businesses. There is a new guide going out to TICs soon with the best places to see the race and things to do in the area. The website is being filled with suggestions too—we want it to be the place to find local information about everything that's happening. Make sure Visit Harrogate has the details of anything you're planning.

Members' Forum

Norse kickstarter

Paul Rawlinson and the team at Norse would like to thank everyone who supported them with the kickstarter. They raised their target of £20,000 in less than 100 hours and have now passed that, so the new venue is set to open in early April. Bookings are open now.

Governors wanted

Harrogate Ladies' College is seeking new governors to join its board. Experience of being a

governor is not necessary, but professional skills would be an advantage. Call 01423 504543 for more details.

Got news to share?

Chamber members are welcome to send their news to us to be shared on our website—email info@harrogatechamber.co.uk. You can also announce your news during Members' Forum at our monthly meetings, or ask us to do so if you can't make it.

Chamber News

Town Centre Focus Group

Mike Procter is continuing to meet local businesses and individuals who are interested in the prospect of a BID (Business Improvement District) for Harrogate, as discussed at our January meeting. This is a way of raising funds to support particular projects, which are decided on by those who contribute. Contact Mike (mike.procter@mprocter.co.uk) if you would like to find out more.

Traffic and Transport Focus Group

The promised additional train services between Harrogate and Leeds are set to arrive by the end of this year, bringing services to every 15 minutes. However, the extra services are planned as 'express' trains, only stopping at Leeds, Horsforth and Harrogate. This misses out Hornbeam Park, the second busiest station on the route and a vital access point for local residents and businesses. The chamber's focus group is objecting in strong terms and asking for this stop to be added. If your business is affected, let us know: transport@harrogatechamber.co.uk.

The parkway station proposal for Leeds Bradford Airport first made by Harrogate Chamber some years ago has now been adopted by Leeds City Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority and the airport itself. An application has been submitted. It would be a great benefit to local businesses and residents—more so than another plan to create a tramway from Leeds city centre.

Join the Chamber Management Group

We are seeking additional volunteers to join the chamber Management Group, as some existing members end their terms at the AGM in May. Anyone who has been in the chamber for two years and regularly attends meetings is eligible to stand.

Committee meetings are once a quarter over lunch, and being part of the group gives you a chance to shape the future of the chamber for all businesses in the district.

If you would like to be considered, or if you would like to nominate a fellow member, please email details in confidence to ceo@harrogatechamber.co.uk.

Dates for Your Diary

Monday 24th April—Yorkshire Business Market at Pavilions of Harrogate. It attracts more than 1,000 visitors in one day, so is a great opportunity to boost your profile, establish numerous new contacts in one day, or launch a new product or service. There are a handful of stalls still available in each size, starting from just £250+VAT for a start-up or £350+VAT for an established business. Visit www.yorkshirebusinessmarket.org for details and to book your place.

Monday 8th May—AGM and Local Plan meeting. Cedar Court Hotel. Hear the latest news about the Local Plan from Harrogate Borough Council, including plans for housing and business developments. We will also hold our AGM at this meeting.

New members

Welcome to the following businesses, which have all joined us in the last two months:

Acanthus Contract Furniture

Chris Francis
07795 593777
www.acanthusfurniture.com

Green Ink Cartridges

Chris White
01423 208033
www.greeninkcartridges.co.uk

iScanGo

Ben Thompson
07921453794
www.iscango.com

St Wildfrid's Church Harrogate

Rebecca Oliver
01423 504629
www.stwilfrid.org

Stuart James Financial Solutions

Shelley Borchard
07791 240505
www.sj-fs.co.uk