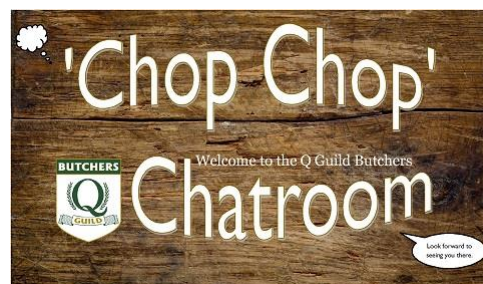


Q Guild Scottish Chatroom 15th July 2020

Attending: Drew McKenzie (Robert Alexanders), Duncan Fraser, Rod Gillie (Thomas Johnston Quality Butchers), Laura Black (Hugh Black & Sons), Jonathan Wallwork (Walmsleys), Stewart Collins (S Collins & Son), Gordon King (Q Guild), David Lishman (Lishmans of Ilkley), Claire Holland (Q Guild), Peter Rushforth (IFI)



Intro's by Drew and David and welcome to all especially new members Hugh Black & Son, round the room updates and comments.

Lishmans of Ilkley

- **Trade:** retail wise still up at least 50% yoy. Some weeks twice as much if not more.
- **Online sales** dropping for contactless, collection or delivery, as more coming back onto the shop. Customer count, almost back to normal but still taking more money
- Had to quickly adjust the Xmas ordering system to use thro'out lockdown for online orders, which proved quite a challenge taking all details by hand – was not an efficient method – but was the best way initially
- **Looking forward** - if there is a 'Next Covid Spike' – will this be an opportunity, will it be over Xmas period – will it mean smaller xmas gatherings - will we do the same – so we are reviewing our offering and getting as much online as possible.

Duncan Fraser – Inverness

- **Trade:** Open thro'out, really busy, doubled in first two weeks, lots of panic buying, calmed down now, but still up around 30%, with margins remaining up
- May need to think about emailing some special offers as custom is slightly dropping now, but still busy.
- **Online:** No online ecommerce site, but have a website presence which can takes orders, plus lots come in by email,
- **Delivery:** Always offered a local del service, luckily a local Taxi driver needed work so worked for us thro the busy period, min order £20, no del fee. Waive it for elderly and vulnerable who don't want a large order
- **Offer C&C** as well, will take out to car
- **Staff:** 1 on furlough thro'out. 3 in the shop at one time. Wife & Daughter now both helping, should I say working in the business....as the shop is still very busy, especially with Scotland just opening
- Cut **hours** 9-3 now open 7.30-5pm
- **PPE:** All wear face masks or shields, as working v close together back to back – all staff are OK with this
- Most customers are wearing Face masks – only odd few who either forget or are exempt

Hugh Black & Sons (new members Laura & Hugh)

- **Background:** Happy join the Q Guild, known other members who have been knowledgeable running high quality businesses – so really happy to share anything we have done too.
- Farming background...trading for 30yrs...so butcherying all relatively new, but looked at the business with an open mind as no previous business experience to compare to
- Bathgate shop, plus factory which distributes to the other retail shops

- **Trade:** up aprx 25% now, easier to manage the orders and customers now after the initial panic buying
- Changed opening hours to manage the orders
- Difference in trade and customer reactions meant rural shops having the most increase in trade rather than town shops.
- Ordering system for **C&C** only, as never done deliveries and didn't want to start in the middle of a busy period.
- **No online** ecommerce yet, but are looking at this now along with a new WWW and system
- looking at a new phone system as currently on a cloud-based system
- **PPE:** Wearing Visors (can reuse and sanitise) and /or masks (getting costly if they are one use only)
- Extra boning hall had to open due to not enough room for staff to social distance at existing boning hall within the abattoir
- Have a dedicated bakery unit as well, which helps with shops not being over crowded
- Mainly coping with all the changes so haven't been doing any new offers, products or lines.

Johnston Butchers, Falkirk - Rod Gillie

- **Trade:** doubled trade initially, now about 25% up, just a case of containing and managing the business
- Now serving 25% less people – but takings are still up 25%
- Was opening up 7am now 8am-4pm – still getting in early to get ready and always a queue at 8am. Not really looking at opening till 5pm as days would become a 12hr day.
- Striking a balance re opening hours – may look at organising a rota for last hour of the day.
- **Online** system, turned off when it started, as couldn't cope with the amount of deliveries, APC used to deliver but let them down quite a lot, didn't deliver on time, or late etc...so didn't pursue any more
- Offered **Call & Collect**, very popular, turned off Click & Collect as too busy, just focussed on customers coming thro the door
- **PPE:** Wearing face coverings, had a local co produce branded ones, which looked great, but they are a bit warm now as they are 3ply, so may revert to more disposable ones.
- 4 people in at a time,
- **Stock:** Steaks/ sirloin or fillet – struggling to get good quality beef when buying in, especially boxed beef
- A great plus for the business is the current team of staff – always willing to work hard and help the business plus really good with customers.

Walmsleys, Ramsbottom – North West – Jonathan Walmsley

- **Trade:** T/O doubled over the period. Almost had to change everything as was always a straight serve over the counter business. Never did deliveries or C&C
- Still up 25% and happy with that, as the whole period has taken its toll, so taking a week off next week for a break.
- 6-7 full time – with a few p/t
- Made us relook at how we worked, and we feel proud of how we have adapted.
- Never really looked at **C&C** but it has worked really well for us. We kept the day for walk-in customers and an hour at the end of the day for collection
- Even tho it takes longer to make-up orders rather than serve over the counter, we will keep the C&C as it is working really well and helps our t/o

- Is **Christmas** going to be another adaptation, i.e. queueing and ordering systems etc.
- **PPE:** Face Coverings not such a big fan but we may look at visors to help customers feel more comfortable.

Stewart Collins, Muirhead

- A big challenge – staff been great and fantastic with adapting to the situation, 2 on furlough, 1 long term sick
- **Trade:** All been flat out with all holidays cancelled and we're up 70% yoy,
- Shop up 50% - Online up 25%
- Stopped the hot food counter
- Customer count is up and sales slowing down – which gives us a breather
- **Online service C&C and local service** – went crazy and took us by surprise, with too many o/n deliveries coming in to get ready for next day, so had to minimise the quantities.
- Stopped the national **deliveries** and focussed on local and vulnerable deliveries, then stopped C&C. Local deliveries slowed down now with customers coming back into the shop
- Started national ones a few weeks back and now full for the next few weeks
- **Christmas** was already online - so it helped, and now we are almost ready for this year
- **Hours** were 6-5, changed to 6-4, now looking to change to 9-4
- **PPE:** 1 server per each customer – behind the counter is 6 – so only 6 customers permitted in the shop at any one time
- Installed sneeze shields – social distancing in the shop – PPE available for staff if they want them
- 99% customers wearing them and we request they hand sanitise at the front of shop, obtained PPE from [Paragon](#) (Corporate Member)
- We temperature check all staff and delivery drivers daily – done since the beginning
- **NPD:** Development stopped while busy but now we can think a bit more about this
- **Beef,** bought more cattle and used the whole carcase – as we lost the catering trade, so haven't had to purchase any beef boxes
- **Big Q:** Where do we go from now, as next year may be a tough recession year

Robert Alexander, Port Glasgow, Inverclyde - Drew McKenzie

- **Small shop** with 7 employees
- Closed shop doors after a few weeks, as we had no counter or catering trade
- 5am start – until finished, sometimes lunchtime sometimes evenings
- **Trade** almost quadrupled over the next few weeks
- 80% online – 20% phone in trade
- 3 month to end of June on line Sales are £158k up on last yr
- Sales only slightly dropping off latterly, used some furloughed staff from other jobs but they are going back to their own jobs now so will be looking for new staff soon.
- Selling a good quantity of higher priced items recently so will be interesting if this continues as our main trade used to be the more basic lines.
- **Online:** We're using a Spotify platform we had set up about 5yrs ago just for Xmas and then developed for w/e home deliveries, which we are glad we had as we really needed it for this time. We find it easier to manage the online sales, as everything is standardised, portion sized and unit priced.
- **Deliveries:** Couriers were not so good to start with as they were struggling to cope as well, so we stopped national deliveries and focussed on local deliveries, with two vans, an avg sale is £43.50

- May take this time to do a refit while the shop is still shut, new counters etc.
- Interesting **Energy Efficiency offer** via the Scottish Government who will do a report on your shop to help you get 15% cash back or interest free loans, covers cooking, refrigeration and lighting. Free inspection which helps to buy the new equipment – ask Drew for further details.
- **Catering:** Two hotels recently opened up in the area and requested a regular order of steaks, we wanted to be strict from the go so priced high, they both moaned and asked for a lower price, we said no, but they agreed anyway.
- **Deliveries**
- Parcel Monkey – like a go compare type site for Deliveries, generally we use Parcel Force, apprx £10 per order by weight. Extra £1+ for before 12pm
- Charging back to customer whole charge, or if order over £100, del is free

Future issues

- **Unemployment** – will this mean customers with less cash to spend, or more employment opportunities
- Will there be recession next year
- What's going to happen at Christmas?
- G King quoted: Meat industry are going to look at the butchery industry to take up the catering job losses, by encouraging butchers/production businesses to take on chefs etc.
- **Facemasks** Will the law re wearing in shops reduce customer footfall

Anyone with a Crystal Ball please get in touch!

Innovative Food Ingredients Presentation (attached) by **Peter Rushforth**

- Presentation on BBQ Marinades
 - Black Garlic Marinade – most popular selling
 - Habenero Chilli – not for the faint hearted
 - Arthur Pipkin Premium Gluten Free range of Glazes, Tuscan, Green Thai, Mexican, Texas & Goan
 - **Promotion** 3x4kg Tubs - £90 includes Spanish Herbal Garlic, Sea salt & Pepper, French Garden
- Link to the IFI full range catalogue: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/6550da6b-309a-46d1-b1c6-3f88c70ef032>

Chat Q&A's:

Payment sense.

- Lishmans - They are good, but we found that when we key in the card number, the charge is about 50p.
- Gordon King stated that Paymentsense have a really good representative in Scotland. Ruth Anderson is the type who will go the extra mile.
- Duncan Fraser Went from Worldpay to Paymentsense – a huge difference to our charges, which have now reduced quite a bit
- Hugh Black Recently changed to Paymentsense and all going well, and also looking at a new phone system as currently on a cloud-based system

Courier debate: What courier company does everyone use?

- Lishmans using **APC** but have issues so are looking at DPD very soon because the service from APC has been poor. **DPD** seems to have a better service too. They text with a 2 hour time slot and a confirmation an hour and 15 mins before the driver is there, they can personalise the messages with your logo too. If you have Dimension then the DPD app can link to Dimension so I don't think you need to fill in the customer details
- Collins use APC, delivery of product is usually good, but no trace and track of order.
- **Q: is costing of DPD comparable?**
- Lishmans think it's about the same if not a little cheaper. The benefit seems to be that there is more contact with the customer - time slots etc. So we shouldn't be getting calls asking when it will arrive
- Hopefully this will also save us a lot of time. I initially thought they were more expensive but it turns out they're not. You also get a printer if you send enough deliveries and free labels
- Drew uses [Parcel Monkey](#) – a comparison site for Deliveries, generally use **Parcel Force**, approx £10 per order by weight. Extra £1+ for before 12pm. Charged back to customer or free if order over £100

Interesting to Note:

South based Member Godfrey's who are based in Highbury, London uses their own vans and only deliver locally to a 5mile radius and is seeing a turn-over of more than £25k per week via online sales.

E Commerce / Online Comments

- Lishmans use a **Woo commerce** interface which links to their **Dimension** database so we only have to change prices on Dimension to change prices on the website, the shop tills and our labels which makes it really easy. (Dimension is installed via South Coast Sysyems)
- Collins have a Woo Commerce integrated to their **Scotweigh** system, and they can recommend their local web developer if anyone wants details, contact Stewart. www.scollinsandson.co.uk/shop/
- However Collins did state that they don't want to make online the main part of their business, want the serveover to be the main focus, but even so the site is still a lot of hard work to maintain with new products and offers, let alone keeping up to date with new IT
- **Stewart made a note of caution** – websites need to show the portion/weights and prices of each product, so only sell online what you sell in your shop so it doesn't make more work.
- Drew uses a **Spotify site** for their online sales, their main spend so far (in 5yrs) about £800 in total, and about £70 per month to maintain, with Drew updating the content which he finds really easy to do. <https://alexanderbutchers.co.uk/>
- Drew feels online trade will grow, just during these past few months it has grown and although it may tail off once the shop opens, it is going to be a big part of the business going forward. We have accumulated over 1,000 names which we can use for newsletters in the future via **Mailchimp**.
- See notes recently sent on round up of previous Chat calls and there is a section on [EKM](#) and Dimension who both offer website/online sales solutions.

Gordon King Update: from a recent Government meeting

- Food Standard EHO's as part of their audits will be looking for evidence of Covid and Physical Distancing training for each employee, so ensure this has been carried out. So ensure your guidelines are up to date and all employees have had training.

Next Call on Weds 12th August at 4pm - Link will be sent nearer the time

Meeting closed 5.20pm