

CHAIRMANS REPORT MARCH 2009

Again it has been a very busy year for the Chamber, with many different new members from differing companies.

Although we have lost some members along the way due to companies moving or going out of business. We actually have only lost 5 members that did not want to renew. And have gained 7 more.

Although I cannot say at this moment in time our exact membership, mainly due to the fact that some have paid on BACS system and have not informed me. However I have received 77 Cheques so far, so we take that as a guideline.

We have raised..... During our fundraising, which is fantastic news.

Last year saw our First St George's day Fayre, and this year it has been upgraded to Festival status due to trebling the size. Many more stalls will be there and much more entertainment. It looks like it will be a tremendous success going on last years celebrations.

The Chamber is the biggest crowd puller in Horley in a 12 month cycle that the town has I believe, ever seen. We as a Chamber have brought many companies and individuals together, helping them to network and do business with each other, and people are proud of the success of the Chamber.

This past year saw the launch of our computer based Newsletter thanks to Chris Sharville, and the response has been astounding. Many more people are reading what the Chamber is actually doing, this is all due by the computer knowing who has opened, read or ditched the Newsletter.

Sadly many companies seem to think that it is the Big Boss that is the member and do not pass on the information to the other staff. Many, many times staff stop me in the street and say "Hey, I didn't know the Chamber were doing this, or doing that". "We never get told what is happening". Sadly that's all due the info not being passed on or allowed to be passed on.

Almost the same applies to the window sticker, these stickers give shoppers confidence, without them on your window, your staff and the populace do not know you are a member; it's a bit like subtle networking! Luckily this only happens in a handful of companies, and naturally some companies like driving schools, do not necessarily need one on their vehicle, or people who work from home in their lounge do not need one on their front door. But wherever you have the public passing by your business it is very helpful and advantageous to display it.

Although personally I was out of the frame for 3 months, and we did not have as many meetings as I would have liked, we have caught up almost with our intentions. The only one we had to drop was the Chamber Poppy Appeal, but that will definitely take place this coming November. We also have afternoon teas for the elderly coming up this year, that too is another way of getting the Chamber name thoroughly embedded into the populace's mind.

Well, I look forward to St George's day and all the fun we will have after all our hard work. I thank you all very much for your help in the past year.

**Peter von Staerck
Chairman Horley & District Chamber of Commerce**