

## MASCOT Members Meeting Minutes

**Venue** Bacchus Hotel, Mablethorpe  
**Date** Thursday, 3rd March  
**Time** 3:00-5:00 p.m.

### Those Present

John Handley	Kim Parrinder
Chris Drew	Keith Pinion
Keith Butters	David Smith
David Brailsford	Lindsay Arnold
David Andrews	Helen Matthews
June Jones	Chris Prestly
Tony Howard	Pete Chambers
Debbie Sutcliffe	Dan Turner
David Ives	Colin Lessitor
Elizabeth Elvidge	Gary Preston
Neil Boodle	
Julie Mudie	
Graham Cullen	
Jenny Cooper	
Richard Arnold	
Karen Froggatt	

### Apologies

Robert Watson  
Russell Bolesworth  
Richard Borthwick  
Magie Dunkley  
Amber Thomas

Chris Drew opened the meeting explaining that Steve Cleeve would not be speaking as planned as he had left the FSB the day before.

The first speakers were Dan Turner and Colin Lessitor from Utility Watch who are working locally as brokers for both electricity and gas contracts (telecoms to follow shortly). They warned against being tied into long, expensive contracts by default as a result of not being proactive when renewals are due. They can provide a free quote to businesses who fill in their one page application and include their most recent gas and electricity bills. Not only is the service free but Utility Watch return 10% of their commission to the client. Find out more at <http://www.dcdirectsales.co.uk/utilitywatch.html>

David Brailsford introduced the Second speaker, Chris Barron the Resort Director for Butlins Skegness and a member of the Lincolnshire Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Chris talked us through the history of Butlins Skegness originally setup in 1936 on a turnip field. The talk contained many pertinent warnings about the dangers of a lack of investment, failing to reach customer expectations and botched marketing attempts to force a change in customer demographics. Eventually this lead to parent company Rank selling Butlins to Bourne Leisure who have proved far more successful operators. Chris attributed the current success of

#### **Chairman**

John Handley 01507 443374 chairman@mascot.org.uk

#### **Acting Secretary**

Chris Drew 07837 781261 secretary@mascot.org.uk

[www.mascot.org.uk](http://www.mascot.org.uk) MASCOT, c/o John Handley, Duneside, 56 Church Lane, Sutton On Sea, LN12 2JB



Butlins Skegness to many factors including expenditure on the park being little and often so returning holiday makers see new attractions and continued improvement. Ideas are now trailed before being rolled out nationally thus avoiding expensive mistakes. Butlins Skegness is now open 50 weeks a year and so is able to employ 800 people in January. The offseason is filled with adult breaks, themed weekends and bookings from the likes of club 18-30 and MCN. Hosting these high spending guests in winter not only increases the usage of the resort but also allows it to remain focused on it's family cliental during summer. Finally Chris spoke about the problems of recruiting locals which necessitates the hiring of Eastern Europeans. As a typical example Chris' team would ring 60 locals the day before the interviews to confirm they would attend, of those only 30 would turn up. Of the 15 hired only 10 would turn up for work. On hiring Chris recommends 'recruit the attitude and teach the skill'.

With regards to the LEP (which effectively replaces EMDA) Chris felt it would be more business focused and hopes it will understand Lincolnshire and particularly the east coast better than EMDA did. Unlike EMDA the LEP has no budget of its own but instead will act as a conduit for available funds such as the Regional Development Fund. Chris was concerned about the closure of Visit Lincolnshire saying the area cannot afford to lose business to other counties who are still advertising. Finally Chris believes the casino bid has run out of steam for various reasons. If it did go ahead it would most likely be in Skegness.

Keith Butters introduced the final speaker, Paul McSorely, MD for Lindum Construction. Paul gave a presentation about the proposed development on Golf Road which is available for download on the MASCOT website (news page – look for date 07/03/2011). As such the presentation will not be recounted here save for a few comments that were not on the slides and details of some of the questions asked.

With regard to the 'competing' proposal of a Tesco's on the Station Sports site Paul felt the site was too small to prevent locals travelling to Grimsby etc instead and would cause traffic congestion on the high street. He believes Tesco's also consider the site too small but would rather take it than let a competitor do so if the Golf Road project didn't go ahead.

Environment Agency (EA) criteria had been satisfied until the coastal study 'moved the goalposts'. Paul feels this work is coarse and flawed assuming multiple significant breaches at regular intervals along the defences but the planning proposal has been adjusted to address the EA's objections.

The development will include a supermarket from one of the following: Asda, Sainsburys, Morrisons or Tesco's.

Neil Boodle (manager of the Co-Op) asked where the new jobs would come from doubting a supermarket would generate as many as claimed. Paul pointed to the extra care centre saying that the staffing level required is almost as high as one member of staff per resident.

Paul stated that he felt Mablethorpe needed the investment as current businesses are being treat as cash cows (i.e. money being taken out but not put back in) with owners reluctant to invest during what appears to be a period of stagnation/decline for the town.

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