

Q Guild Executive Meeting

Minutes of meeting held at
The Wesley Euston Hotel, London
Tuesday 22nd October 2019



Present: David Lishman, Sue Woodall, Mark Turnbull, Claire Holland, Philip Cranston, Gordon King, Stephen Robinson, John Mettrick, Drew McKenzie

Apologies for absence: Martin Player, Kathryn Meadows and John Davidson

Action Points from last meeting actioned as follows:

- Five year plan needs updated (DL holding fire)
- Saltan suppliers of Himalayan Salt walls based in Southampton will be pursued for corporate membership. They are keen CH has sent membership form, awaiting reply.
- Quality audits have been carried out by Insight and the reports have been emailed to the individual businesses.
- Steak and Health Benefits promotional material have been re-sent and members informed that further hard copies are available free of charge.
- Active DS database will produce a template for Q Guild members to access at a one off cost of £2,500. CH has access to their system and can upload images/pos if required. **Decision not yet made until we can ascertain if the cost is worth the number of members who access this service?**
- AVO trip went ahead with members from Frank Parkers attending.
- 3 day trip to the Republic of Ireland went ahead with 18 members attending.
- Conference call had with Stephen Robinson, Mark Turnbull, John Mettrick, David Lishman and Claire Holland to consider categories for the Smithfield Awards.
- DL convened a small steering group of past, present and future chairman to consider change to Guild terms. Discussion document circulated for this meeting.

Approval of Minutes of last Executive meeting on 26th June 2019 were approved.

There were no Matters arising from these minutes that would not be discussed on the rest of the agenda.

Membership Report

There are 80 members with 94 shops. All members have had their FHRS rating checked and all have the relevant pass or star ratings necessary. These will be checked again in 3 months' time.

Since the beginning of the year there have been 23 new member enquiries. Follow up letters were sent to those highlighted in yellow on the 7th August. To date there has been no response and no new members.

There are currently 23 Corporate members. We received interest from Stuart Batterby of Purety Gourmet Flavours but informed them that as we had a lot of ingredient suppliers already on the list, it would not be fair to include another at this time. Imoon have not paid membership and have been removed. Unilever (Maille Mustard) is also being checked after a recent communication from them.

MT queried feedback from potential members on why there is a decision made or not to join the Q Guild. CH replied it is often available budget, not getting value for money, not suitable or no staff available to attend meetings or events. Kelly in Admin Office is to follow up potential members in January. Bolton Family Butchers in Rothbury may have an interest so this should be followed up.

Finance - Budget year to date update

The executive considered the figures for the current year against the budget.

The bank balances are currently £21403 and £33761.

Budget forecasting surplus of £9788.

PC stated that money is there to be spent if need be. All agreed to make a decision on use of extra funds going forward.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

26 "mystery shopper "quality audits" have been carried out by Insight and the reports have been received and issued to the members. All were successful.

Annual Accounts have been emailed to the Executive Committee.

CH- Employment laws for young people - A member had a query from their local council re their young staff and use of dangerous equipment. CH posted on the Facebook Forum if others had same problem. JM stated local authority have different policies.

Guild Manager's Report

- **Communication update** (Newsletter, Guildsman, Social Media)

HOTB has been sent out July, August, Sept & October, plus a review of Irish trip.

DL stated HOTB is a point of contact. Useful but any other suggestions would be greatly appreciated. E-mail addresses are being updated to make sure it is getting to the staff in the shops, not just the owners.

DM suggested it would be a good idea for all suitable staff members to receive the HOTB.

DL suggested we send e-mail to business owners to ask for staff e-mails so they can receive updates directly.

WhatsApp group worked well on Irish trip.

- **Promotional Material**

Guildsman has just gone out and was well received.

Advert for Saltan was inserted for free to help encourage corporate membership.

Discussion on salt wall dry aging and all agreed it was a positive way to mature, promote and sell.

Facebook has 2700 followers and ticking over with posts, CH posts 2/3 times a week, 4500 followers on twitter. There has been a big increase lately could be due to recent press on Climate change and meat eating.

Other press stories worth noting were as follows:

DM- **Game changer** movie based on scientific level on meat eating and was very convincing.

Lewis Hamilton has been taken to task for this due to his sport.

Kellogg's and nestle behind a big push in production of meat free products and will be competitive in price.

CH- Website, regular visits linked back to social media pages. Find a butcher locator is used the most. Hints and tips has useful cooking and cuts information, working to grow information in that section.

Chicken masterclass leaflets have been printed and issued in the last week. Kept simple and informative.

Christmas leaflets from old stock have also been issued.

GK to check on stocks of the steak leaflet, narrow design with well done, medium and rare pics, if non left will get a reprint or include it with the Steak Masterclass to make a 4 page leaflet.

BOS & Main Website

BOS is there if needed and is a source of useable information. Regularly updated with minutes, pdfs of POS and images

Regional Support Report

Meetings since July

July – postponed the Young Managers Tour until October, reviewed and postponed until 2020

24th July – NW mtg - Business Workshop – at MRC headquarters – well attended

25th Sept – NE Mtg - Country Valley Foods tour, mtg and eve meal at The Violet Green (Blackwells) – good attendance

30th Sept – 3 day tour to Ireland – well attended with 18 butchers – lots to see and learn from – good feedback – summary available on BOS

Planned

11th Nov – Scottish mtg – young butchers Christmas product comptn – postponed until 2020 – some interest but date not suitable – some Northern butchers also interested – so may do a joint one

12th Nov – Wilsons of Crossgates, Leeds tour of shop and NE mtg

19th Nov – Higginsons – tour of shop and Xmas NW mtg

CH- Was informed of a newly formed Northern butchers group, by invite only on WhatsApp, a number of Q Guild members were in attendance

MT's son Dan attended, said it was a networking group held twice a year, run by Dalziel.

PC- Worth considering if there is merit in Q Guild talking to the group re new members?

Guild Plans 2020' discussion

Created by the management team of the Q Guild

The discussion addresses

- the falling membership of both butchers and corporates
- falling income as a result of this
- to establish a direction for the Q Guild for the next few years with the aim of maintaining its value and continued success in the independent retail meat industry.

The value of being in the Q guild is -

- Meeting up with likeminded people and the sharing of knowledge.
- Visiting other businesses in the trade
- Participating in product evaluations to test products and share recipes with other members.
- Using awards as a promotional tool.
- The use of a trademark endorsing a quality trade.
- Outside organisations see the Guild as a route into an interest group, which can often mean benefits to members

DM suggested to promote the benefits better by offering the wealth of support and exchange of ideas for only £14 per week or £2 per day.

The Guild does not see itself as-

- A political organization, A buying group or A nationally recognized brand.

One of the issues facing the membership is the difficulty in arranging regional meetings in certain parts of the country due to lack of attendance, apathy and distance to travel. It is felt that the quality of the membership is really important.

The new look guild is suggested to take the following form:

Independent inspection

- Remove independent inspections via shoppers anonymous
- Members to follow the TAC 'Hygiene rating' criteria
- New applicants would require a visit by 2 members, preferably by one nearest the business in order to assess:
 - quality of meat on display & butchery skills.
 - image of the shop, inside and out.
 - interest and willingness of the business owners/ managers to participate in meetings, share knowledge and the enthusiasm for the Guild and the industry. A lack of attendance to meetings will be viewed negatively and contrary to the sharing knowledge with other members.
 - 4 or 5 * hygiene would still be minimum level of entry

DECISION - agree with above and suggest new members have a proposer and seconder from existing members who will encourage membership participation.

Visit from existing member for any who do not have a proposer plus invite to the next regional meeting.

Press and media

Accept that national brand recognition is very difficult and costly to achieve and is now not a key objective

The Guild shall

- Continue to work with trade press for stories to remind people within the industry that the Q Guild is very much 'Alive and kicking'.
- Retain activity on social media instagram, twitter and facebook
- Q Guild facebook forum to be used as a line of communication to members and staff with the Guild manager posting weekly questions to encourage engagement from members

DECISION - all agreed.

Competitions

- The bbq competition at national level will be incorporated into the Smithfield Awards
- BBQ competitions at regional levels are at the discretion of the regions themselves.
- The Smithfield awards will be kept and continue to be held annually, now at the beginning of the year
- The Smithfield awards will work to become self-funding
- Celebrity guest may be booked depend on funds and notoriety. Worth looking at alternative options.

DECISION - all agreed.

Correspondence

There is a need for contact with the membership.

- Hot off the Block E newsletter will continue and only to be posted every third month.

- Promo material will be on an ad-hoc basis or if an opportunity for useful content presents itself and budget available
- Guildsman: discussion whether 1 or 2 copies per year were still required. Conclusion was to produce one per year with a summary of the previous years activity and to be sent at the beginning of the year along with renewal notices.

DECISION- all agreed.

Website and BOS

- Keep the BOS which has useful areas, such as the image gallery and recipes.
- gguild.co.uk website needs to be a shop front for consumers to find guild members, offer info to prospective members and trade enquiries, plus a point of contact, so the site will be updated to cover this.

Decision- all agreed.

Regional Meetings and national meetings

Discussion held about the three national meetings and low level of attendance plus the reduction in regional meetings

Decision - Q Guild meetings, workshops, visits and events will still be held throughout the country to suit or at the request of interested members. Where possible having dates set in advance would help.

Corporate members

Discussion about attendance at meetings/events where space and time is available, especially as meetings were less frequent now

SR - suggested to keep it flexible. JM - suggested to keep a balance of interaction.

Decision - to keep corporate representation at regional meetings at the groups discretion.

Trips

A great value is put on trips to other parts of the country and abroad.

Two trips per year are recommended and to be organised by the Regional Support.

DECISION - all agreed.

Q Guild Branding

- Branding inside the shop would continue to be provided
- External signs would be at the cost of the business.

Decision - all agreed.

Management and executive meetings.

Discussion around if executive members were still required as there are a number of regions with no RM's? Could the Guild have just Board meetings?

Proposal that Management meetings would remain, plus CH and GK x3 a year. The Executive meetings to be part of regional meetings with regional representatives encouraged to attend. **Proposed** by MT seconded by SR.

The Q Guild constitution will also be checked for clarity. GK

Administration Duties for both the Perth office and the General Manager

- To remain mainly the same with some time adjustments due to reduction in activities. CH & GK to discuss details.

Fee's

CH questioned - should the changes affect the current membership fee's

i.e. Corporate Members £1020 & Butcher Members £1120 + £500 per extra shop

Decision - to reduce Corporate members to £750 and Butcher members to £750 + £500 for each additional shop

Proposed by JM - All agreed

GK to prepare 2020 Budget based on 70 businesses with 80 shops in order to ascertain minimum budget availability.

Fee's payable

From Jan 2020 all payments will be in full, quarterly not offered to new members.

No part refunds if resign before the year end.

If join between Oct-Dec and agree to pay the following years fees upfront will get those months foc.

Decision - all agreed.

No of Members Suggestion:

limit to 100 individual businesses (does not include extra shops)

amending the sign off tag line to **Britain's Best or Top '100' Butchers**

Smithfield Awards Discussion

Apart from a general review the Guild needs to increase product entry numbers and awards lunch attendance. A category review was also suggested at the last meeting. So a steering group was set up, including: Mark Turnbull, Stephen Robinson, David Lishman, John Mettrick, Claire Holland who discussed the following ideas via conference call in Sept.

Results Review - Past three years entry numbers

	2019	2018	2017
Category	Total		
Traditional Pork Sausage	22	35	37
Specialty Sausages	45	64	98
Burgers	17	28	50
Ready to Eat	13	14	23
Bacon & Cured Meats	22	33	53
Hot Pies & Bakery	23	50	78
Cold Pies & Bakery	25	26	44
Kitchen Ready	31	56	108
Ready Meals	14	26	28
Gluten Free Products	10	19	27
TOTAL	222	351	546
Butchers Entered	35	50	65
% of Butchers	35%	45%	50%

Suggestions for revised Category list:

1. **Traditional Pork Sausage** to include regional variations such as Cumberland, Lincolnshire, Lorne
2. **Innovative Sausage** - any flavour or meat type
3. **Burgers** - any meat and size or specify each year?
4. **BBQ product** - each product must be cooked in under 30 minutes on a BBQ and shouldn't include burgers or sausages.
5. **Charcuterie 'From the Deli'** i.e. anything cured, like beer/salami sticks, pre sliced ham, mortadella, Pastrami, Prosciutto or Chorizo and pate or rillettes
6. **Britain's Best Bacon Category** - for all types of bacon, only pork or other meats too, i.e. Beef and lamb bacon recently being produced.
7. **Hot Eating Bakery** - choose a specific type for each year i.e. Steak Pies, or Chicken & Ham Pies, can be family or individual

8. **Cold Eating Bakery** - again choose a specific type for each year, i.e. Sausage Roll, Pork Pie, Game Pie etc.
9. **Kitchen Ready** - all ingredients should be in an oven-able tray that can be cooked or reheated at home
10. **Gluten Free** - Have a different product each year i.e. Gluten Free Sausages, Gluten Free Pies, Gluten Free Ready Meal
11. **Steak** (specify the cut and the weight which changes each year)
12. **Game Product Award** - chosen from all game products entered into the previous 11 categories

No Country specific awards? To be discussed

New Suggestions

1. **Butchers Counter Display Award** - judged in advance by an independent team from x3 or 5 photos submitted, butcher must be in one of them.
Suggested categories, perhaps choose a different one each year, i.e. Fresh Meat, Cooked Meat, Deli Counter, Sandwich Counter/Display, Best use of a top rump

All images/photos could be displayed on a board at the Awards Lunch.

2. Replace the Innovative Category with an “**Off the Wall**” or “**Off the Block**” **Product Category** - aimed at really innovative or different, possibly make this one aimed at young butchers, helps with their Product Development
3. Change Gold & Silver Awards/Certificates to 1, 2 or 3 Smithfield Star awards

Keep Entry Cost at £25 plus £5 VAT

Judging

- Currently booked for receiving products on 4 February 2020.
- Judging days are 5th and 6th February 2020.
- Venue - Harper Adams University, Telford, Shropshire.

Awards Lunch

No date set yet, suggested early - mid March, dependent on venue and turnaround of awards. Update now booked for 24th March 2020 at Butchers Hall

Speaker/Awards Host

To review, dependent on costs.

Time, Day of the Week and Location

- Tuesday suggested
- Keep it to a lunchtime, with a later start of 1pm
- Keep it in London and try for Butchers Hall

Remove Costs where possible

- i.e. toastmaster, AV and stage

Incentives to enter and attend lunch

- Offer entrants who enter more than 5 products one free ticket to the awards.
- Ask sponsors to offer a monetary prize, vouchers or products instead of sponsorship fee.
- Could the Guild offer a free membership to the overall winner?
- Have ‘value for money’ on the day prizes for attending the lunch

The above suggestions will be further reviewed in detail by MT, CH & SR and confirmed at the next meeting on 19th Nov.

Any other competent business

The new one-time Annual Guildsman and fee renewal to be sent out early January along with Smithfield entry forms - online will be available earlier. Kelly to phone round to encourage entries in January via calls.

Action point- CH to prepare a list of dates for trips, board meetings and important dates for next year to be put in annual Guildsman.

Date of next Management meeting: 19th November @ Cranstons in Penrith for 10am

Meeting closed at 16.30pm

a Masterclass in Meat...

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