



Q GUILD

Executive Committee Meeting

Dean Court Hotel, York, Wednesday 3rd February 2016 at 11.00am

Present: Mark Turnbull (Chair), Greg Hull, Brindon Addy, Robert Jones, David Lishman, Martin Player, Gary Chadwick, Gordon Newlands (Guild Manager), Douglas Scott (minutes).

Apologies: Philip Cranston, John Davidson, Andrew Edmonds, Mike Richardson.

Minutes of last meeting held on 16th September 2015

These were agreed

Matters arising

Revised Guide for Regional Chairmen had been issued but will be repeated.

Chairman's Comments

Very impressed by the turnouts at every regions recent AGMs. He was delighted with the buzz and positive nature of these meetings.

Correspondence

We have received letters of resignation from Etheringtons in Cornwall and Andrew Belcher of Andrews Butchers in East.

Finance

DS gave a summary of the cash balances. The Guild had finished 2013 with a balance of £61,000, 2014 with £41,000 and 2015 with £53,000. The finances for 2015 showed a surplus of £10,000. Hopefully this will be the figure that remains after the audit of the annual accounts and depreciation, prepayments and opening balances are taken into consideration. The executive were happy with the proposed budget and noted that there was copy within the budget to fund the ten products of the month.

Membership Update

There are currently 107 members of the Guild.

The newest member in December 2015 was Mearns T McCaskie in Wemyss Bay. Two applicants failed audits and have work to do before they will be ready for audit again. Applications for membership have come in from Grasmere Farm near Peterborough and also Grierson Butchers, Castle Douglas. We are awaiting dates from Acoura to progress with pre-audits but Grasmere has been set for 22nd February.

Two prospective members in the pipeline - Huntley at Preston, Country Harvest near Ilkley.

Membership proforma's were sent out to all members in December asking for an update of contact details, address, email address etc in order that we can update our records. To date 50 have been returned.

Membership certificates for those members who have paid their subscription for this year will be sent out in the next week.

15 branch shops have been invited to take up the offer to join at a fee of £500. The initial intake has been good and the Guild Manager will pursue the others.

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Corporate Membership

After the recent membership of Theo's Food Company and Phil Webber Meat Ltd, XL Refrigerators have also joined as a Corporate member at the end of December 2015.

Two prospective members in the pipeline - Smith Packaging and Marsden Group in Rotherham.

Membership information has also been sent to Middleton Foods and Datos.

Corporate membership currently stands at 39. The Executive agreed that increasing corporate membership was in the interest of the Guild. It was pointed out that it regional chairman should be sensitive to conflicts of interest when including corporates at meetings.

There has been an application request from Bryce Lawson of McMurchie Meats which is just under 10 miles from existing member Coates at Coxhoe. An objection was received from Michael Snowball on behalf of Coates Butchers. It was agreed by the Executive Committee that the proximity rule would not apply here since they are almost ten miles.

It was proposed that where a member has not attended at least two regional meetings per year as required by Quality Standard rule 6.1.3 then they should lose their rights of objecting to a new applicant.

Technical Advisory Committee

MT is still chairman of TAC. Committee includes Kathryn Nicholson and Simon Osborne. Steps to Quality Manual has been updated with recent amendments regarding inspections. The Executive agreed that they were happy with the existing membership and that TAC chairman should attend Executive meetings. TAC would be expected to convene two meetings per year with a written report sent to Guild Manager. GN said that a system would be set up to request and file each member's most recent local authority Food Hygiene report.

The Executive discussed the issue of six members who did not meet the Guild's Quality Standards. A draft letter was tabled and the content was approved.

Election of officers and directors

Chairman: Mark Turnbull, proposed by Brindon Addy, seconded by David Lishman.

Vice Chairman: David Lishman, proposed by Brindon Addy, seconded by David Lishman.

Guild Manager's Report

Since the last executive meeting in September there has been a huge amount of work going on in the Q Guild.

Smithfield Awards in November were held in a new venue for the Q Guild- Ironmongers Hall in London. This proved to be a very successful venue and the Ironmongers' staff went above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that we were happy with the event. Members all agreed that the event was one of the best attended and enjoyed. Monica Galetti was fresh and modern and we could not have hit her profile at the most perfect time. She spent time with the membership and tasted some of our Award winning products before the event and gave excellent feedback and in her own words stated- "I cannot believe that butchers produce all these good products."

The lunch ended with the obligatory drink at the Smithfield pub where many happy memories are shared over a pint.

Keurslager also paid a visit to Scotland in November to decide what the feel and look of the Q Guild website looked and felt like. This was a good meeting.

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National Chairman: Mark Turnbull and National Vice Chairman: David Lishman



December

I had decided to take some time off in December as I had created a huge amount of TOIL (time off in lieu) and figured that members did not wish to see me or hear from me. However, I was involved late on in December with the Copas scenario. Several Members had contacted me to discuss their displeasure at Copas placing in every Turkey box a coupon or 20% off voucher for their Thoughtful Producer Chickens. This left members furious and rightly aggrieved as this was driving sales to Copas own website where the customer could order and purchase. I phoned the account manager Debbie to voice my concerns and she to be fair to her, was only informed of this voucher/coupon when a member phoned and told her. Management agreed that a letter after the Regional AGM's had taken place would be sent to Copas to express our concern. Personally given the outrage that it caused for several members, I think Copas will have a few less customers. Letter sent 01/02/2016

January.

The AGM's of all the Regions have taken place and a PowerPoint presentation of the Keurslager system was presented to the membership. Attendance by members was probably better than for a long time with attendances averaging 18 at each meeting. Calendar of Events was populated at each regional meeting and will be sent to the corporate members and the membership when ready. Timeline received from Keurslager and one that I will work to over the coming weeks.

Smithfield Awards.

I have met with the agent that deals with the celebrities and have discussed several options. The bottom line is that we do not have enough in the budget to attract extremely high profile names. For example:- James Martin- £25K, Gordon Ramsay- £20K, Alex Ferguson (Manchester United coach) - £100K, Raymond Blanc- £10K.

However, we discussed several names that potentially could be in budget:- Tom Kerridge, Aldo Zilli, Marcus Wareing, John Torode, Lisa Faulkner, Tom Kitchin, Tom Parker-Bowles.

He did say that because food was so popular now and on TV so much, the prices would increase year on year. We would eventually be looking at hiring food writers for our budget. I do not think that this is what we should be exploring since they do not provide enough profile.

Smithfield Judging

The judging panel will be refreshed in 2016 to avoid potential conflicts of interests. Rufus Carter from Patchwork Pate was extremely knowledgeable and has made a few suggestions to enhance our judging process and Douglas Scott and myself will work on this over the coming months.

Keurslager.

The PowerPoint has been displayed to the membership and will now be sent to the members via a Dropbox link. We have asked for a show of hands at each meeting and this has been well received. To date we have had 41 businesses express an interest in the system. The first 5 members will progress onto the system in April:- Gary Chadwick, John Davidson, Mark Turnbull, David Lishman, Frank Parker

This gives us a geographical spread where members could visit and see the system first hand. I am working on the Q Guild website every week and have been sending

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information to Keuslager for content of the new Q Guild website. Key partners have been contacted and will have a page on the back office of the system. (format still to be sent by Keuslager).

The system is 100% the way forward for the Q Guild. There are still a huge amount of questions to be asked and answered by both members and Keuslager but I am confident that we will stick to timescale.

BBQ Final and Business Conference 2016

After provisionally booking for Belton Woods Hotel, Grantham, Lincolnshire for the 15/16th May this proved to be over budget and far too inflexible. Eastwood Hall, Brinsley near Nottingham has now been booked as the venue.

This will take the format of our key partner training weekending the form of 5 x 2 hour slots of New Products and ideas exclusive to the Q Guild and will also offer exhibitors the chance to sell their products to the attendees.

The Alfresco Chef have kindly agreed to cook the BBQ products off on their BBQ's and also have booked a BBQ chef to demonstrate the art of BBQ cooking.

We hope to have a motivational speaker on the art of customer service deliver his views on what good customer service constitutes. All in all it is looking like another good weekend not to be missed.

New members.

I am continually trying to grow the Guild and have received several names of companies from corporate members and members that they think are good enough to be in the Guild. I have planned several in February and will work hard to visit within 1 month of being informed.

With the Executive Committee's approval six member shops will be informed that their business are not up to quality standard required of the Q Guild. This has been a tough decision to make as the majority of these shops have been long standing members, however, if we wish to grow our business it has to be filled with the correct businesses. It is crucial that we stick to our standards. Steps to Quality manual still exists and inspections will be brought back in if this standard is not adhered to.

Letters to be sent to these members and at the moment we have withheld their memberships for 2016. They will be given a chance to improve or unfortunately their memberships will not be renewed.

NB- it is a requirement of the inspections being dropped that the EHO reports be sent to the office for the attention of the General Manager.

Branch Shop Fees

The management of the Guild felt that to gain more member shops into the Guild that by reducing the fee to branch shops from £750 to £500 it would entice the member to place his branch shop in membership.

19 member businesses were identified that could place their shops in membership. I phoned all the businesses concerned and received positive news that they would all consider placing their shops in membership. I am monitoring the members and will chase them up if they are now reluctant to do so.

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Hygiene Audit Systems.

I am having a nightmare with HAS!! Christine in the office instructed HAS to arrange an audit for Grasmere Farms, one week later when I phoned HAS, they had still not arranged an audit or even contacted their auditor. Grasmere Farms have been desperate to join the Guild and are not happy that this is taking so long.

We have to find a way that cuts this lengthy time from application to membership. If there is a problem with a pre-audit then fair enough, but I personally think that HAS do not really care about our business now. They are part of the Accoura companies which is huge in food service and commercial auditing.

Frustrating for me as I am being instructed to grow the business and I feel that the way we go through the process just now is risking the growth of Q Guild.
Agreed: TAC will consider the options available and report back.

BBQ Regional Heats.

I am in the process of contacting several food bloggers in each area where the heats will take place. I feel that this will gain us more presence on social media and also not be left to corporate members or indeed the members themselves. I think that the bloggers will give us that independent judging and also promote the Q Guild. We do not have enough in the budget to use the same two judges to travel around the country to judge every region, which was suggested by one region. After discussion it was left with regional chairmen to run and judge regional heats in the way they and their members wished.

Guild Manager

I have been contacted by BBC, ITV, Radio 1, Radio 2 and the Trade press over the last 4 months on various topics and have linked each request with a member business. Taken part in surveys with Universities in the UK for retail surveys and have given information to Cambridge University on the ageing of beef. This demonstrates that Q Guild is a growing and respected force to be reckoned with and are being contacted as a point of authority on our Industry.

I continue to work through my workload and on average receiving anything between 50-100 emails every day. (some are rubbish).

Twitter- standing at 2651 and on average gaining 3-5 followers per day.

Facebook- Currently standing at 1107 and is growing at a steady rate. Not as quickly as Twitter but popular none the less. Videos seem to be extremely popular with over 700 views on average.

Instagram- Started Instagram recently and have posted several photographs of member shops.

I have accepted an invitation to be on the National Committee for Great **British Food Fortnight** and look forward to their meeting in London in March. Raymond Blanc chairs the committee and I hope to give the Q Guild as much exposure in this important venture as possible.

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Love British Lamb have also invited me on to their committee to be held in Stoneleigh in February and again I have accepted. Both are major initiatives that we should all be taking part in as Butchers, it is the very essence of the Q Guild that we use British Produce. I will be informing the membership of both these initiatives nearer the time.

Steps to Quality Manual

Following the TAC's agreement this has been updated by the Q Guild Office.

Q Guild Branding- Smithfield

It is an historical ruling that prevented Member shops promoting the Q Guild out with their own or a member Guild shop. This has now changed and Q Guild logo can be used on packaging. Stickers have been produced and the name and address of supplier have been issued to the membership with a copy of logo. There are strict rules and regulations to protect the Q Guild logo and these will be issued in the near future. I see the promotion of the Q Guild logo as a positive move to the members and the first step to the general consumer recognising the Q Guild brand/business.

The Guildsman.

We have given a benefit to the key partners of free advertising in each Guildsman. (3 x per year.) What do the members feel about this magazine? I took the remit from Robin Moule last issue and gathered all the information before sending to him for layout and editing etc. The cost of Robin compiling the whole magazine is too great and one that we cannot afford.

Butcher of the Month-

I compile the Butcher of the Month and send to Mike for web posting. It is a bit of a nightmare to get butchers to answer their emails as well as filling out my questions and sending in photographs.

Hot off the Block-

It really upon information being passed to myself and the office which determines when the E-newsletter is produced. Several companies are good at sending in information like Innovative Food Ingredients. We will send out another reminder for corporate members to use this member contact. However, the last Hot Off The Block opening rate was only 54%. A figure which really has to be increased.

PR

Robin has been placed on a retainer for the Guild at a cost of £875 per month. This includes Smithfield Awards and BBQ Conference and any new member PR. We have the opportunity to look at this contract after 3 months and review accordingly. I think this will give us more value for money.

Conclusion.

Plenty of work to be done and I am trying to juggle a lot of balls in the air at one time. Corporate members and members phone me each and every day to ask questions and gain information. 2016 will be a challenging year ahead but one that I think will be the first stepping stone for the "new Q Guild".

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**2016 Events programme**

Keurslager Trade Show - all Regional Chairman and Vice Chairman have been sent details of the event that includes visit to Versteegen in Rotterdam, Keurslager day at Nijkerk and food tour of Amsterdam.

BBQ Championships and Marketing Conference is arranged for 15/16 May at Eastwood Hall.

Smithfield Awards: GH suggested awards should be presented in the early part of the year so that they have longevity. Executive approved with late January / early February. The meeting considered suggestion from GC that the Smithfield Awards should be rebranded Q Guild Awards, regional champions and open to processors and supermarkets. This was recognised as a good idea in terms of income generation. GC considered cleavers - one to three - would be preferred to Gold, Silver and Bronze. Suggested evening event rather than a lunch. GC suggested that there were opportunities for Q Guild and MT thanked him for raising challenging suggestions. This was fully discussed with view expressed by everyone round the table.

Conclusion:- much for status quo but exploring extension to supermarkets and non members worth pursuing. An evening event had support but would need to gauge effect on attendance.

Agreed that Smithfield Awards could be improved with master of ceremonies, better organisation of photographs, presentation of more than award for one product, correct announcement of product then business and more information for chairman to inform audience about the award winning products and businesses.

Q Guild Digital Platform

Planned Roll Out is on target. The concept was well received at every regional meeting and indications from those attending suggested that currently at least half the membership was interested in participating.

Any other competent business

It was noted that a member who had fallen behind with payments had been offered a payment plan starting in February 2016. It was agreed that should the February payment not be made their membership should be ended.

Date of next Meeting:

Wednesday 22nd June 2016 in York

Meeting closed at 3.30pm

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