

Chamber of Commerce

Lancaster District

President's Annual Report to Members 2010/11

It has been a privilege to serve as your President for the last two years and I am pleased to report that despite the challenges of the recession, your Chamber had a successful and eventful year.



The accounts show a surplus of £5,090 before tax, but taxation on our un-earned investment income has resulted in a small deficit of £2,079 after tax. Performance against budget was on target throughout the year but the end result was affected by £3K investment in the M6 Link campaign which had not been budgeted for.

That campaign must be considered as one of our key achievements, helping to secure a commitment to fund the scheme following the Public Spending Review by the new coalition Government.

Networking & Events

Networking is one of the most popular benefits within Membership. The Chamber has once again successfully managed to run a wide variety of events throughout the year, not only providing networking opportunities to suit all styles but a continuous cycle of Informative Briefings, Workshops and Training Days.

“Fantastic networking opportunity with a good variety of businesses – great atmosphere created by the Chamber and plenty of opportunities to raise our profile.” Jen Horsburgh, CancerCare

The past year has seen a surge in new networking events and organisations, making networking in the Lancaster District a very competitive market. However the Chamber's Network continues to be the biggest in the area attracting over 1,500 attendees at the various events throughout the year.

“First rate networking event with a very interesting speaker and an opportunity to catch up with local business leaders.” Sarah Turnbull, Natwest

Fact File - A total of 57 events were held including Networking, Socials, Briefings, Seminars, Workshops and Training days. Attendance 1,512.

The Chamber launched a **new initiative** for Members in 2010, the **Business Mentoring Programme**. The Programme aimed to help owner/managers take the time out of their businesses to reflect on their current business and personal achievements and allowing time to consider how to drive the business forward. The Chamber ran 3 groups, in partnership with Enterprise 4 All and funded by NWDA. The programme was due to continue for a further two years but due to cuts it ended in March 2011. The programme assisted 21 Chamber Member businesses.

All three groups had a positive experience, and one group is continuing to meet on a regular basis. Some of the feedback included:

“I found the sessions enlightening. They allowed self analysis!”

“Very inspiring and informative.”

“Good Group – Plenty of lively discussion and sharing of ideas.”

Fact File – 28 Briefings, workshops and seminars were held.

Chamber Services

The newest service is Chamber Childcare, a childcare voucher scheme managed by the Mid Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce. Established for some years now and with a growing reputation, Chamber Childcare enables employers to make cost savings on NI contributions and working parents to make tax and NI savings on their childcare costs.

We continue to offer a free 24 hour legal advice line and a Chamber HR website which are invaluable to many of our members.

Fact File: the Chamber represents 505 businesses employing over 12,390 people in the district.

International Trade Documentation

Nationally the documentation figures for certification and EC documents increased this year and we are pleased that the Chamber’s documentation service can report the same. Valuable support has been given to exporters requiring specialist advice on the Middle East and Latin American markets and we have seen an increase in documentation for the Arab States.

There are many opportunities for developing and expanding the overseas markets by attending the events promoted through the Chamber, i.e. Enterprise Europe Network, UK Trade & Investment and the N & W Lancashire Chamber of Commerce International Trade Network.

Business Forum

The Lancaster City Centre Business Forum continued to meet and was successful in securing a commitment from Lancaster City Council to help fund the development of Business Improvement Districts (BiDs) for both Lancaster and Morecambe Town Centres. Over the next two years, the Chamber will work with colleagues at North & Western Lancashire Chamber to secure successful ballots to take the BiDs forward.

Retail Group

The Group secured £22K of funding through the City Council from the Government’s Empty Shops Fund. This was used throughout the year for events and marketing including cleaning of empty shop windows,

contributing to the “Talking Shops” arts project, which involved independent retailers, profiling their history and contribution to the City and the creation of artwork on display in empty shop windows, currently in St Nicholas Arcades.

The funding supported street entertainment and marketing for the Fireworks, Edwardian Street Market and Lancaster Music festivals as well as Christmas promotions.

Information & Signposting

The small team of Chamber staff pride themselves on being able to provide prompt responses to business enquiries, and during the year dealt with over 900 requests for information. Some of these required signposting to other services and the staff use their knowledge and experience to ensure Members are put in contact with relevant business support providers, saving them time and introducing them to new sources of funding.

During the year one Member found themselves in a difficult situation over late payment of rates and the bailiffs knocking on the door. They sought help from the Chamber and we were able to make contact with the Council, halting proceedings. As a result alternative options were found and the Company is now continuing to trade successfully.

One sole trader was considering the future for his business when he was encouraged to get involved in some of the Chamber’s networking events and to utilise the support of a local Business Link adviser. As a result he now has a mentor who has even sourced business for him.

Fact File: Staff dealt with over 900 information requests, 350 export enquiries and offered over 200 business opportunities

Representation & Consultation

The Chamber has represented the views of the business community on the following issues:

- Heysham M6 Link
- Centros proposals for development of Lancaster Canal Corridor North
- Future for Lancaster Castle
- Lancaster Market
- Development of land at Lawsons Bridge Scotforth
- Development of land south of Lawsons Bridge, Scotforth
- Review of Car Parking Fees and Charges
- Abolition of Default Retirement Age
- Road Markings Friars Passage, Lancaster
- Public Spending Review
- Shoreline Management Plan

The following surveys were carried out to support representation locally, nationally and regionally:

- *British Chambers of Commerce Quarterly Economic Survey
- Chambers of Commerce North West Wages & Benefits Survey
- Chambers of Commerce North West Business and the Environment Survey
- Impact of Volcanic Ash Fallout
- Impact of the Recession

- Finance & Banking Survey
- British Chambers of Commerce Trade Survey
- Retail surveys following City Centre events

*The Quarterly Economic Survey or QES is a regular assessment of the economic situation in the area and remains the most important piece of survey work that the Lancaster District Chamber undertakes. The survey provides us with valuable information on the state of the Districts economy as well as feeding into the national survey undertaken by the British Chambers of Commerce.

The national survey is the largest of its kind in the country.

In May 2010 the QES survey went digital, allowing Members to receive the survey by email and complete online via Survey Monkey. This has allowed the survey to be sent to all Members increasing the distribution from 90 to over 500, and in turn will increase the response rate. Which currently stands at 15%, this is an increase from the rate of response from the old paper format.

The Chamber is the Economic representative on the **Lancaster District Local Strategic Partnership** and a Member of the Economy Thematic Group.

Other Services

Other services have included provision of meeting room facilities, publication of a promotional magazine (Business Matters), regular e-newsletters, energy audits, primary healthcare cover, on-line human resource services and legal advice line. The Chamber also provides administrative support to Lancaster and Morecambe PubWatch schemes in association with local Police.

The Future

With the continued support of Members the Chamber will continue to deliver core services in response to Members' needs. We will work with the business ratepayers in both Lancaster and Morecambe town centres to help deliver successful ballots leading to the creation of Business Improvement Districts to improve the environment in which those businesses operate.

The purpose of the Chamber is to support the prosperity and development of the local business community by providing effective representation, networking opportunities and a range of relevant and valuable services.

We will continue to pursue our strategic objectives of strengthening the Chamber as the VOICE of local business and the HUB for local business support.

Acknowledgements

There are many individuals and organisations making a positive contribution to the Chamber, including all those who subscribe through membership, and I thank you all.

I thank the staff, who despite the fact that they are a small team with very limited resources, manage to deliver an extensive range of quality events and activities for Members.

I thank my co-directors for their support and for providing their time and expertise in directing the Chamber's activities and representing the interests of local businesses.

Thanks also to the Business Matters editorial and publishing team for providing us with a first class magazine keeping members up to date on the local business scene.

My thanks also to the many individuals and organisations that have supported the Chamber through sponsorship of events and delivering workshops and briefings.

Jon L Price
President

Attached is a copy of the Income & Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet.
A copy of the full Financial Statements for the year to 31st March 2011 is available on request or
Abbreviated Accounts can be viewed via the website at www.lancaster-chamber.org.uk/news

AM/AnnualReport10-11
June 2011

Lancaster District Chamber of Commerce, Trade & Industry
Commerce House, Fenton Street, LANCASTER LA1 1AB.
Registered in England No. 53741

Directors & Officers Insurance

The Directors and Officers of the Chamber, by reason of their position, may incur personal liabilities. Therefore the Chamber maintains insurance indemnifying the Directors and Officers against any liabilities arising from their duties as Directors and Officers of the Chamber.

**Income and expenditure account
For the year ended 31 March 2011**

	Note	2011 £	2010 £
Turnover	1	176,826	142,774
Cost of sales		<u>(59,396)</u>	<u>(28,911)</u>
Gross surplus		117,430	113,863
Administrative expenses		(147,208)	(148,585)
Other operating income	2	<u>34,525</u>	<u>43,734</u>
Operating surplus	3	4,747	9,012
Interest receivable and similar income		<u>343</u>	<u>301</u>
Surplus on ordinary activities before taxation		5,090	9,313
Tax on surplus on ordinary activities	4	<u>(7,169)</u>	<u>(6,731)</u>
(Deficit)/surplus for the financial year	9	<u>(2,079)</u>	<u>2,582</u>

The notes on pages 5 to 8 of the full accounts form part of these financial statements.
A copy of the full accounts is available to Members on request.

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2011

	Note	£	2011 £	£	2010 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	5		3,665		6,130
Investment property	6		<u>375,000</u>		<u>375,000</u>
			378,665		381,130
Current assets					
Debtors	7	41,850		38,186	
Cash at bank and in hand			<u>110,334</u>	<u>115,437</u>	
			152,184	153,623	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	8		<u>(84,699)</u>	<u>(86,524)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>67,485</u>		<u>67,099</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>446,150</u>		<u>448,229</u>
Capital and reserves					
Revaluation reserve	9		99,201		99,201
Income and expenditure account	9		<u>346,949</u>		<u>349,028</u>
			<u>446,150</u>		<u>448,229</u>

The directors consider that the company is entitled to exemption from the requirement to have an audit under the provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 ("the Act") and members have not required the company to obtain an audit for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Act. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at 31 March 2011 and of its loss for the year then ended in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 of the Act and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to the financial statements so far as applicable to the company.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf on 12 May 2011.

J Price
President

J R M Barker
Vice President

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