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Impression

NEWSLETTER

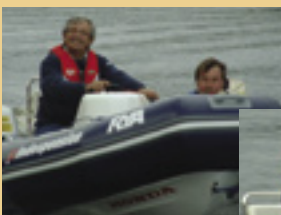


October 2005

Business Club Powerboat Challenge 2005

13 members and friends of the Chorley and South Ribble Business Club took to the water at The Anderton Centre on Rivington Reservoir to do battle for the coveted Powerboat Challenge medals on an overcast (but dry) evening during July. The Avon RIBs are powered by Honda outboard engines and are capable of around 30 knots. The course, however, is designed to promote smoothness and control rather than outright speed. It consists of a slalom around buoys, a man overboard exercise and a reversing exercise before a sprint to the finish. The boats are normally used for the Honda RYA Youth RIB Championship, a national competition for 8-16 year old youngsters. Our competition is the only one involving adults this year. The RIBs, engines and trailers are the prizes for the clubs of the National Champion in each age group. Competitors were given a few minutes practice in the boats before attempting the timed course twice. Last year's champion, Mark Collins, triumphed again, winning for the second year in succession. I will have to devise a handicap for Mark next year! The runner up was Greg Heath who is determined to take Mark's title away from him next year. My thanks go to the Anderton Centre, especially George Livesey and Keith Blackledge for instructing and coaching competitors during the event. Also thanks to the RYA for providing the medals and allowing the use of the boats. And then, of course, thanks to our sponsors, Honda, Avon Inflatables and Indespension Trailers.

Keith Ellison



THE NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 4th October

7.45pm for 8pm @ Lancashire College, Southport Road, Chorley

Networking - Open floor

Unfortunately the talk by Rivca Rubin on Creative Thinking has had to be postponed. As the first Networking meeting trial in May was so popular and well received, the committee has decided to run this format again on the 4th October. We will break into groups of 6 to 8 people and each member or visitor will be invited to talk for two or three minutes about their business and any problems or goals they are currently tackling. After each brief presentation the group will have a short discussion on any questions, help or contacts they can offer each member. Come to the meeting with business cards, samples, give-aways and an open mind about both buying and selling opportunities that may arise. If there is time we will mix the groups and repeat the exercise. It was amazing how many ideas bounced around the room in May. If just one suggestion solves a problem for you then the night will have been worthwhile and it will be undertaken in the usual, relaxed and informal business club style.

NOTICEBOARD

The form E111 that we need to travel in Europe is being replaced by the new card can EHIC Card from no later than December 2005.

Only E111 validated this year are at present valid. Details of the new card and how to get one can be found on www.dh.gov.uk/travellers

Chorley into 2016

Work is progressing on the new Local Development Framework for the Chorley Borough, which will set out policies and proposals for the development and use of land (this will replace the current Borough Local Plan) A Statement of Community Involvement and a Statement of Compliance have been produced and submitted to the Secretary of State. Comments are welcome from the public from the 14th September to the 26th October.

The representation form and further information can be found at www.chorley.gov.uk/planning

Reminder - The National Minimum Wage will increase again in October 2005

- The adult rate of the minimum wage (for workers aged 22 and over) will increase from its present hourly rate of £4.85 to £5.05 in October 2005, and to £5.35 in October 2006.
- The development rate (for workers aged 18-21 inclusive) will increase from the present hourly rate of £4.10 to £4.25 in October 2005 and £4.45 in October 2006.

NB: The development rate can also apply to workers aged 22 and above during their first 6 months in a new job with a new employer and who are receiving accredited training.

- At present the 16-17 year old rate remains unchanged.

NB: 16 and 17 year old apprentices are exempt from the young workers rate.



Dates for the Dairy

Oct 4th	Networking
Nov 1st	Wine tasting with Chordale Wines
Dec 6th	Members presentations
Jan tbc	Bowling
Feb 7th	Collette Murray The Voice Company
March 7th	AGM

Committee contacts

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Advance Notice of new Employment Law Legislation - Age Discrimination

Age discrimination in employment will become unlawful from 1 October 2006, to comply with the EU Employment Directive. The new legislation will carry the same weight as earlier legislation on gender, race and disability.

On 14 July, the Government finally published long-awaited draft age regulations that were greeted by barely a whimper within the business community. This suggests that either the Government has taken a smart approach to developing legislation through extended consultation with employers, or employers have yet to understand the full implications of the Government's proposals. The answer possibly lies somewhere between the two. One fact does, however, stand out. The Government has had a great deal of success by following an active partnership approach to developing these new laws and the regulations are the better for it. By establishing an Age Advisory Group very early on in the process, bringing together representatives from business, the unions and the age lobby, the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) has displayed welcome foresight.

One thing the Government cannot deny is that it has messed up on timing. Initially promising employers two years to prepare has proved impossible. At best employers will see ACAS guidance and final regulations by January 2006, just nine months before the legislation comes into force. For those employers who have already started to look at their age policies, the scale of change required and the timeframe is daunting. The rest remain in blissful ignorance.

Effecting culture change is going to be one of the biggest challenges for employers. Ageism is deeply rooted in employment practice, if not policy. And many are scratching their heads over how to make ageism as unacceptable as racism or sexism in a little over 12 months.

So what are the highlights of the Government's proposals? The following provides a summary.

- No age criteria in recruitment, promotion and training (without justification).
- No mandatory retirement before 65 (without justification).
- New process to manage retirement for everyone.
- No upper age limits on unfair dismissal.
- No direct age criteria in redundancy.
- Pensions and service related benefits generally exempt.

Employers should be in no doubt that these regulations will require major reform in all areas of employment policy. There is a reason that employment lawyers keep saying that age discrimination regulations are the most significant legislation for a generation.

What next?

Employers need to do more than wake up, check out the proposals and respond to the consultation. They will have to wait until January 2006 for the ACAS guidance, but anyone with experience on this agenda knows there is perilously little time to prepare effectively for the regulations, when they come into force in October 2006. It is essential that employers start gearing up immediately. The EFA recommends the following key steps.

- Audit your employment policies for age bias.
- Remove age elements in policies wherever possible.
- Introduce a "no tolerance" policy on ageist behaviour well before Oct 2006 (you can't change ageist attitudes overnight!).
- Sit down with employee representatives to decide how best to unpick age from existing contracts and agreements (employees need to understand why you are making changes to their terms and conditions. Age laws will supersede contract laws).
- Develop a system for analysing staff surveys and monitoring employee information by age to help you identify potential problem areas.
- Review your pension scheme and retirement policies.

The Employers Forum on Age (EFA) is urging employers to respond to the Government's proposals during the consultation period (14 July–17 October) to ensure the regulations are workable when they are introduced. See its "Last Chance" fact sheet at www.efa.org.uk for a summary of the proposals.

The EFA is the first employer-led initiative to promote the business benefits of an age diverse workforce. It is a leading authority on age issues in the workplace and offers expert advice and support to employers on managing skills and age-mix of their organisation.

For further advice on any aspect of employment law contact Jane Howarth at Howarth Associates, Business & Personnel Consultants, 31 Chapel Brow, Leyland, PR25 3NH. Tel 01772 456554 or E-mail Jane@howarth-associates.com