



## **Minutes of Meeting 30 November 2007**

### ▪ **Welcome to the meeting by the Chairman and aim of the Business Club**

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to the members and briefly reported to the meeting the key aims of the Business Club. Namely, that the Club is able to provide a voice for businesses in Lincoln, whilst also being a relaxed environment in which to meet and network with members of the local business community. The Chairman noted that the catchment area for "travel to work" for Lincoln is 300,000 people, whereas 3,000 people live in Lincoln itself. This is a huge catchment area for businesses and the Club aims to provide a forum for those businesses to meet.

We now have nearly 400 members registered!

### ▪ **Member introductions**

Starting with the committee members, each of the members stood up and introduced themselves and stated which businesses they are from.

### ▪ **Sponsorship for future meetings**

The Chairman reminded the Club members that to sponsor a meeting it is £50 per meeting and that entitles the sponsor to talk for five minutes in relation to their business. The Chairman reminded that members that the Club is a non-profit organisation and that for every £2.00 that they pay every week, £1.00 goes to the football club to put on the refreshments and the other £1.00 goes into the Club savings. The savings are then split between two charities at the end of the year. The charities are decided by the members although the committee encourages the members to go for local charities as oppose to the national charities.

### ▪ **A word from our sponsor: Beverley Smith – Counselling Coach and Teaching Services**

Beverley has been working as a Counsellor and Tutor for 10 years and she produces courses for businesses relating to stress and anger management. She is also a qualified Counsellor and in addition to having her own clients she also tutors in counselling. The difficulty is that there are no placements for the students to have on the job training and so she has set up her own counselling service which is a free bereavement service called "Listening Ears" which means that her counselling students can use this environment to train. Her counsellors pay for everything themselves; "Listening Ears" simply provides the environment in which they can work. Therefore fundraising events are crucial to them. They are having a charity

ball in February with various prizes and auctions. One of the prizes is a box in March at the Royal Albert Hall and also there is a villa in Spain up for grabs. Please show your support.

- **First speaker: Martin Cooke – Innovation Lincolnshire**

Martin is the Project Manager for Innovation Lincolnshire and he is a business mentor/coach who runs programs in conjunction with the public sector with businesses to improve what they already do. Martin says key to improvement is understanding what drives change. We need to be asking the right questions – can I make the product better? Can I make it easier to use? Can I innovate? What is innovation? Martin said that his interpretation of innovation is the successful exploitation of new ideas. It is not just science and technology. It is a practicable translation of the ideas and commercial success. The key is having a planned strategy to be in a position to respond to the market place. Innovation Lincolnshire Outreach is a mentoring support organisation which can assist with grant funding, training and events. Please contact Martin for further details.

- **Speed Networking**

The Chairman encouraged the members to change places and sit with people who they did not know and where possible to have full tables in order to get the most out of the speed networking part of the meeting. This part of the meeting enables each member to sell their business for 1 minute to the rest of the people on their table. This is a valuable opportunity to get to know the members of the club and to swap a few business cards. We were all reminded to make sure that we bring enough business cards to circulate round the table as we talk.

- **Second speaker: Jonathan Bowman – Aspect 7**

Jonathan Bowman for Aspect 7 spoke to the club about different types of market depending on the type of trade or service that we provide. For example, a company selling concrete or a tradesman would have a localised area and therefore would know his competition and be more protected in his market. Whereas, for example, an architect or e-commerce company would be less protected as they would not have the geographical constraints of a tradesman. People generally want to use local suppliers but only where all things are equal. So why trade overseas? It is spreading the risk of being more susceptible to our own economic downturns. There are businesses all over this region who export products overseas. For example, recently Jonathan was telling us that he was at the Exporter Awards in respect of the East Midlands and an architect company in Newark got the best business award and the exporters award for China and globally. Jonathan talked to the club generally about the difficulties with competing with the markets in China in respect of products. However, he pointed out that one area that we can certainly compete is in respect of knowledge and skill. Jonathan made the point that how people internationally buy that knowledge or skill and it is clearly over the

internet and therefore Aspect 7 produces local language in local culture style internet sites for international markets.

- **Card Draw Speaker: Mark Hollingworth – Flowers by Suzanne**

Flowers by Suzanne have been running for nearly 30 years and it has made it to the last 23 florists in the UK for the gold award. Flowers by Suzanne now have 3 shops in Lincoln, the Bailgate, St Mary's Street and North Hykeham. The shops also have beautiful ranges of home fashions which compliment the flowers in the shop. Mark also told the Business Club about the business flowers which they create for receptions and conference rooms. Clearly having flowers in public places creates a certain impression about your business. Mark then carried out the card draw for the December meeting and Emma Todd of Best of Lincoln was selected. Mark also donated some of the flowers which he had bought to display to Emma.

- **Card Draw Speaker for next meeting : Emma Todd from Best of Lincoln**

- **Website/Events/Advertising Update**

Mark updated the members as to the ideas to create an events page on the website to enable us to split up different types of events. We would like to have different categories, for example social and business events, and create a forum for local businesses to be able to check what events, networking or training are going on in the city.

The Chairman also reminded the meeting about the Christmas lunch to be held in So Lux on the Brayford on 14 December.

- **Member's Announcements**

The members were asked to consider whether or not anybody has any lockable drawers that can be donated to a small local charity.

The members were told about a careers show at the University in respect of graduate jobs and second year students and the members were asked to consider whether or not Lincoln Business Club ought to have a stand.

- **Date and timing for next meeting.**

The next meeting will be on December 14<sup>th</sup> at 7.00am until 9.00am (the same day as the Christmas lunch).