

Lichfield City Council

City Council Offices, 53 Wade Street, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 6HL

Town Clerk: Peter Young, B.A.



Switchboard: (01543) 250011
Fax: (01543) 258441
Email: peter.young@lichfield.gov.uk

Ask For:
Direct Line: (01543) 309850

Your Ref:
Our Ref: PY/M3

21 April 2009

To whom it may concern

I confirm that pages numbered 1 to 3 following are Notes taken by City Council employee, Kate Durrant, of a meeting held in Lichfield Guildhall on 24 November 2008.

Yours sincerely


Peter Young
Town Clerk

Your Town from Yell Meeting – Monday 24 November 2008
Venue: Whytmore Room, Guildhall, LICHFIELD

Attending:

David Case – Publishing Contracts Manager
Christian Wells (Legal and Compliance for Yell)
Peter Rand Link Direct – Delivery Operations
Debbie Hayward – Customer Services
Chris Rapley
Lisa Ogden
Faye Evans
Rachel Whitelaw
Simon Roberts – South Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Kate Durrant – LCC

Notes by Kate Durrant (please note that these should not be regarded as minutes)

Christian made the introduction and explained that Yell were working within the guidelines of Unsolicited Goods and Services Act which outlines certain information that has to be provided to the customer before an order is taken; e.g. minimum delivery numbers.

Contract is binding and Christian agreed that traders would be entitled to a refund under the Act if the minimum delivery were proved not to have taken place.

Link Direct - are a nation wide company used to delivering throughout the UK. (For companies like BT, Thompson, Yell, and Local Government etc.)

A Presentation followed setting out areas of delivery and numbers delivered and back checks made.

Peter confirmed delivery was placed with a local supplier on 10.3.08 and delivery commenced on 20.3.08 using Royal Mail postcodes. Local supplier, Shaun Sargent (no company name) is regularly used to distribute free newspapers etc. He has a local team of workers. Peter confirmed that there was a contract in place with the local contractor. He confirmed that the delivery team had worked for the company for 18 months and are aged between 20 – 40 years.

2x teams of 5 were delivering over 3 days, with supervision from an accompanying vehicle. Peter also confirmed that the local teams gave direct feedback to Link Direct.

With regard to actual delivery, Peter confirmed that delivery was down to the discretion of the man in the street – i.e. some buildings will be non-deliverable if there is no obvious letterbox.

Distribution was 19,508 (with a minimum of 17,600).


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A 3rd party completed independent telephone checks for Link Direct by 31 March 2008. This confirmed 1,199 random checks giving 51% recalled receipt (i.e.616) across the delivery area. Positive and negative checks are patterned evenly across the target area.

Simon asked if Yell had made any independent back checks?

David confirmed some back checking takes place by a team within Link Direct within 11 days of delivery and they were satisfied with the back check information supplied by Link Direct.

Traders queried the validity of the back checking particularly in the Fradley area, and it was pointed out that large clusters of positive checks were in sparsely populated areas.

Peter confirmed that the back check process was to industry standard and Yell is satisfied that successful delivery had taken place.

Chris Rapley gave a response; highlighted that the delivery was door to door, but that no traders that she was aware of had received copies. David confirmed that all advertisers should have received a copy with the distribution run.

She confirmed a questionnaire carried out in the town centre; out of 32-questioned only 1 responded positively.

In Leomandsley Road of 11 questioned none was in receipt.


Other traders present confirmed similar negative responses, Faye confirmed that on asking customers visiting her farm shop she logged 700 negative responses. Although questionnaires etc were only instigated from about April when suspicion of non-delivery was aroused.

Christine also highlighted the process of complaints to Yell and the difficulty in gaining a response, and pointed out that some of the smaller businesses had allocated all of their advertising budgets to Your Town publication, with some having paid up to £1,400.

Lisa explained that she had independently contacted Link Direct with a proposition of delivering a flyer and the resulting response did not improve her confidence in Link Direct.

Christine drew attention to a similar, local directory – Look Local that is regularly delivered to approximately 16,200 houses in Fradley, Shenstone, Whittington and Lichfield. She raised the possibility that this publication could easily be mistaken for the Your Town directory, particularly as it is published in a similar format and colour.

Kate confirmed that shortly after the press release in March, the Council received a number of requests from the public for the directory and from April


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complaints and enquiries from traders. Both City Council buildings were in non-receipt and none of the staff had received a copy to their home addresses. Of City Councillors questioned, including the Mayor, Sheriff and Deputy Mayor, none were in receipt. One Councillor thought she had a copy but on production it turned out to be the Yellow Pages, despite an accurate description of the Your Town publication being given. The Council did receive one office copy, on request but not the 25 copies requested to hand out.

Christian confirmed that Traders with a contract stating delivery of 20,000 would be entitled to a full refund – on production of a copy of the contract. He also confirmed that he would discuss with Link Direct the statements set out by the traders and requested copies of the information presented.

Chris asked for copies of Yell presentation and explained that she would need to meet with the traders before giving up the information they have collected.

Lisa pointed out that some traders have stopped paying Yell until the matter is resolved and were now having to deal with credit agencies, Debbie confirmed that this had been halted.

Christian confirmed that Yell would make a response 7 days from receipt of the trader's presentation note and figures.


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