



CHAIRMAN'S NEWSLETTER

MARCH / APRIL 2010

Dear All

As most of you will know by now, I am not putting myself forwards for re-election this year. It's been a great three years, and also two years before that playing an active role on the committee. However I think that it's the right time to move on and give someone else the opportunity to lead this great club into it's 25th year.

The AGM will take place on the 20th April 2010 at 7:30. Please do your best to attend, particular as voting this year will take place on the night, and not before hand. All full and paid up members are entitled to vote, and with four strong candidates for the positions of Chair and Vice chair, it should be an interesting evening.

The nominations for Chair and Vice Chair are Charles Hanmer, Mick Davies and Derek Weekes. In addition Jenni Crawford has been nominated to stand for Chair only. Each of them bring different ideas and skills to the fore, and it is for you the membership to decide who you think is the best person to lead the club in the coming years.

Ladies first then. Jenni has been a member of the club since 2003 and has spent 3 years with the committee. She is Dudley born and bred and is passionate about small businesses. She has connection with Rotary and in the media and so finding quality speakers should be no issues. If elected she intends to bring the "famous for sixty seconds" back as a regular item.

Charles has been with the club for almost its entire existence, and indeed was Chair of the club for many, many years in the nineties and the early "naughties". He is also the club's Honorary Life President and a regular attendee at our meetings. He is well connected in the Black Country business community and intends to use these contacts and his considerable business experience to the club's benefit.

Mick has been your Vice Chair for the last 12 months. He is primarily responsible for moving the club into the 21st Century by re-inventing its online presence. As a result members are now able to find out about future events, book events and pay their membership fees as well as receive their invites via email. Using something called MAILCHIMP, the committee are able to track any email which is sent which has proved a useful tool in its marketing activities. He has also been responsible for organising the "open networking" themed evenings.

Derek Weekes has been the club's PR guru for the last 12 months and in that time, I think we have managed to secure more press coverage than we have done for several years previously. In turn this has led to a growing awareness of the club and its activities and helped grow and develop the membership in new areas.

So it is a tough choice...and I'm glad I'm not the one who has to make the decision! Now, only those who are fully paid up members are entitled to vote. The membership year runs from January to December in each year and as such, your annual subs must be paid for you to be eligible to vote. If you haven't paid yet, then you must make sure you either send you £25.00 annual payment to the Steve Millington, the Treasurer or even better, visit the web site (www.ddbc.co.uk) and make the payment online.

Sue, the Secretary, will issue the voting papers on the night, but will have a list of fully paid up members to ensure that only those eligible to vote may do so....and obviously to ensure fair play.

If you cannot make the evening, then the committee will allow members to vote via proxy. The notice of the AGM which accompanies this newsletter will contain a Proxy instruction to the Secretary so that she can cast that members vote for their chosen candidate.

We will also be joined on the evening by a representative of our chosen Charity for 2010, the Stourbridge, Dudley and District Branch of Diabetes UK who will tell us more about their work, and will also accept a cheque from the club for the fund raising activities which took place at Christmas.

It is our intention to also hold a charity raffle in aid of the Stourbridge, Dudley and District Branch of Diabetes UK and we would be really grateful to anyone who wishes to donate prizes so that these can be raffled off. Certainly of late, the raffle prizes donated by members have whittled away. This is a great shame as the raffle was a great source of funds for the club which we were able to put into its events and activities and also to provide donations to various charities and good causes. Please do what you can.

I am also pleased to announce that the Committee have now finalised the plans for the DDBC 25th anniversary celebrations. It was felt that on this occasion, we should really "push the boat out" and do something more

special than the traditional dinner dance type affair. So, the date for your diary is Friday the 1st October 2010 at the Black Country Museum. The planned itinerary for the evening will be as follows:

- Drinks Reception 6 for 6.30
- Silver Service 3 course meal – 7.00 to 8.30 (ish)
- Entertainment from Black Country Comedian, Anuck
- Then either take the tram or walk down to the village and meet "some of the locals"
- Then back to the Cradley Institute building for dancing to a live band until late

The important thing is that there are only 120 tickets, and are priced at £10 each. They will be offered to the members and one guest (spouse / partner/ friend/business associate) initially to make sure that everyone who wants to come, can make it.

The tickets should be available for sale at the AGM and you'll need to get in quick as they wont hang around for sure!!!

Can I just finish in saying that it has been a real honour to lead the club over the course of the last three years. Over that time we have had some great evenings and I am pleased to have overseen the modernisation of the club and the marked change in its membership. Three years ago, I set out to move the club away from its "social club" reputation to a credible business networking organisation. I believe that this has been achieved as lots of you have told me how much more business you are getting from the club these days.

Of course in that time, competition amongst business clubs has increased tremendously. However, I am pleased to say that our club remains one of the very few "no for profit" organisations in existence, and in my view provides the best events!

I hope that I leave the club in good order for our next Chair and that they can build on some of the changes and developments that the committee and I have brought in over the last three years and in so doing, ensure that the club continues lead the field in the business networking community for another 25 years!

See you all soon.

Stuart