



**Minutes of the Midlands Regional Meeting
held at Chase Farm Shop, Roughley, Sutton Coldfield
on Monday 10 October 2016 at 3pm**

Present:

Gordon Newlands, Robert Jones, Nigel Rose, Tony Yorath, Stephen Hewitt, Mark Healey, Gaynor Richards (Walter Smith Fine Foods), Frank & George Parker (F Parkers), Richard, John & David Hawes (Watermoor Meats/Jessie Smiths), Paul Swain (Owen Taylor Butchers Ltd), Arthur Wright (C N Wright Butchers), Steve Robinson (Robinson Butchers & Delicatessen), Danny Lidgate (Lidgates Butchers - Guest from Southern region), Julie Henshaw (A E Chambers Ltd), Sheila Lane & Will Bovell (Grasmere Farm), Nick McAndrew (Chase Farm shop)

Corporate Members:

Mike Warmer & Paul Beaman (Dalziel Ltd), Keith Burke & Paul Murthar (Bizerba), Simon Nicholson & Steve Jones (Dalesman)

Prior to the meeting members were able to take a short tour of the recently refurbished Chase Farm Butchery. A splendid lunch was then provided by Chase Farm restaurant.

1. Introduction & Welcome

Rob Jones welcomed members and a warm welcome was extended to Julie Henshaw who has moved from Eastern region to Midlands region. Nick McAndrews and his staff were thanked for providing a first class lunch and the venue for the meeting. Rob offered members the opportunity to use their driver to transport entries to Glasgow for the Smithfield Awards.

2. Apologies:

Allan Bennett, Nigel Poxon, Scott Barlow

3. Minutes of Last Meeting and Matters Arising

Minutes of the last meeting had been circulated and there were no matters arising therefrom.

4. Manager's Report - Gordon Newlands

Membership currently stands at 121 a growth of 12.4% with 42 corporate members a growth of 20%. A decision had been taken at Executive/management level to **close** corporate membership. There are 5/6 businesses who would like to join the Guild in the New Year. Emphasis was placed on the importance of driving regional meetings forward and making all members and corporate members aware of the date/time/venues of each region's meetings to encourage interaction.

5. Executive Report

The Guild has been busy organising the Smithfield Awards with 64 businesses entering and 622 products to judge. 43 judges consisting of food bloggers, food writers, butchery experts and consumers. Judging will take place on 19th, 20th October with the Awards Presentation being held on 1st February 2017 at Ironmongers Hall, London. Thereby giving a ten month marketing period for members.

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High profile celebrity, Tom Parker-Bowles, will be presenting the awards and members present thought him to be a good choice.

Gold award certificates will be withheld if members fail to submit their recipes to the Guild as requested since they will be used in the 100 recipes book the Guild are producing to be released to members in January 2017 and subsequent years.

Smithfield award stickers will be issued following awards - a good promotion tool for members and the Guild.

Signed agreements had been attained from six non Guild businesses ordered to stop using the Guild livery. Litigation to defend the action had cost some £6,000 but it did defend the rights of other members.

Regional surveys regarding trade were ongoing.

Product of the Month - Paul Swain reported the Spatchcock Chicken had been very good with profitable spin-offs since they put their own stamp on the product. In the main members reported varying degrees of success.

Gordon asked members to submit any product ideas to him for this purpose.

The new corporate Q Guild website is underway. A UK based provider, Prototype Creative, is working on the website. A form from them will be sent to members to populate with their details for the contact listings on the website. Please complete this and return as soon as possible. The 2nd stage will enable POS to be customised to individual shops. If any member has any problems with their entries on the website then please contact Gordon Newlands.

6. TAC Report

Each new member will have one new Audit. Thereafter EHO reports together with Star ratings should be submitted to the Guild. A minimum of 4 stars is required or suspension from the Guild will be administered.

Hygiene standards have been revised to comply with current legislation by an independent food consultant with experience in the meat industry.

The Hygiene & Quality manual will be re-issued in January 2017. The new 2017 folder supersedes all Manuals. Any manuals currently held should be disposed of and the new 2017 folder will be the bible and Hygiene & Quality manual for members to use.

An Intellectual Property Lawyer had been engaged regarding Terms and Conditions in connection with counter-claims.

A Young Managers' Club has been planned for February 2017. This will be in the form of a two-day course with visits to relevant shops in London. The course will be confined to approx. 20 no. places. Gordon emphasised that this would be a stringently controlled sound learning experience. Please advise Gordon if you have any candidates for a place on the course.

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National Tour - proposed during March 2017 visiting France to view ten outstanding butchers' shops in Paris.

7. Members Two Minute Presentation - General & Christmas Planning

Julie Henshaw - A E Chambers Ltd

Currently purchasing Isle of Man beef, good quality & price with the spec. they require. Oven-ready individual meals and gluten free sausage selling well. Will be promoting gluten free sausage during National Sausage Week. 30 no. Xmas Hampers already ordered. A payment plan for Hamper purchasing is available and Hampers are delivered to customers.

Danny Lidgate - Lidgates Butchers (guest from Southern region)

Their High Street shop had experienced an 8 month refurbishment closure - they had lost some trade but now back to where they should be. Use AMAZON for on-line business. Undertakes motorbike deliveries between 5-7pm picking up on the "young professional" market in London.

Mark Healey - Walter Smith Fine Foods - Melbicks

The Garden centre shop had been quiet during summer with a poor BBQ trade but sold more bulk meat from flat deck refrigeration unit. Topside beef, whole gammons and stuffed boneless turkey breast were already being purchased for freezing down for the festive season.

Stephen Hewitt - Walter Smith Fine Foods - Albrighton shop

Village shop with little passing trade. Outside orders have been good, selling a large quantity of cooked hams each day. Busy with product preparation selling at least 200 pork pies per week. Preparation of pork pies and pigs in blankets for Xmas has commenced. Started taking orders for Xmas this week.

Nigel Rose - Walter Smith Fine Foods (Area Manager)

Visits many garden centres each week and has noticed sales have been fantastic midweek but not so good at weekends - the weather playing its part in this. Summer eating range includes flavoured meats, kitchen ready products, ready meals: Lasagne, Cottage Pie and Shepherd's Pie are big sellers. Some garden centres were selling 300/400 pork pies per week, this in part he feels is due to the "Great Taste Award" stickers that are displayed on the pies and give them a great deal of kudos and credibility especially as the industry gets tougher.

Nick McAndrews - Chase Farm

A good year seeing growth since new area of shop opened. Pleased with new automatic burger and meatball machine which greatly increases production output and will be used for Xmas stuffing ball manufacture. Pushing both Ambient and Fresh Meat Hampers. Steam pressure cooked prepared vegetables selling well.

Arthur Wright - CN Wright Butchers

Village shop on the roadside so relying on regular customers. Good trade on par with last year. Found every Product of the Month good with benefits from add-ons. Xmas orders coming in. Produced Hampers for the first time last year and will be doing them again.

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Paul Swain - Owen Taylors Ltd

Small shop on main road, relying on local people and visitors. BBQ season not as good as last year. Tried kitchen ready products, some work, some don't. Pleased with Product of the Month. Three Xmas Hampers on offer: Whole bird sales dropped last year so putting a whole bird into the Hampers, costing £45-£65-£100. Trade generally been ok.

Richard Hawes (Jessie Smiths) - Watermoor Meats

Richard due to retire but his two sons will be taking over. They have moved to a Farm shop with new premises and specialist equipment. The business is evolving. Their large self-service multi deck counter selling pre-packed meat is proving extremely popular with young people whilst older customers tend to head to the traditional butchery section. Selling dry-aged beef at one price and vac-packed at another is difficult to maintain and they are trying to stick to the premier end of the market leaving the economy range to the supermarkets.

Steve Robinson - Robinson Butchers & Delicatessen

Suburban shop in village of changing aspects which has resulted in amendment in opening times to suit footfall.

Following Xmas will be opening a food service section for 30 no. covers.

Steve brought along a brochure to show members which he created himself last year at very little expense.

Last week for the first time in three months the shop hit last year's figures. They are selling a lot of cooked food - beef bourgignon, cauliflower cheese, root vegetables etc for customers to pick up. Fresh meat proving harder to sell.

Frank Parker - F Parkers

Shop located outskirts of declining town centre. 5 years ago had shop refit. Hot food section mega busy. Ready meals introduced and sell out every Saturday. At Xmas they sell boxed Caldicott turkeys which keep well and reduce workload. Started prepping Pork Pies and freezing down for Xmas. Have invested in an automatic sausage filler making the production of PiBs much easier.

The question of costing pigs in blankets was discussed and Nigel Rose drew members' attention to the cost of supermarket PiBs as a comparison for butchers to work from.

Will Bowell - Grasmere Farm

Have 3 shops based in south Lincolnshire - all different. Summer up and down with midweek better than weekends. Re-launching their website - they do have an online presence. They want to build up an email database. They have market stalls and attend events. Ready-to-go meals successful - a convenience product hitting the spot with customers. Building new unit to help shops out with Christmas prepping work.

Robert Jones - Walter Smith Fine Foods

Has recently opened two new shops (1) Denby, Derbyshire (2) World's End, Aylesbury and reports both shops doing well. Pointed out that whilst opening new shops he finds the Q Guild members a good resource for accessing new types of equipment and ideas.

Gordon Newlands added that the **Guild's Secret Facebook Group** was set up for members to use as a useful resource. You have to be approved to join the Group.

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8. Presentation by Dalziel Ltd - Xmas

Mike Warmer presented Dalziel's new stuffings to make into forcemeat: Smoked Garlic & Rosemary, Spiced Orange & Cinnamon, Apricot & Honey, Cranberry & Pink Lady Apple and a Gluten Free S.O. Recipe was 1 part stuffing : 1 part water : 1 part sausagemeat. Sold in 1 kg packs before the end of October with Special Promotion offer available.

Introduced MRC Winter Warmer Flavaglaze, available in 2kg packs on Special Offer within next couple of weeks. Members sampled cooked product tasters.

9. Presentation by Bizerba

Paul Murthar demonstrated two excellent label printers to members.

10. Presentation by Dalesman

Steve Jones discussed the next Product of the Month and members were given a sample bag of products. Leaflets were available to members regarding the launch of their new Maple Bacon cure.

11. Any Other Business

Steve Robinson explained the method he had used for attaching labels within the steel racks of their deep freezer. Regarding Gluten Free products - within close proximity of the product they had a label stating that "all products made by us are made in premises where gluten and nuts are used" and this seemed to have been accepted rather than placing labels on all packaging.

Frank Parker explained that in view of their having a bakery section they had been advised not to sell gluten free products.

Clarification concerning the new Nutritional Labelling regulations is being sought and Gordon will advise all members as soon as possible.

In view of the forthcoming Smithfield entries, Gordon urged any members who were unsure as to the correct labelling of Gluten Free products or any other products to contact the Q Guild for advice.

Vice Chairman, Nigel Rose, closed the meeting and thanked Chase Farm shop for their hospitality and all members present for attending the meeting.

Date of Next Meeting:09/01/2016 Venue- TBC.....

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