

AGM Minutes
Thursday, 9th February 2023 - 17.30 to 19.00
Chartham Park Golf & Country Club

Present: Lee Farren CEO
Lisa Thompson, Business Manager
Janice Fearn, Treasurer
Stuart Scholes, EGBA Committee
Rex Whittaker, EGBA Committee
Fiona Bewers, EGBA Committee
Grahame Russell, EGBA Committee
Charmaine Hallmark, EGBA Committee
Tim Thompson, EGBA Committee
John Bines - Kangaroos
Elaine McGloin, McGloin Services Ltd
Darren Greenaway, Greenaway Residential
Nancy Holmes, EMS
Norman Webster, MSDC
John Hallmark, Hallmark Travel
Stephen Hillier, MSDC
Mims Davies MP
Roger and Margaret Martell
Sally Reed, RH & RW Clutton
Sam Benson, RH & RW Clutton
Kevin Orchard, KMC Financial
Ashley Banks, KMC Financial
Hard Fitness
Paul Faircloth, UAE Team
Karen White, Buss Murton
Nick Blythe, Paella Fella
Helen Farren, EG Town Councillor

Apologies: Richard Tramontin, EGFC
John Belsey, EGBA Committee
Fiona Humphreys, EGBA Committee

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CEO's Address

Lee welcomed everyone to our AGM and thanked Chartham Park for hosting the event.

Lee also welcomed Mid Sussex District Council and also East Grinstead Town Council. Welcomed any members and non-members in attendance.

Treasurer's Report

Accounts for 2022:

Income up on last year and was £15,193 which consisted of £11,628 subscriptions, £2,500 grant from MSDC and £1065 from events.

Expenses were £11,195 (standard expenses) with a closing net profit of £3,892 which was better than last year that had a loss of almost £1,000.

Lee explained we are a not for profit and having been in a loss last year, but if we make profit the aim is to put it back in the business community so will look at what projects we can invest in this year.

Greenaway Foundation

Darren Greenaway, the Chairman and founder, spoke on behalf of the Greenaway Foundation. The Foundation was set up 12 years ago which initially provided ingredients in order to cook a 2 course Christmas dinner and in the first year fed 5 families. This year just gone aimed for a 1000 families but did just over 800 families.

A few years ago started Make A Wish for a present for a child up to the value of £25 and did just over a 1000 presents in the year just gone. Needed to raise just under £50k to just do xmas.

Last year piloted prom pop ups so where a school had a pro we would do the hair and make up, and asked people in the community to come along and be a chauffeur for them. Turned out to be a nightmare, so this year proposing to at least pay 50% of prom ticket.

Lots of people donated and included £700 from EGBA and some schools starting to make donations. Taken on 3 more trustees in the last 12 months now 7 trustees in total. Meeting shortly with Nicolas Owen, the newsreader, to become an ambassador and a few more fundraisers booked in for this year. Set a goal to raise £0.25m and before I go I want to feed a million in one christmas. Goal this year to beat Jesus and feed 5000! Going from strength to strength. Proud to be associated with EGBA and the support they give. EGBA hosted a Charity Event last September in order to raise funds and the food was kindly donated by Paella Fella and held at The Tasting Rooms.

Re-election of Committee Members

Lee explained the formality of re-electing officers and introduced each committee member and advised that Paul Addison had stepped down as a committee member.

Re-appoint Officers

Officers	Proposed	Seconded
Lisa Thompson	Lee Farren	Sam Benson

Business Manager

Janice Fearn Lee Farren Stuart Scholes

Treasurer

Grahame Russell Lee Farren Rex Whittaker

CEO

Lee announced he has been the CEO for 6 years and is now stepping down but will remain as a Committee member. Lee introduced Grahame who will be taking over as CEO.

Reelection of Committee Members

Member	Proposed	Seconded
Robert Bliss	Lee Farren	Tim Thompson
Darren Greenaway	Lee Farren	Norman Webster
Stuart Scholes	Lee Farren	Darren Greenaway

Election of new members

New Member	Proposed	Seconded
Fiona Humphreys	Lee Farren	John Bines

A big thank you to Norman, who has been our representative for MSDC and a wealth of knowledge, a stalwart for MSDC and is stepping down as a minister - round of applause for Norman.

John Belsey is our Town Council representative but could not be here tonight.

If anyone is interested we are always looking for committee members, let us know, it is an enjoyable role and great to be a part of the EG business community.

Review of 2022

Tough 6 yrs for Lee, done the pandemic, Putin war and energy & cost of living crisis and of course Brexit! Membership has pretty much stayed the same. Hopefully travel industry is starting to find a way back as hit very hard. Went on a walk around EG with MSDC (Caroline Duffy and Nicola Emoffi) who commented that although EG has had some shops close, it is not quite as bad as other towns. Try and keep our shops alive somehow.

New era of home or hybrid working, hoping to bring more people back into the home town, has got to level out at some point. Get a lot of information all the time from MSDC and their economy team, absolutely brilliant and are absolute stalwarts for what we do, because information they give us we throw out so try and read newsletter and news posts as information we get is fantastic. They provide big support for Mid Sussex and EG businesses as is Mims Davies our MP.

Helped ShopAppy launch, mixed reception. App to get people to shop locally hope it will gradually step up impetus. In September 2022 Lisa took over as Business Manager, and has been absolutely unbelievable and thanked Lisa. Lisa is the driving force, the engine behind the EGBA.

During last year joined Sussex Chamber of Commerce but left after a year as we found they wanted more from us than they could give us. Didn't know what they could offer us. May revisit as some point

Networking events have been great, so please try and attend as many events as possible.

The Year Ahead - 2023

Let's hope better year for business and energy & cost of living gets sorted. We do have our hands on our MP, MSDC and TC so anything your business is worried about or want to know about we can find a way.

Looking to change some of our events to create more of a community feel and looking to introduce a few specialist events.

One task was to get the 3 Business Associations working closer together and managed to achieve that and along with MSDC we have regular meetings and it really feels like there is a Mid Sussex business community that everyone can tap on and the aim is to drive EG but Mid Sussex business as well. Looking at a few more joint events and starting talks with GDB.

Lisa has started drop in sessions, but going to flip that and instead during the year Lisa will visit businesses to see how in and see what more we can do.

Started increasing social media profiles and will try and get higher, it is important for business.

Grahame looking into the idea of Charity Golf Day at Chartham Park.

Also started having chats with Meridian Radio - used to have a business hour.

Got a big event coming up on 9th March EGBA/MSDC Business Support Event and how MSDC can support businesses and to learn about the business opportunities.

Mims Davies, MP and EGBA Chair

Apologies for being a bit tardy - ministerial challenges! Lovely to see friendly faces and thank you for amazing support with the most recent bounce back business breakfast at Chequer Mead, feedback impeccable and the positivity that we have to keep engendering across Mid Sussex and across everything that we do and sharing that with people who may not be feeling that or actually it's going great and we need to make sure that people in outside world need to know. Set up bounce back business breakfast 18 months ago and made it a focal point of what we'd learnt from covid, how we'd changed and engendered that positive and inclusivity and the way we quickly adapted and how that shaped businesses in Mid Sussex going forward. Started off in Orange Square in Haywards Heath, next one was at CAE in Burgess Hill. EG one was supported by global company here in EG and we talked

about inclusive employment, start ups and other learnings we've had because of Covid. Next one will focus on Stem and Innovation.

Today in Westminster, currently holds a post in DWP as the Minister for Social Mobility, Youth and Progression. Met some great apprentices in hospitality. Not everyone sees the value nor wants to work in hospitality but it is the most socially mobile area to work in. Global business and can progress very quickly. With good support can be a leader very quickly but yet we talk about it as low skilled and seasonal. Went behind the curtain at the Ritz to see the apprentices working with the Executive Chef. National Apprentices Week.

£2.7 billion more going into apprenticeships, nearly 9% more apprentices starting. Within a couple of years of leaving uni versus people with apprentices you are normally approx £5k better off.

Bringing forward the next stage of the cost of living bill, introduced this week payments for 8m households on low income, including support for disabled people and pensioners over next year. On 21st February the bill is getting its second reading.

One of my biggest concerns for EG specifically is the train station. EG is the lost forgotten commuter town, abominable what is going on there. Not acceptable and very mindful of that. Trains one an hour, overcrowding, toilets not good, have to change at East Croydon, service pre-Covid to now is unrecognisable.

Lee Farren asked if Mims got involved in re-shuffle. Mims did not, very happy with her role and her department will be looked on greatly to be delivering some of the change we greatly need and bringing in the bill.

Fiona Bowers made a comment, she was there the day the new lifts opened and all very well the money spent on the new lifts but no good if we don't have any trains.

AOB

Lee introduced Grahame who said it was a real privilege to move into this position, fantastic committee and very pleased Lee is staying on committee and retaining Stuart as well and all the other members voted back in. Very sad not keeping Norman. Bags of potential in EG and what we have to do now is take on good work done to date and make sure we fulfil that potential. In broad terms I think of a blueprint for EG, it has so much going for it. Let's think how we can be that much better from a retail and business perspective. Supporting the schools and apprenticeships is also very important and start to think about what we can touch and what we can make work. Important thing is we have the committee to do that and the resources, Privilege to have Lisa onboard who has been absolutely amazing and supporting me tonight.

Ended the AGM with Grahame giving a big thank you to Lee.