

Framlingham Business Association

Wednesday 16th November 2022 Bi-monthly Committee meeting – Draft Minutes

Present (at The Crown Hotel Framlingham):

Jenny Labbett (FBA Management Committee) – Renaissance Training/Jenny Labbett Computer Services

Jenny Stockman – Seckford Education Trust

Lisa Hamon – LA Global Management

Cllr Carl Ramsey-Bennett – Framlingham Town Council FBA rep

Vivia Bamford – Framlingham Library

Michele Smith (Speaker) – Membership Advisor Federation of Small Businesses

Rachel Chesman – FBA social media

Jacqueline – FBA Secretary and Association Co-ordinator

Apologies:

Kelvin Gibbs (FBA Management Committee) – Charnwood Milling Company Ltd

Lily Benbow (FBA Management Committee) – Noble Prawn Ltd

Steve Calver (FBA Management Committee) – SR Epic Sound and Lighting

Keith Snowdon (FBA Management Committee) – Keith Snowdon Web Design Ltd

Eileen Coe – Framlingham Town Council, Town Clerk/RFO/DPS

Emma Hayes – Dolled Up

Meeting Chaired by Jenny Labbett Meeting Commenced at 5.30pm. Introductions were made.

1.Attending and Apologies

Please see above, apologies explained and accepted. Noted that wouldn't be quorate for all decisions should any need to be made.

2.Minutes from previous meeting dated 21st September 2022 for approval

The September minutes had been approved and uploaded onto the FBA website. The October Management Committee meeting minutes had been pre-approved by JL and LB in advance in this meeting.

ACTION: JW to request KS upload to website.

3.Matters arising from the previous meeting dated 21st September 2022

No items.

Speaker – Michele Smith, Membership Advisor Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)

Michele Smith (MS) was introduced by JL.

The FSB was set up in the 1970's as a business advisory service on behalf of small businesses whether members or not, it is non-profit and non-party political. It is a national organisation with 160,000 members including sole traders and limited companies. A small business is classed as one with less than 250 employees. There are around 2000 members in Suffolk. FSB is a membership organisation and covers members both as a business (can include more than one business) and personally. Part of the role is to lobby government on behalf of small businesses – who can contact FSB about things they would like raised.

FBA have already informed its own members of the outline benefits included in FSB membership and MS went into further details on the main benefits:

Legal Support – FSB members have access 24/7 to solicitors for advice on legal matters. This includes HR support on everything from sickness and maternity leave to starting and leaving staff and

employment tribunals (for which there is cover up to £200K). There is also a debt recovery service that offers help and advice on debt recovery. Legal costs up to a set limit are included.

Template documents - are available to download, including policies, contracts, and partnership agreements. Drawn up by lawyers the documents are legal in this country and can be personalised and advice can be sought about what documents might be needed, for a new business for example. Health and Safety – advice and policies available.

FSB Insurance – for members only and not available on comparison website, a free audit of what is needed can be carried out to ensure appropriate cover is applied for. Impartial insurance advice is available.

Free Insurances cover -

An HMRC tax investigation, including additional accountant costs up to £200K.

Jury Service cover - includes a defer letter template and £250 for up to 10 days to cover business owner or staff to help minimise additional business costs such as employing temporary staff member.

Free Business Banking – FSB have worked with Co-op Bank for 30 years to offer largely free business banking. Free BACS, online and standing orders and up to £1000 of cheques per month FOC. FSB members can use both Co-op Bank branches and local Post Offices.

FSB Care – illness and medical advice available from a personal nurse advisor, includes help with home equipment, mental health, and counselling whether personally or business related. Up to £250 worth of treatment such as acupuncture, physio or sports massage is included.

Funding platform – FSB can investigate what funding is available and appropriate to your needs, this is done anonymously so your credit rating isn't affected, and the funding supplier won't have your details.

FSB website has a lot of information, members can access extra areas.

Networking – there are hundreds of free events nationally, most are virtual, and everyone can attend any event regardless of area, The networking is structured so that small groups of people can interact together in break out rooms. From October 2022 there are face to face networking events in Suffolk, including in conjunction with the Uni of Suffolk in Ipswich. You don't have to be a FSB member to attend, there may be a nominal charge, you can sign up to attend on the FSB website. There are also free webinars on the website on a wide range of topics including sales and marketing. The regional networking is East of England; East Anglia; and Beds/Cambs/Herts, and usually 10-11am. There are about 40-50 people, including new people each time. Suffolk events continue in 2023 and should be at least bi-monthly.

Membership cost – for a one-person business it's £177 in year one which includes a one off £30 joining fee, so £147 thereafter. Cost goes up in increments for larger businesses, there is no VAT, and membership cost is tax deductible. Membership is a very good value security blanket for businesses. Following the talk there was a question-and-answer session covering a wide range of topics including when the next local networking is (December 14th at Uni of Suffolk), how FSB is funded (by membership fees), about insurance for non-business matters (you can ask for advice at FSB) and if charities can join. MS explained she joined because of a family business and on realising the cost-efficient benefits became a membership advisor. One of the FBA Committee is a member and highlighted the benefits that had been useful and cost saving. FSB don't advertise, people tend to hear about it from fellow businesses or from membership advisors.

For further information please contact Michele Smith at: michele.smith@fsb.org.uk and 07773 612 676.

4. Management Committee and Events

Management Committee for 2022/23 – The new committee was voted in at the AGM with new members Lily Benbow and Steve Calver. Lisa Hamon and Jenny Stockman to continue attending meetings and be supportive, LH to remain treasurer. JS commented that the bi-monthly meetings are useful to her for networking. Small leavers gifts for JS and LH were locally sourced from FBA

member Suffolk Sense and presented at the November 2nd networking. LH and JS have both sent a thank you, commenting on the value of FBA to their personal development and for businesses in the area.

Meetings 2023 –

The Committee is to set the dates for 2023 for Management Committee and Bi-monthly meetings, a draft schedule has been issued by JW for approval.

ACTION: JW to ask committee to agree final dates and look at booking venues.

JW had investigated the availability of the Unitarian Church for an extra networking meeting for a Thursday or Friday pm or a Friday am. Only Friday pm would currently be available. This would be if we are asked to hold one early next year. It is possible Framlingham Library could be available, depending on any date that is required.

Speakers –

SCC Multiply Suffolk would be happy to speak to FBA businesses about improving employee numeracy skills. Vivia was thanked for her efforts to link FBA with this project, the link is Rachel Scofield.

JS happy to talk to meetings about businesses mentoring and working with young people.

ACTION: JW to remind members they can speak at meetings and ask RC to as well

December Management Committee meeting – It was agreed that a social will not take place at this late stage. A meeting could still take place on that date to discuss important items from this agenda – Membership marketing pack content, social media strategy, FBA strategy for 2023.

ACTION: JW to check availability of committee and look at booking a venue, Framlingham Library was a suggestion.

FBA Networking – Took place November 2nd, small attendance but very useful links made and a very informative talk by Vivia Bamford from Framlingham Library.

ACTION: JW publicise in newsletter, with flyers and by content to Rachel for social media.

ACTION: JW has asked members for networking preferences on time, day, speakers etc, RC to poll on social media.

ACTION: Review networking strategy and publicity post the November 30th event and after member feedback.

Small FBA Events – To be reviewed.

Christmas 2021 – JW has been attending the FTC Christmas event meetings.

JW has sent out the letter about the small xmas trees going up to synchronise with the main tree delivery and tree lighting.

The decoration of the FBA tree for the FOSM tree festival theme (Christmas in Fram or aims of the FBA) was discussed. It was agreed to keep more photos of FBA events and meetings to decorate a future tree.

ACTION: JW to organise decoration of the FOSM tree.

FTC Spectacular Event – This was reviewed in the context that FBA had supported FTC grant applications for the event and had promoted it on social media and newsletter. It was agreed that the event aims to be eco-friendly, with community and art involvement, involvement with Fram Castle, and to be something different were good.

Someone from the FBA committee had attended and not enjoyed the event, there had been monotonous music and no commentary or credits about what was happening. There had been some catering issues that were out of FTC hands. Cllr Ramsey-Bennett reported that while there had been both negative and positive feedback on social media there had been 1800 tickets sold and 52 requests for a refund, which is just 3% of attendees. It was felt the marketing had been a bit unclear which had affected expectations, there is to be a post-event survey and a meeting on 6th December about the event and any future 'Bonfire Night' event. FBA will be very interested in hearing more about the feedback and any future plans.

FBA Focus and Strategy for 2023 – Committee have started to look at, JL is working on a spreadsheet document to clarify the plans, actions, and responsibilities.

ACTION: JL to share with committee before the final strategy can be agreed at the next meeting.

5. Framlingham Town Council

Cllr Carl Bennett attended as the new Framlingham Town Council rep. The previous FBA rep, Cllr John Jones, has recently resigned from the town council and it was agreed to send a card from FBA expressing thanks for all his hard work for the town, businesses, and FBA.

ACTION: JW to arrange a thank you card.

JW had spoken to James Overbury about the ESTI funding. He confirmed the Sunday Market would be going ahead Spring 2023, but in house rather than by as an outside organiser as originally planned. Work would also progress very soon on the Digital Trail. FBA noted both initiatives had been discussed between FTC and FBA previously when the ESTI funding was applied for, and that both will benefit local businesses. The other thread discussed to develop digital welcome packs for both businesses and community are still planned but will have to follow the other 2 priorities.

6. Business Items of Interest

No updates yet on the East Suffolk Wi newsletter for news and business ads.

No footfall figures although Proximity Future seem still to have FBA on their contact list and sent an annual report, but it was high street trends generally and not this area or town.

7. Marketing and Online presence

Marketing, social media and online presence.

RC reported that there have been improved stats for the past 2 months. Facebook reach is 9400, 500% up recently, Instagram is up 72% in the last few weeks. Vivia uses multiple social media accounts and advised the meeting. There is a need to look further into what the improved data means for members. Vivia advised there is more data available via Meta Business Suite but as RC uses her phone for posting Vivia advised that you need a computer or laptop rather than phone or tablet to access this deeper data. This would include age details, noting that younger people are using less Facebook and more TikTok and BeReal if we wish to reach more of them.

ACTION: RC to visit Vivia at Framlingham Library to look further into the data.

RC posts almost every day and does receive some content directly and some for the FBA newsletter articles, the rest is researched. RC needs more member content. It was suggested that more likes and shares need to be encouraged as these build reach and interest. It was also agreed that businesses should be asked directly to do a business profile that would be focused on and shared on FBA communications - especially social media

ACTION: Committee members to comment, like, and share FBA posts.

ACTION: RC and JW to ask members to like, share, and comment more on FBA posts, and to send in more content.

ACTION: RC/JW to ask members directly to share their news and to do a profile for social media sharing.

Considered sharing FBA social media stats with members and potential members once there is a clearer understanding of the data.

ACTION: To be reviewed monthly and consider publicising stats to members and potential members.

Looked at having a review of social media strategy and impact.

ACTION: JW to ask committee about having a dedicated social media meeting, ideally face to face.

FBA Website –

ACTION: News and Offer update to be done (KS)

Domain Name –

Organised and paid through Charnwood, we have just 1 renewed one of these and now refunded to Charnwood, two more are due in the early part of 2023.

8.FBA Membership

Membership is 37, renewal process not yet complete. Have had 3 applications to join in last 2 weeks. We believe latest applicants are attracted by the networking and social media.

Reminders sent out and final reminder and removal from website to happen by end of November. 4 leavers – 1 closed, 1 moved away, and a joint membership are adjusting their business direction. Had some nice comments about the value of FBA membership, an example:

...We most definitely would like to renew as we really value the regular social media support and mentions in the newsletter - it is definitely good value for money, and we appreciate the membership fee has been reduced....

ACTION: JW to request KS to hide leavers and add the prepared list of members who don't have a member page.

FBA Membership Drive – Marketing pack is needed, there is £200 budget available. Need to agree wording and content for Keith to plan out the document. JW has forwarded the latest version of the potential content to the committee to review and finalise.

Where we can this will go out as a digital pack but useful to have hard copies for walkabout, events and where business email addresses are not published.

ACTION: Management Committee to finalise asap.

JL and JW looking at doing a Wickham Market walkabout but hanging fire of having the membership drive document to leave with people.

We have been asked again by ESC about progress.

ACTION: JW continue with contact list and prep a list of postcodes for KG to look at.

ACTION: FBA committee members to write brief testaments about impact of their roles

ACTION: Need to get back to ESC about progress

Mailchimp Stats for FBA newsletter

Newsletter 224 18/10/22 – 100% delivered, 66.7% opened, 295 total opens, 7 Clicks on Member news

Newsletter 225 26/10/22 – 100% delivered 61.9 % opened 134 total opens, 7 Clicks on FBA Member news

Newsletter 226 03/11/22 – 100% delivered 57.1% opened, 101 total opens, 3 Clicks on member news and FBA Facebook.

9. FBA Finance

As at - 16/11/22:

Community a/c - £2086.76

Saver a/c - £6627.58

Total - £8714.34

Total includes ring fenced amounts: £320.10 for HOD event, £450.36 for small events, ESC grants remaining £2653.63, gazebo.

Finances Community Account:

October In - Membership fees £1250.00. Total £1250.00

October Out – social media (2 months) £360.00, membership discount refund £10.00. Domain name fee refund £14.39. Total £384.39

Interest of 70p applied 08/11 to the Saver account, Spreadsheet not yet done.

Need to get back to ESC about all grants inc X19.

ACTION: JW to contact JS for suitable time to review

FBA Insurance – standing agenda item to review this.

Need to review PL and FBA insurance needs, Committee had already been informed of costs from previous years.

ACTION: JL to investigate FBA needs and report back to committee.

10. AOB

FBA storage –

Need to carry out an inventory of FBA items in storage, SC has said FTC have borrowed 12 barriers for their 2 events.

ACTION: Will review after Christmas event and when weather better.

Leavers gifts – FTC leavers gift and card in hand.

FBA Planters – Have been removed and stored by Garnett's Gardens, they have been thanked.

List of Businesses – Cllr Ramsey-Bennett asked if FBA have a full list of local businesses. FBA have a list of members and a list of businesses to approach about membership, but it isn't comprehensive. Discussion followed about using Companies House website to research limited companies by area, this won't find sole traders. Those with access to companies such as Experian can also find businesses by postcode.

FBA Invitations – Discussion about whether personal phone call invitations to networking or meetings could be considered, although FBA don't currently have a suitable phone. Agreed the personal touch is a good way to explore. The sharing of information on LinkedIn was also discussed, Michele Smith is to share that she attended this meeting.

11. Next FBA Meetings

Management Committee meeting - meeting 14th December. Next one tbc.

Bi-monthly open meeting – time, date, chair, and venue tbc.

JL thanked everyone for attending.

JL thanked Michele Smith for speaking.

Meeting ended at 6.58pm.