

MINUTES OF THE AGM
Held on Tuesday 27 January 2015
At the Felbridge Hotel 18.00-20.00

Present:

Stuart Scholes, CEO	Norman Webster, EGTC
Roger Martell, Treasurer	James Moore, Green Light Co.
Caroll Everest, Administrator	Jacque Russell, IQ Storage
Margaret Martell, Martell's	Bob Russell, IQ Projects
Jackie Huggett, EG Sports Club	Lesley Walker, Airtech
Elaine McGloin, Buss Murton	Sue Todd, Frontline
Peter Robinson, RES	Barney Durrant, Bluebell Digital
Bob Mainstone, EGTC	John Berry, Timeless Time
Matt Cole, Cole's Estate Agents	Sue Berry, Timeless Time
Lee Farren, BGL Communications	Edward Walker, Buss Murton
Alex Lee, Buss Murton	Edward Belsey, Golfguard
Gordon Westcott, Knighthood	David Perkins, Bailey Ahmad
Wendy Fitton, Felbridge Hotel (briefly)	

1.	<p>Apologies: Were received from Nicholas Soames MP, Chairman; Kate Bennett, EGBA, Nancy Holmes, EMS. David Epstein, Sturdy Edwards, Jonty Egginton, EGG Media, Fiona Friend, Wear it Again Sam and Cllr Garry Wall. The CEO, Stuart Scholes, welcomed the turnout to the meeting, which was much appreciated.</p>
2.	<p>Financial Report and Adoption of Accounts Copies of the accounts were distributed. Roger Martell the Treasurer said that the Accounts had been checked by Place Flight. The EGBA had done reasonably well although lost slightly more than budgeted. There are sundy expenses, but is balanced by income.</p> <p>We continue to receive a grant from Mid Sussex District Council.</p> <p>We currently have 142 paid members. The subscription is now £95.00 for the year and we are still aiming to be self-funding.</p> <p>There is an excess of £2693 and funds of £14639.21. Next years budget has £1,000 allocated to projects from the excess.</p> <p>Adopted: Lee Farren Seconded: James Moore. The accounts were approved.</p> <p>SS thanked everyone that had already paid for 2014. Requested that those that have not yet paid do so promptly to avoid unnecessary costs in chasing for payments.</p>
3.	<p>Review of 2014 Stuart Scholes thanked those working with him and appreciated their efforts, these include; Caroll Everest (Administrator), Kate Bennett, (Business Manager) and Roger Martell (Treasurer). He reminded everyone that he and Roger Martell were volunteers.</p> <p>SS said we had had an impressive year. Details include:</p> <p>McIndoe Statue: this was the highlight and the result of 3 years work by the EGBA, Town Council and McIndoe Foundation culminating in the unveiling of the McIndoe Statue in June by Her Highness Princess Royal.</p>

SS said he was very pleased with the end result and that it brought people to the town and was well worth the effort. It should also be floodlit soon. This has proved difficult so far due to power supplies/ownership etc.

Meridian Line Song

This was a new song, written and sung by a local musician and recorded. Services of the songwriter/singer and producer were provided for free.

A video was produced, at cost, by one of our members, Jonty Egginton at EGG Media.

Nicholas Soames, kindly appeared in it and it has been distributed via Youtube and promoted by social media and Meridan FM.

Meet & Greet

This initiative was started in 2013, SS and John O'Brien wore T-shirts and had support of Bluebell Railway, Southern Railway and Waitrose – who provided staff – paid by them – to 'volunteer'.

In 2014 Waitrose were unable to continue support due to staff recruitment issues and it is now being administered by Mark Kingsley-Monks, aided by SS and others. Leaflets were handed out and advice given to those arriving in EG and on the Bluebell Railway – the aim to guide people into town and provide information about what to see and visit. More volunteers are needed for this year, although SS will still assist a little.

Shop Window

With help from Olive Grove, (who owns the shops that were Majors and a Piece of Cake) SS was able to persuade them to allow the EGBA to use their shop windows for promotion whilst undergoing renovation. Initially details about the McIndoe Statue and unveiling were promoted, and now information is on East Grinstead Sports club, in recognition of their help to the EGBA.

Kingscote Valley

This initiative (by John O'Brien) will incorporate the land from Saint Hill to Kingscote Vineyard etc. The aim is to have walks, cycling paths and a number of activities in the area to make it a 'destination'. The new **Town Team** (started by John O'Brien and currently Chaired by Jeff Morris at the Sports Club) is to turn it into an area of attraction for locals and visitors.

MSDC

We continue to have dialogue and meetings (attended on EGBA behalf by Kate Bennett) with the Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath Business Associations, encouraged by MSDC.

Visteastgrinstead.com website

This was set up in 2012 and last year it need to be transferred to a new platform. This has now been done, although there are still a few changes be made and Kate Bennett is responsible for this. Barney Durrant has suggested some amendments.

The site is non-profit making, although we have to cover the costs for the design and the hosting platform and for this we are seeking advertising. Although all suppliers/shops will receive a free listing.

Networking Meetings

Drink & Meet

SS said that we continue to have a monthly meeting at La Farola which is generally well supported with usually 25-35 attendees each time. It attracts a mixture of businesses, often many new people come along to meet us as well as the Police, PCSO, and EG and Mid Sussex Councillors.

Buzz Meetings

SS said this year we have had breakfast lunch and evening meetings. These ae usually held at a members premises, the aim is that the host provides refreshments and has the opportunity to talk about their business.

	<p>Other SS gave thanks to Philip De Jong at Pertinax partners who has assisted the EGBA by attending meetings relating to the proposed Gatwick Airport expansion.</p> <p>CEO SS has been CEO for nearly 4 years and had indicated that he wished to step down. However, a replacement has not been found, so he will continue for the foreseeable future, until a replacement can be found.</p> <p>All small steps, but with the aim towards making East Grinstead ‘a destination’.</p>												
4.	<p>Election of New Committee Members SS said there are 6 committee members, 2 of which step down each year. This year we also have one member that is moving out of the district so we need three replacements.</p> <p><u>Stepping down:</u> Elaine McGloin, Gordon Westcott, Jonty Egginton.</p> <p>Three people volunteered to stand on the Committee:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="300 846 1252 974"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">Proposed</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Seconded</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Bob Russell, IQ Projects</td> <td>Margaret Martell</td> <td>Jacquie Huggett</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elaine McGloin – to re-stand, Buss Murton</td> <td>Matt Cole</td> <td>Peter Robinson</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Lee Farren, BGL Communications</td> <td>Barney Durrant</td> <td>Sue Berry</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Proposed	Seconded	Bob Russell, IQ Projects	Margaret Martell	Jacquie Huggett	Elaine McGloin – to re-stand, Buss Murton	Matt Cole	Peter Robinson	Lee Farren, BGL Communications	Barney Durrant	Sue Berry
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5.	<p>Reappointment of Officers CEO, Stuart Scholes Treasurer, Roger Martell Both were re-appointed.</p>												
6.	<p>The Year Ahead 2015 Dementia Awareness SS said that Kate Bennett had recently attended a seminar/meeting on this important topic. Edward Belsey, Golfguard is also involved who said it is good for business and stores and is about raising awareness of Dementia.</p> <p>Meet & Greet The aim is to provide information and guide more people into the town that arrive on Southern or Bluebell Railway. Large percentage go into town and can be encouraged. Popular and welcome by those approached. Need more volunteers. Get to ride on the Bluebell and talk to passengers. Those interested should contact Mark Kingsley-Monks who is now responsible for this (under aegis of EG Town Council).</p> <p>Town Team This was started by John O’Brien, County Councillor. Currently under guidance of Rex Whitaker and John Dabell. Also involved are Bob Mainstone, Norman Webster, Stuart Scholes, Simon Kerr and Alex Eichner.</p> <p>The aim is to get ideas for the town and push through to improve things. Currently the main thrust is the ‘Station to Statue’ to get people in and to the town.</p> <p>Kingscote Valley The EGBA will have a minor role in this development. It is important and Boris Johnson’s office is wishing to develop tourism outside London.</p>												

	<p>Visiteastgrinstead.com As mentioned, this has had a new platform and currently needs a few amendments made. Barney Durrant has provide comments and suggestions which KB will be dealing with shortly. Advertisers are needed to cover the costs for running it.</p> <p>Social Media We are active on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and now Streetlife.</p> <p>Business Lecture SS said that he has been trying for a few years to get a high profile person to deliver a lecture in and for the town. We have tried various people including Mary Portas, Vince Cable, Boris Johnson etc. CE has now secured the CEO of White Stuff, Jeremy Seigal to deliver a lecture, probably at Chequer Mead on 18th June.</p> <p>The idea is for him to talk about why White Stuff came to EG, business plans, challenges, the future etc.</p> <p>It will be widely promoted via the business community and the public. We will encourage schools to participate and send students – and it will be free for them. Young Enterprise will also be informed and we hope will attend.</p> <p>There will be a charge for attendance and we are also seeking sponsorship to cover the costs. Charges to attend will be: members £10.00, non-members £15.00.</p> <p>Mayors Ball SS said the EGBA had reserved two tables for this to be held at EG Sports Club on 18th April. Please let Caroll know if you would like to be part of this event. The cost is £40.00 pp.</p> <p>Expanding the Association SS said we still need to grow the Association. We typically always have some people leave each year for various reasons and need to replace them and then to get additional new members. KB and CE are active on this but YOUR help is required. If everyone bought along one new member, we would be self-sufficient.</p>
7.	<p>Future Buzz Meetings – their format Networking Meetings CE said that currently we hold 2 networking events a month.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Drink & Meet at La Farola 2) Buzz meetings held at a members premises. <p>Last year we conducted a survey about what members wanted and based on that we changed the timings to include not only evening meetings but also breakfast and lunch to accommodate the needs of members. We also included 'just a minute', so everyone could have 60 seconds to talk about their business – helpful if they have not managed to talk to everyone.</p> <p>The Buzz meetings although for networking, are also about showcasing the various businesses and gives the host the opportunity to provide more information about what they do. However, they are not always well attended as some people only seem to attend if they are interested in that particular company/venue. ie the wine tasting went well.</p> <p>CE has currently a programme of events arranged with companies/venues until August with various hosts and in November</p>

	<p>However, she asked for views on the format going forward.</p> <p>She said that we occasionally receive requests from people/companies that wish to give presentations. So far in the last 4 yrs we have not held these as the buzz meetings do not always have the time for this or facility for it.#</p> <p>So wished to discuss whether to review this. A suggestion would be to hold inn say a pub that has a room (ie Dorset Arms) that will have a separate room to accommodate us where we could network and have a presentation. We could perhaps have one 3-4 times a year.</p> <p>Views: John Berry, said that HHBA hold similar presentations, but they are not particularly well attended, sometimes with only 8 people.</p> <p>RM said that he thought the Buzz meetings were preferable and that the presentations did not work – based on what we held several years ago, where we struggled to get attendance – but possibly not any less than we currently have for some Buzz meetings (CE).</p> <p>It was suggested that if we did go down this route – to try, that we should get members views on what they want to hear about – rather than based on who approaches us to give a presentation – which may not necessarily be what members want to hear about. CE to put item on social media and newsletter.</p>
7.	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p><u>Norman Webster:</u> Coast to Capital Enterprise partnership statistics – Jan – Dec 14. Companies House records show that 1,100 businesses were incorporated in Mid Sussex. Averaging 75 to 115 per month with the highest number in September.</p> <p>Number of those drawing Job Seekers allowance across the District has reduced. Unemployment Rate 2013: 0.8% In December 2014: 0.5% It has fallen further since then but in % terms remains at 0.5%.</p> <p>He reported that there is only 485 people receiving JSA in Mid Sussex in the 18-64 age group. He said this is really good news although not for those few unfortunately in a position where they have to draw JSA. This situation does make it difficult for companies in Mid Sussex to recruit.</p> <p>Empty Shops SS said that there were few empty shops in EG, with several of those empty currently either being refurbished to let or awaiting/sorting out new contracts/leases. The jewellery trade is booming.</p> <p>He also reported that work on Caffyns has now started.</p> <p>Queens Walk SS said that Roger Martell is working hard on this and has some new plans,</p> <p>PALS Shop SS said that refurbishment work has now started on this site.</p> <p>EGBA Activities SS asked if we are doing the activities that members want.</p> <p>Bob Mainstone asked about membership and how many retailers are members. CE replied probably about 10. But they have been the sector that CE and KB had spent far more time on in visiting and discussing the EGBA with.</p> <p>He observed that the Multiples rarely attend the networking Meetings. SS said that Sainsbury’s, Caravan Club and Boots have occasionally attended. However, it is usually the smaller business that participate.</p>

	<p>Bob Russell said that not many of total membership attend. SSs said that although there is a core of people that attend more regularly and a large proportion that do not attend any meetings at all.</p> <p>Station to Statue: SS said he hopes that this will bring more people into the town. QR Codes: plain is to have some this on the route which will provide people with information on interesting sites enroute.</p> <p>A suggestion is also to have blue footprints to indicate the route. Council are working hard on this and to beautify Station Approach. John O’Brien is working on this.</p> <p>Norman Webster – Bluebell Railway Said that the number of passengers in the first year was 35,000 that departed from EG. If 10% of those came into town, that’s another 3,500 extra visitors.</p> <p>He said we need to maintain our glass half full positive vibe, which will rub off. An EG company was awarded a Digital Award several years ago and he was proud to have accepted a Google E Award, with Sir Nicholas Soames for the whole Town. Recognised that EG was in top 10 towns to increase internet business. Businesses saw an opportunity to increase business and they did.</p> <p>Suggestion for meeting speaker: Training: Company Fifty 6. Jason Dulworth, Computer Skills & training. Has spoken at HHBA meetings.</p> <p>Local Newspaper Consensus is that this is generally negative and is not well supported. The new online digital newspaper has positive news and is up-to-date – is positive and challenging.</p> <p>Margaret Martell: Standen Reported that she had currently attended the tour of Standen. They have increased their visitors to 100,000 (from 3,500 initially). Another great attraction for the town and we can do more to help.</p> <p>Barney Durrant, Bluebell Digital Railway Approach. Said that in Brighton they have shared roads, pedestrianisation? It’s the gateway to EG. EG in Bloom did a very good show last year to improve this road.</p> <p>Jacquie Russell: said that it would be good to have it one-way again, and to hold the market there again, as in the past.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Next Networking Events La Farola on Monday 9th February from 6-8pm. Breakfast Buzz meeting at Crawley Down APH on 25 February 7.30-9.30am.</p>
	<p>AGM closed at 7.30pm. Networking continued until 8pm.</p>