

**Q Guild Executive Committee Minutes
2nd October 2013
Dean Court Hotel, York**

Present: Brindon Addy (chair), Robert Jones, Jon Thorner, Philip Cranston, John Davidson, Sandy Crombie, Julie Henshaw, Greg Hull, Mark Turnbull, Laura Bishop, Sandy Boyd, Douglas Scott.

Minutes of the Executive Meeting of 27 June were approved. There were no matters arising that would not be covered by the agenda.

Laura Bishop gave a short presentation of work in progress at EBLEX. She demonstrated a facility that will come online in 2014 where Q Guild members within the QSM scheme will be able to design their own point of sale material and have posters printed including their own and Q Guild. Laura was seeking feedback and all this was very positive.

Correspondence

BA reported that there had been a communication from Audrey Coates that had requested payment for an additional three months. A solicitor's letter response had been sent from Burnetts on behalf of the Guild. A discussion concluded that the course of action taken was correct.

Sandy Boyd

BA introduced Sandy Boyd, the Guild's new General Manager. He described Sandy as a perfect fit for the job. SB then gave a résumé of his career path from Safeways, Booker Health Foods, Loseley (quality ice cream and yoghurt manufacturer) and Chatsworth Estate. Chatsworth was developed into a benchmark for farm shops. His background has been in speciality food, worked with Windsor Farm Shop and more recently developed a farm shop at Ludlow into a major award winning food centre.

SB identified the Guild as an opportunity for all members to grow their businesses. The Guild is an important tool to use. Need to identify benefits, and have someone to shout about butchers. Need educated customers who are assured about the provenance of their meat. Enable staff and infuse consumers about what makes us special. Need to evaluate where we are at. What we stand for and what separates us from the supermarkets. Strengths and weaknesses should be clearly understood.

Communication to the general public requires to be clear and not fall into trap that cause harm to organic trade. Standards, benchmarking and market research need to be used to advantage. Require stats that can reveal the strength of the organisation e.g. Guild spends £x million per year on fresh meat.

Craft skills are the independents' advantage over supermarkets. The more people understand meat, the more they will value a quality operator. Develop our young people and the next generation of butchers to have cooking skills. Enthuse about the product!

Hygiene is crucial but because of Scores on the Doors and the ease of achieving five stars undermines the work of the Guild.

Advice to members supports owner and management but more could be done to boost staff as well. Opportunity within regional meetings perhaps. Promotional events, marketing and PR are better opportunities for the more silent members. Not all on the web, using Twitter and Facebook.



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Potential to develop idea of the Great British Bake Off. Meat cutting demonstrations are good for business and members should be encouraged to get involved. SB concluded that it was necessary for all the Guild members to be pushing in the same direction. In the short term SB said that the priority was to get out and speak to members.

BA thanked SB for his inspirational presentation and raised the intimated desire of Corporate members to develop a "kick back" scheme on business put through them. Discussions included how to source English turkey butterflies and how that in the future might have buy in from members.

Finances

A report was tabled showing income and expense, and forecasted year end figures. income from Corporate Members still needs scrutiny. Payments to HAS appear to be much less than anticipated yet SC confirmed that the four month just past had 37 members inspected which was exactly what could be expected. New Zealand trip was showing a deficit whereas BA felt that the trip should have been showing a surplus. DS would revisit figures with bookkeeper on Thursday.

Membership

110 members with 8 applicants.

In the Midlands region there is currently one prospective new member, G Simpson Butchers, Heckington. He has two shops, the other in Sleaford. HAS were contacted on 24th September to arrange their Pre-audit. The pre-audit was carried out on 17 October 2013.

In the South region there are currently four prospective new members: Peter Speaight, Tunbridge Wells; Laverstoke Farm Shop, London; Tilehurst Village Butchers, Reading; Lewis of Sunningdale, Sunningdale.

Tilehurst Village Butchers had their Pre-Audit inspection carried out on 23rd September. Tilehurst Village Butchers were advised to contact HAS to arrange their Full Audit on 18 November 2013. Laverstoke Farm Shop cancelled their Pre-Audit on 30th October, the day before it was due as their Manager was leaving. Lewis of Sunningdale originally had their Pre-Audit inspection arranged for 24th September but the last notification received from HAS was that it was scheduled to take place on 11 November. There were no major problems but they have requested that their Full Audit be done early in 2014. Peter Speaight have been unable to be contacted by HAS to arrange their pre-audit.

Royal Windsor had their Full Audit on 31 October 2013 and all membership information has been sent out to them, apart from details about signage.

In the South West region there are currently two prospective new members; Moody Sow Farm Shop, Cefn Mably, Cardiff; Etheringtons Farm Shop, Scorrier, Cornwall. HAS were contacted in September to arrange the Full Audit for Etheringtons. Moody Sow Farm shop had their pre-audit arranged for 6 November 2013.

Discussion on the HAS process and whether the task could be done by the General Manager. System we have is construed as arrogant and not necessarily helpful. Pre audit arrangement with HAS has been agreed to take place within one month but there was potential for SB to assume responsibility for this.

Members with direct debits that have been returned or not paying statements. Communicate to HAS

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Technical Advisory Committee

SC reported that Hygiene only inspection cost reduced to £285 from £350 for those booked from 1st September. It was felt that the value of the hygiene standard leant to the Guild was too great to be sacrificed or watered down, and that it should remain on an 18 month cycle. It was important that the members' views were reflected, and since 2/3rds of those surveyed were in favour of the hygiene audit, it has been retained.

There was a feeling by some that the audit was too competitive so the A and B ratings will be dropped from the Certificate of Conformity. GH suggested that the Certificate of Conformity include five stars. It was agreed that this was a good idea and will be actioned.

Detail of every audit no longer goes back to the office. Only information held would be Certificate of Conformity or Reappraisal required. Timescale thereafter of three months, failing that referred to TAC. Where scores are below the pass level the auditors will liaise with the member to improve their scoring and signed assurances or other evidence will be requested. The new way of working to be adopted on all audits booked after 1st September.

Procedures

A flow chart was circulated outlining audit procedures. This to be circulated to members. 37 audits were undertaken between April and September; these were very good with 17 A+, 10 A and 10 B.

SC expressed disappointment that Vince Matthews would be leaving HAS and would be replaced by Julia Wilson. Letter to be sent to Vince thanking him for his services.

Quality Standard is no longer audited. Alternative suggested of a mystery shopping survey. Cost quoted would be £100 per outlet surveyed. The cycle proposed would be five yearly i.e. 20% membership annually. £2200 would be the annual cost and it was agreed to start contract in January. Service would be available for members to buy into if they were obviously not going to be subject of survey. There was also an opinion that the frequency should be increased if budget allowed. Suggested that there should be discretionary awards when examples of good service were discovered.

Next TAC meeting will be at 9.00am on Wednesday 20th November at Butchers Hall.

Smithfield Awards

Entries came in late and in variety of manners, some not even filling in forms. By 10:30 this morning a total of 371 entries had been received that was 362 in 2012. 48 members had entered. By category entries are approx Sausages 100, 40 in each of Burgers, Cooked meats, Bacon and cured products, Pies to eat hot, Pies to eat cold, Kitchen Ready Products 70, Chipolatas 25.

A budget was presented for the whole event and members felt in hindsight that possibly the entry fee was too low. It was agreed to set ticket price for the lunch at £90 inc VAT.

Judging criteria was discussed and it was agreed that those attending would be judging on personal taste. It was pointed out that almost half the judges were English and that the tastes would not be totally Scottish despite the venue being City of Glasgow College.

Overall Diamond Award would not be decided by Jean-Christophe Novelli. Random golds to be tabled. Agreed that challenge boning pigs trotters should be accepted. BA agreed to accept the challenge along with one other. Last year's overall Diamond to be on the menu. DS to speak to Neil Corry PR activity.

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Diamond award winning products should be promoted nationwide through every member's shop.

Barbecue Competition

Final to be held again at Weber Grill Academy in May. Regional Barbecue finals to be held in March at the latest. (Possibly better co- ordination to allow socialising on an all night stay). DS will seek dates and quote.

Tri Nations Competition

Teams from Australia and New Zealand will start their tour on 3rd July 2014. The contest will be held on 10th July, the final day of the Yorkshire Show. EBLEX are dealing with the arrangements. Training would possibly involve four get togethers and attending tour days ahead of the competition. Discussion on how to finance home team members suggested approaching television and seeking a willing sponsor.

Foodex 2014

The organisers have requested a skills competition in exchange for exhibition space. It was agreed that given the commitment required for Tri Nations the Guild would not be interested in staging a skills competition at the show.

Marketing

Product Evaluation is the sole event remaining for 2013. Now we need to sit down to establish what should be delivered in the future. A programme of activity should be formulated between now and the end of November.

A Marketing Event was deemed necessary. In 2013 this was held in York on a Wednesday but JH suggested that a weekend date would be of benefit on the social side.

A self financed conference would be a potential. Top end event with a wow factor is needed.

Christmas leaflets

Check stock in Perth office and offer re- run.

Guildsman

Need to obtain quote from CODA for compiling next edition. Content to be provided by SB.

Loyalty programme

Finbarr Malone had demonstrated a system but it was reliant on fast broadband speed and so was not suitable to all. Finbarr says he would be willing to come to any regional meeting to talk about loyalty systems in general. If anyone wants to talk him up on his offer his details are available from the office.

Regions Update

Midlands

RJ reported a post Christmas meeting would be held on 20th January in Lichfield.

Irish trip planned mid March

South West and Wales

Struggling to get attendance at regional meetings. Members appear to be apathetic. Planning a meeting in January. RJ proposed a joint meeting in January with Midlands.

Scotland

Next meeting will be held in Perth on 21st October. At the last meeting Baro Lighting had made a presentation, discussion of energy costs and comparison of disposable towel costs.



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East

Next meeting will be 21st October. Previous meeting had been held at South Coast Systems jointly with Southern region. It was very impressive with a clocking in system (c £360), and invoicing. It was a pity that the meeting was so poorly attended.

North East

Last meeting had been packed out but MT felt that there was a dilemma over frequency of meetings. BA suggested continuing regular meetings even if MT could not attend. Next meeting would be 18th November. Pricing, benchmarking and cost ratio comparisons had been run. Information was available only to those submitting figures.

North West

Next meeting 12th November. Last meeting held at Higginsons was very successful.

Trip to Islay

DS explained that an opportunity exists to take a study tour to Islay. This could be both social and educational and business allowable expense when building in visits to the island butchers and abattoir. Islay is an island off the west coast of Scotland that has eight distilleries making malt whisky and the wonderful Botanist gin. Islay is an inexpensive flight on Flybe from Birmingham or Southampton to Glasgow. Ferries are also available for those who would rather drive. Itinerary to look like Sunday arrival, accommodation at Monday four distilleries, free time in Bowmore, evening tutor tasting by a master blender after dinner, Tuesday visit bird watching attraction remaining distilleries.

Return flight late afternoon or next day. This is merely a suggestion with no particular date in mind.

Communication

Suggested a résumé of the Executive Committee matters goes on the Q Guild website.

Date of next Executive Meeting was agreed as Wednesday 5th February 2014 in York [This was subsequently moved forward to Wednesday 12th February 2014]



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