

Q GUILD

Minutes of Midlands Regional Meeting (closed meeting for members only) held on Wednesday 25 November 2009 commencing at 7.30pm
Venue: The George Hotel, Linchfield



Present:

Robert Jones, Walter Smith Ltd
Chairman

Joint Midlands Regional

Steve Robinson, Robinsons of Tettenhall
Allan Bennett, Allan Bennett Ltd (Codsall)

Joint Midlands Regional Chairman

Colin Bates, Bates Butchers

Patrick & Gaynor Richards, P Richards Butchers

Arthur Wright, C N Wright

Nigel Poxon, Poxons Butchers

Jon Steel, Owen Taylor & Sons Ltd

Gareth Bowler

Paul Cadman, Nigel Rose, Mark Healey, Matthew Fisher of Walter Smith Ltd

1 Welcome

Following a most enjoyable meal, RJ opened the meeting and thanked those present for attending.

2 Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Scott Barlow, Paul Riley, Richard Taylor and Stephen Hewitt.

3 Future of the Midlands Region

(a) Marketing

RJ gave a comprehensive presentation on current Q Guild affairs following his attendance at the Executive meeting which had been held in York earlier that day. He explained that David Laidler, who had previously worked for the MLC and had been responsible for their "Tuck-in" magazines, had now been engaged by the Q Guild. David had already carried out an assessment of three Guild shops in order to assist him in compiling an "Overview Document" of proposals for the Guild. The document was explained and briefly viewed but would be made available to members in due course.

RJ explained that David thought future funding for the Guild from Trade bodies was possible. The importance of "Q Guild Branding" was also emphasised with ticketing and point of sale details being introduced over the next three years.

RJ produced a copy of the latest Guild publication entitled "Countryside Food Uncovered". It was proposed to release four publications to Guild shops each year (i.e. Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter). Permitted quantities per shop were discussed, initially 50 per shop with a future proposal for members to be able to purchase additional copies. The publication would be personalised for each shop, available to customers free of charge, although the possibility of raising money for charity from the sale of the publication was a possibility.

Members would NOT be permitted to photocopy the magazines but SR asked if it would be possible for the magazine to be provided on Powerpoint for screen format display in shops. It was agreed that this was a good idea and should be followed up.

RJ reported that the Guild's New Website had now been launched and in its new format would benefit both consumers and members. Q Guild members would still have access to a useful "members' section". In this respect RJ asked those members who had still not provided a photograph of their shop or business details to e-mail the information to Audrey Fenton for inclusion on the website as soon as possible.

It was reported that the Mystery Shopper Programme had proved useful feedback to those butchers that had been visited. The Guild is now offering members the opportunity to have a Mystery Shopper visit carried out at their premises. If any member would like a mystery shopper visit then they should contact the Q Guild office. The Member will be charged for the visit.

(b) Foodex

The event will be held on 21-24 March 2010 at the NEC Birmingham. The Q Guild has taken a stand at the exhibition and a team of volunteers would be required to help run the stand.

On Tuesday 23 March a Q Guild Butchers' Competition would be held with teams of butchers competing against each other in a counter display competition. Teams would have to be decided upon.

(c) Raising the Guild Profile

RJ reported on the proposal for a 2010 Guild Charity e.g. "Children in Need", with a Q Guild National Sausage, say Pudsey Bears' Marmalade Sausage and advertising by way of a barometer type scale rising. The idea was well received by members.

(d) Smithfield Awards Product Evaluation

RJ reported that the Smithfield Awards had once again been successful with a resultant profit for the Guild of £3,000.

RJ emphasised the need for members to ensure safe delivery of entries in future as a number of courier delivered packages had been received in a damaged state.

It was confirmed that R Turnbull & Sons were the overall Diamond Award winners for their Garlic & Chilli Dry Cured Bacon. Their recipe would be made available to members.

(e) Lord Mayor's Parade

RJ reported that members of the Q Guild had travelled through the centre of London on board the Worshipful Company of Butchers' float on 14 November for the Lord Mayor's Parade. Thanks were given to Tom Newitt, Southern Region Chairman, for co-ordinating the float so successfully.

(f) Executive Meetings and Memberships (SR)

SR outlined his attendance dates for Executive Meeting (24 Feb, 7 July and 6 Oct 2010).

SR reported that he had received three enquiries for membership from (1) Gonalston Farm Shop, Newark (2) Haig Butchers, Coventry and (3) Chase Farm. SR confirmed that he would be visiting these shops in due course.

(g) Midland Region 2010 Calendar – What Do We Want to Do?

SR read out Agendas from other regions in order to give members event/visit ideas.

AB suggested four meetings should be held each year to cover specific events, i.e. Easter, Christmas etc.

A Marketing Weekend 15/16 May was discussed and would be planned.

It was unanimously agreed that a 2/3 day trip to Belgium would be a good idea.

PC proposed a visit to the West Midlands Regional Food Academy, based at Harper Adams College, Newport. This was discussed and the proposal would be looked into.

A visit to Southern Region shops was also put forward.

SR explained the requirement to hold our AGM during January 2010 as it was a Q Guild directive to formally nominate a Chairman. The Agenda for that meeting would also include the planning of future trips, Foodex and a Christmas Review.

It was agreed that The George Hotel had proved a good meeting point and that it should be the venue for the January meeting with members paying for their own meals but the conference room hire to be met out of Guild funds.

It was agreed that the meeting should be held on Monday 18 January 2010.

4. Any Other Business

(a) Christmas

SR had produced a useful Customers' Christmas Ordering form. If members would like a copy for future use then please email SR.

RJ presented a number of impressive Christmas brochures as produced by butchers' shops. He explained that quantity colour copying has never been so reasonable and was a good form of advertising.

AB explained that he had purchased a "Pop-Up" scroll for Christmas display advertising use at the reasonable cost of £99 approx.

NP said he could give members the telephone number of an excellent local advertising supplier of this form of promotion material if they would like to contact him.

SR said that for the first time he was taking £10.00 deposits for turkey orders and this was proving useful.

The cost of turkey butts was discussed.

(b) Allan Bennett

AB was congratulated for receiving the Champion of Champions Award and Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award within the industry. AB also did extremely well at the Smithfield Awards achieving three Diamond awards out of 12.

AB thanked RJ and SR for undertaking an excellent job in taking the West Midlands Region forward and emphasised to members the importance of the Guild to us all.

5. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 18 January 2010 at The George Hotel, Lichfield. Members will be notified of the starting time in due course.

The meeting concluded at 10.18pm.