HEYHA Meeting

**Thursday 28th October 2021**

**10:30am**

**Saltmarshe Hall**

**Attendees**

David Cooke (Chair)

Samantha Cook (Vice Chair)

Jonathan Rhodes (Vice Chair)

Maurizio De Martino (Treasurer)

Andrew Smith

Paul Vinsen (Association Advisor)

Kate O’Hara

Penny Lamming

Ekaterina Vasilieva

Megan Oldridge (Administrator)

Guest Speakers

Rachel Underwood

Ellie Walkington

Richard Morris

**Agenda**

10:30am – Welcome from Kate O’Hara, General Manager at Saltmarshe Hall.

– Welcome from David Cooke (HEYHA Chairman)

* *Guest Speaker* – Rachel Underwood (Membership Manager, Welcome to Yorkshire)
* *Guest Speaker* – Ellie Walkington (Business Tourism Sales Officer, Visit Hull and East Yorkshire)
* *Guest Speaker* – Richard Morris (Managing Director, Hospitality Staffing UK)
* Financial and Membership Update – Maurizio De Martino
* Any Other Business.

**Meeting Notes**

**Welcome from David Cooke** – David began by welcoming everyone to October’s HEYHA meeting and thanked everyone for coming. He then gave members an introduction to himself and explained his role within HEYHA. David concluded by running through the agenda for the meeting. Introducing in turn the guest speakers and a brief summary of what will be spoken about.

**Welcome to Saltmarshe Hall from Kate O’Hara (General Manager)**

* Kate commenced by introducing herself and her role as the General Manager, before welcoming everyone to Saltmarshe Hall. She then went on to discuss the hotels history, explaining that it was bought in 2012 by Kate and Roland Whyte. They at first purchased the Hall for themselves to live, but decided to make it into a business. Kate explained the now hotel originally belonged to the Saltmarshe family, which stayed within the family from 1067 until the 1970s.
* Kate explained to the group that Kate and Roland lovingly restored the Grade II listed Hall with great passion, yet also great difficulty. This involved introducing heating, making the once servants quarter accessible to the main house and turning very much unusable space into 14 bedrooms. This includes; one, three bedroomed apartment and a two bedroomed cottage. Alongside this the owners hired two interior designers to make sure care was taken into the restoration, ensuring a contemporary feel yet preserving the character and history of the Hall.
* The function of Saltmarshe Hall now is a hotel and restaurant, which features a bar, alfresco dining and a heated swimming pool. Perceived as the predominant wedding venue within the area, Kate explained parties were able to hire the Hall exclusively. Allowing wedding guests to take advantage of the whole building and the 20 acres of gardens surrounding it. When questioned Kate stated although they do not have any direct competition within the area, Rise Hall and Bunny Hill could be classed as their current competitors.
* After providing HEYHA members with the history and function of Saltmarshe Hall, Kate moved onto talk about the future of the Hall. This involves continuing to extend the function room, which when finished will have the ability to seat 120 people. This will be particularly beneficial for the business during winter, allowing larger winter celebrations to go ahead. Another area of the Hall that has plans for the forthcoming years is the swimming pool located inside the walled garden. Kate explained they were hoping to extend the facilities to be able to offer a spa for guests. A further aspect of the Hall which is due to be renovated is the creation of a bigger carpark, as the current poses issues during events.

**Market Report**

* David then moved onto the market report, allowing members to discuss and share any concerns they are currently facing. Two current aspects facing the industry is; Festive Bookings and Staffing/Challenges.
  + - **Festive Bookings**: It was unanimously agreed upon that the festive period is looking strong for all members. Many stating they are over 70% full for the whole period. Ekaterina explained the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Hull was especially busy this festive period, with the need for a dedicated Christmas coordinator.
    - **Staffing/Challenges**: A widely known challenge currently experienced within the hospitality industry is the lack of chefs. It was agreed upon by all present members that their kitchen departments were short of staff. With many stating they have tried recruiting, but it has proved futile. A further challenge currently facing most members within the association is the difficulty in getting supplies in. This is highly important in the run up to Christmas with turkeys. It was also stated that wine was another area proving difficult to get hold of with David stating they recently ordered £12,000 worth of wine and was informed they could only deliver half of this.

**Ellie Walkington (Business Tourism Sales Officer, Visit Hull and East Yorkshire)**

* After being introduced by David, Ellie introduced herself and her role within Visit Hull and East Yorkshire (VHEY). She explained that she had not long returned from maternity leave, so the aim of her attending the meeting was to catch up with the group and inform everyone of what they have going on at VHEY.
* Ellie began by explaining they are hoping to bring back The Big Welcome training programme, which is a two part visitor welcome training programme showing how attention to detail makes a difference in regards to customer care levels. She clarified this was undertaken in two parts; knowing Hull and customer care. The reason as to why she brought this up was it would be beneficial to VHEY to know when the best time to run this programme would be. Therefore, Ellie asked for members to get in touch with this information.
* Another update Ellie mentioned related to the TXBG booking system and due to the COVID and other factors many hotels have been locked out of this. Therefore, in order to relaunch this members need to get in touch to allow use of this again.
* Ellie then mentioned her colleague, Anthony, had asked for feedback relating to VHEY creating a recruitment campaign on the run up to Christmas. This has the aim of filling some of the vacant positions within the industry. It was noted that many members stated this was too short notice, with the majority already undertaken campaigns of the same sort for the festive period.
* A further area that required action from HEYHA members was the creation of QR posters to stick onto hotel bedroom mirrors. These have the ability of linking hotel guests straight to the VHEY website, where they are able to access information on the region. Ellie asked anyone interested in these to get in touch with Meredith, who will organise the delivery of these. It was also requested by Meredith that Ellie informed the association of VHEY’s new winter YouTube advert which is launching very soon. This is to include updated straplines more suited to the winter months.

**Rachel Underwood (Membership Manager, Welcome to Yorkshire)**

* Following on from Ellie, David introduced Rachel from Welcome to Yorkshire (WTY), she began by explaining that her role at the meeting today was to provide an update on WTY for the members of HEYHA. Rachel went on to inform the members that James Mason the former CEO of WTY left the company last week, and although this was a shame for both the business and the county, they had a really positive board meeting which reiterated the need for WTY. Due to James Mason leaving, Rachel stated the business are planning to recruit an interim Chief Executive, until a more permanent figure is found. Another change within Welcome to Yorkshire is the introduction of a new Head of Commercial for the company. Rachel was very complimentary about her work and explained she has put together a commercial plan for WTY going forward.
* Further to this Rachel wanted to make members aware of two events coming up.
  + The first a networking opportunity in the form of a breakfast meeting held at the Bonus Arena on 9th November, 8-9:30am. This event is being held by Tetley Humber, in partnership with WTY. The breakfast meeting will feature a great guest speaker from 3RockAR, who is currently assisting WTY with their marketing. This will involve augmented reality (AR) marketing in the form of a cycle route around East Yorkshire, showing off its beauty. Rachel shared the fact that she hopes this would be ready to be shown at the breakfast meeting.
  + Secondly, being a training event which is free to sign up to. This is being held on 7th December 2021 at the Queens Hotel Leeds. Rachel clarified this event can be attended by members or individuals within their respective teams. This has a main focus on international tourism but will benefit all businesses within the hospitality sector. Rachel then quickly outlined what the training will cover;
    - Inbound and domestic tourism
    - Common obstacles to market
    - Meet the markets
    - Defining your product offering
    - The travel distribution system
    - Building powerful relationships
    - Pricing your tourism product
    - Creating engaging content
* Rachel encouraged all members to register for this free programme and to do so they had to follow the link previously sent to them via email.
* Another aspect of Welcome to Yorkshire mentioned by Rachel was that Walkshire was to be replaced with a food and drink related campaign. Concluding this Rachel asked members if they had any ideas or the knowledge of events concerning this, and if so could they inform her of these. As she plans to have 2 to 3 events based around food and drink to take place within the region.

**Richard Morris (Managing Director, Hospitality Staffing UK)**

* Richard started his presentation by introducing himself and his objective of providing HEYHA members with an overview of the current recruitment situation within the Hospitality sector.

**Our Year So Far**

* Richard began by expressing how relentless the past year had been, but described the future as settling down and improving. He stated that he had seen a record number of job vacancies, many being within food and beverage and conference and events. He continued by emphasising that a large number of these roles were furloughed or had been made redundant resulting in almost one in seven people leaving the industry. To highlight this demand Richard stated the same number of placements had been made between April and September 2021, as there had been within the whole of 2019. Looking towards the future, Richard maintained 40% of people have been placed in new jobs after being made redundant during the pandemic, which he expressed as “extremely satisfying”.

**Current Job Market Conditions**

* Currently the conditions of the job market within hospitality are challenging. This is due to a shortage for many reasons, some of these being; individuals leaving the industry, loyalty to their current employer, anxiety in changing jobs due to uncertainty regarding lockdowns etc, people receiving salary increases/enhanced benefits and the ability to offer flexible/home working.

**Solutions**

* + - Salary increases
    - Employees being paid hourly above contracted hours
    - Retention bonuses
    - Increase in holiday entitlement and improved pension contributions
    - More focus on welfare and wellbeing
    - Meals on duty, free parking, gym memberships etc.
    - Asking staff what would make a difference in relation to their working environment and the benefits they receive
    - Feeling rewarded for peoples hard work, commitment and loyalty.
* Richard stated that although some of these were temporary measures in order to retain staff, it is highly important to tap into motivations to discover what people actually want from an employer.
* Paul asked Richard about the recent news regarding the Amazon Warehouse signing on fee and if he has seen this within the hospitality sector. Richard claimed he had experienced some companies also offering this, but described it as a sweetener rather than a motivator. Alongside this, there has been a rise in wages, in some cases going up by almost 15% in comparison to before the pandemic. This was particularly prevalent with chefs and mainly due to the current crisis in relation to the recruitment and retention of kitchen staff.
* Richard concluded by advising members to make people aware of what is out there, this is achieved by highlighting the workplace/employers best points – this can include talented people already working there and other benefits to the role. He also suggested using modern social media portals such as LinkedIn and Facebook as he sees these as the most successful ways to recruit.

**Financial and Memberships Update**

* Maurizio provided members with a brief overview of the current financial situation of the Association. Stating they have a total of 13 paid and five unpaid memberships.
* In order to obtain these outstanding payments a number of individuals were allocated members to converse with. Therefore, gaining an understanding of whether they want to continue with their HEYHA membership.
  + Holiday Inn Express Grimsby – Sam
  + Cave Castle – David
  + Beverley Arms – Paul
  + Hull University – Jonathan will sort this
* In clarification, new members of HEYHA that join now will be charged 50% of the full year membership. This is £175 for the remaining business year and then full membership at £350 following on from 1st April 2022, this is the date that was agreed upon for all HEYHA memberships to be renewed.

**Discussion Points**

* **What do members want from HEYHA?** 
  + David opened up the discussion with the topic of what members want from the association. He stated that his role as Chair was to represent the members and provide interesting and helpful content in order to do this. He acknowledged that not many members are attending the monthly meetings, therefore missing out on the valuable benefits of being a HEYHA member. Sam replied with her thoughts, that this drop in attendance is only temporary and is due to the lack of staff, with many members covering shifts due to sickness. Therefore, not allowing them the time to attend the regular meetings.
  + In response to David’s question Jonathan declared a major benefit of HEYHA is the networking events the association holds. For example the awards ceremony, previously held at the Mercure and the summer get together which was organised to take place last summer. He went on to say these are a great platform to get together with people, whilst celebrating business. Following on from this Andrew said he views the help and guidance that HEYHA members provide to each other as a major benefit to the association. This was particularly apparent during the pandemic as the communication between members was extremely helpful when attempting to make sense of different COVID rules and regulations. This was agreed upon by all members, with some expressing that HEYHA is the only place where hoteliers from the region can get together, therefore a vital lifeline for communication within the industry.
* **How do we get most from our relationship with VHEY?**
  + Another point highlighted by David was getting the most out of HEYHA’s relationship with VHEY. He stated that he had noticed a surge in energy from them in the previous months, Sam agreed with this as Sophie had been in contact with her recently communicating possible bookings. It was established that the organisation need feedback from HEYHA to steer them in the right direction. This is extremely important in order to witness the benefits that this relationship brings.

**Any Other Business**

* David raised the query of needing to replace the vacant Vice Chair role. Paul advised that any candidates should volunteer themselves and the members present will take a vote. Jonathan volunteered for the role, with David supporting his nomination. To conclude, all members agreed that Jonathan is a perfect candidate for the role, resulting in Jonathan undertaking the role of Vice Chair, alongside Sam.
* David thanked all the speakers and everyone for attending and reminded members of the next HEYHA meeting, which is taking place in January.

**Additional Information**

* The REYTA awards applications are going live in November.
* The next HEYHA meeting will take place in January 2022 (date to be announced) which will have a focus on what HEYHA needs to do for its members in the forthcoming year. This could include breaking off into smaller groups so people feel more comfortable discussing this, which once the group re-joins may address some common themes.