

1. Overview and Aims of Group

- 1.1. Business First is a non-profit business networking group who organise breakfast meetings each week throughout the year (with the exception of Christmas and New Year as agreed yearly by the group majority).
- 1.2. The main aim of Business First is to provide attendees with the opportunity to network, promote their primary business activity and pass business referrals to other members of the group.
- 1.3. Business First provides a suitable venue and each member is entitled to a breakfast as part of the meeting fee.
- 1.4. Members must aim to attend all scheduled weekly meetings throughout the year.
- 1.5. If members are unable to attend then they are to provide a substitute to represent them.
- 1.6. Members may invite potential members to attend meetings as visitors providing their line of business does not clash with a current members.
- 1.7. The decision of the leadership team and ultimately the executive committee is final, and no negotiations regarding applications or disputes will be entered into.

2. Group Structure

- 2.1. Business First is managed by a leadership team consisting primarily of roles including **Chair, Vice-Chair, Membership-Coordinator**, and **Secretary / Treasurer**, and other appointed members (e.g. Education Co-ordinators and visitor hosts). At the discretion of the leadership team some of these roles may be combined or split between members of the leadership team.
- 2.2. The **Chair** is elected by the outgoing leadership team on a 12 monthly basis. Nominations can be made by any member.
- 2.3. All 3 main officers must stand down every 12 months but may stand for election again.
- 2.4. The **Chair** hosts the weekly breakfast meeting attended by all the members, substitutes and invited guests.
- 2.5. The **Membership Co-ordinator** maintains details of invited guests and statistics on attendance and referrals passed between members.
- 2.6. The **Treasurer** manages the Bank Account and keeps records of payments and receipts. This may be completed with the assistance of the groups appointed book-keeper Treasurer also oversees the processing of new membership applications and membership renewals.
- 2.7. Disputes, and disciplinary matters are dealt with by the Chair / Vice-Chair
- 2.8. The leadership team may appoint further members to act in other positions of responsibility on the leadership team as deemed necessary. This may include (but not limited too) visitor host(s), education slot coordinator, 10 min coordinator, time-keeper, marketing coordinator, events coordinator etc.
- 2.9. None of the leadership team or committee members receive payment for the work they carry out.
- 2.10. Complaints will be reviewed by the leadership team and may result in a written warning to a member. The committee reserves the right to terminate the membership of a member who does not rectify their unacceptable behaviour after receipt of a written warning.
- 2.11. A Business First Executive Committee may be called when necessary, this committee is made up of past Chairmen of Business First - who have been continual members since their term of office.
- 2.12. Any judgement or unresolved dispute may only be overruled and finalised by a majority ruling by the Business First Executive Committee and the serving Chair.

3. Meeting Structure

- 3.1. Meetings will **officially** start at 07:00 and finish at 08:45.
- 3.2. Open networking is actively encouraged prior to and post meeting times (06:30-06:55 and 08:45 onwards).
- 3.3. Meetings follow a fixed agenda and are run by the Chair or an appointed representative.
- 3.4. The Chair introduces visitors to the group (i.e. name, organisation, trade / profession).
- 3.5. A copy of the agenda will be provided to all new members in their introduction pack (the Chair is permitted to make minor adjustments to this agenda during their term, but not the start or finish time).
- 3.6. Any late attendance may be deemed by the Chair as a disruption to schedule and as such late attendance will be logged and all membership rights for that meeting may be negated at the discretion of the Chair.
- 3.7. Members and substitutes will be invited to present their represented member organisation to the group for 60 seconds.
- 3.8. Substitutes will also be invited to present their own organisation to the group for 60 seconds, as long as there is no clash with any current members business.
- 3.9. Visitors will be invited to present their represented organisation to the group for 60 seconds.
- 3.10. The time-keeper will signal when 60 seconds has passed and the speaker will stop and politely sit down promptly
- 3.11. Members, substitutes and visitors are not to pass business materials (with the exception of business cards) during the meeting, with the exception of the 10 minute presenter. A literature table will be provided for such materials, so as not to cause unnecessary distraction during the meeting.
- 3.12. Members, substitutes and visitors are requested at the time of 'contributions' to either
 - i. Pass referrals,
 - ii. Give a single and brief testimonial
 - iii. Pass on useful information (not directly related to their service or product)but not a combination of these in a proportionate amount of time (decided by Chair or time-keeper).

4. Finances

- 4.1. Business First is a non-profit business networking group.
- 4.2. Members pay a weekly meeting fee, which entitles them to representation and breakfast.
- 4.3. Meeting fees are to be paid on or before the first meeting of the month by standing order (a month in advance).
- 4.4. Members pay an annual membership fee, which entitles them to representation, membership and secures their place for that service/trade.
- 4.5. For any member who is more than 60 days overdue on either meeting fees or membership fees, the leadership team reserves the right to issue an official written warning.
- 4.6. Should the account not be settled within the timescale stated in the written warning, the leadership team reserves the right to terminate membership.
- 4.7. The amount of the meeting fee and membership fee will be set by the committee bi-annually.
- 4.8. The funds of the organisation/group belong to the members and are administered on behalf of its members by the elected committee.
- 4.9. All cheque payments from funds require 2 authorised signatures by members of the committee.
- 4.10. The funds arising from membership fees and meeting fees are deposited in a bank account held in the name of the organisation. There are a limited number of authorised signatories to this account.
- 4.11. The signatories are drawn from the current membership committee and are changed as required.
- 4.12. The funds are used to pay for necessary services and promote the activities of the organisation.
- 4.13. Should group finances allow for a group social event for additional networking this will be decided on a majority decision by the current group membership.
- 4.14. In the event that the organisation ceases to exist (with unanimous decision by all 12 month subscribed members within 14 days), any remaining balance of funds will be distributed equally amongst the current up to date and 12 month subscribed members of the group.

- 4.15. A set of accounts is produced annually and is available to view at the request of members.

5. Membership Applications

- 5.1. Each new membership application is sanctioned by unanimous decision by the current leadership team.
- 5.2. New membership applications can be for a 6 or 12 month period, however if the representative or member organisation they represent has previously been a member, applications will only be accepted for 12 month terms
- 5.3. Membership applications must clearly identify the trade, profession and/or range of services that they wish to represent and these must not overlap or conflict with any other member.
- 5.4. The current leadership team and executive committee may also reject a membership application where they deem the trade, profession and/or service unbalances group representation (i.e. towards one or more professions).
- 5.5. The decision of the leadership team and ultimately the executive committee is final, and no negotiations regarding applications will be entered into with unsuccessful applicants following the rejection of a membership.

6. Member Guidelines

- 6.1. Each member is recognised as a specific business/organisation (not an individual – except at the discretion of the group) and membership is not transferable without the agreement of the leadership team.
- 6.2. Each member shall represent a trade, profession or range of services that is clearly identified and does not overlap or conflict with any other member.
- 6.3. Each member shall NOT represent a trade, profession or range of services that overlaps or conflicts with any other member. The leadership team reserves the right to terminate the membership of any member who continues to conflict.
- 6.4. Each member has the right to request alteration to their application profile (trade, profession or range of services) however this is undertaken in the same manner as a new member application (with no cost).
- 6.5. Each member is obliged to pay a meeting fee, even if the member decides not to have breakfast or if the member does not attend the meeting.
- 6.6. Each member is obliged to pay the annual membership fee in a timely manner.
- 6.7. Each member shall be aware that meeting fees are payable by all members and are not included in the membership fees.
- 6.8. Each member shall submit their monthly meeting fees on or before the first meeting of the month by standing order, delayed payments may result in membership being terminated at the discretion of the leadership team.
- 6.9. Each member will be entitled to receive referrals from other members.
- 6.10. Each member recognises that there is no guarantee that a member will receive any referrals.
- 6.11. Each member will use their best endeavours to provide referrals for other members.
- 6.12. Each member shall commit to follow up all referrals received in a professional manner.
- 6.13. Each member has the right to complain about the conduct or the level of service provided by any other member, to a member of the current leadership team.
- 6.14. Each member should discuss any complaint or issue with the member concerned for early resolution wherever possible.
- 6.15. Each member on joining will be given the option to attend a new member training when available.
- 6.16. Each member will be given the option to attend one scheduled group training event during each year of membership when available.

7. Member Absence

- 7.1. Each member has a 3 meeting holiday entitlement per annum. Substitutes should be arranged if possible.
- 7.2. Any member who is otherwise absent without arranging a substitute on more than 2 occasions in a 6-month period will receive a written reminder of their obligation to attend.
- 7.3. Any member who is absent without arranging a substitute on more than 3 occasions in a 6-month period will receive a written warning. The leadership team reserves the right to terminate the membership of any member who continues to be absent after receipt of a written warning.
- 7.4. Any member who has their membership terminated is to pay all outstanding fees immediately and they are not automatically entitled to a refund of fees whether they be meeting fees, membership fees or otherwise.
- 7.5. Any member who voluntarily leaves or resigns from the group are to pay all outstanding fees immediately and they are not automatically entitled to a refund of fees whether they be meeting fees, membership fees or otherwise.
- 7.6. An absent member may request a leave of absence from a meeting, provided they have tried to find a substitute and that they make the appeal to the committee within 24 hours following the meeting.
- 7.7. Members have the right to request exemption from attending weekly meetings for a period of time in special circumstances such as illness. In such cases the leadership team may allow the member to be unrepresented at meetings for an agreed period without having to pay the meeting fees and membership fees will be suspended.

8. Substitute Guidelines

- 8.1. Members of Business First who are unable to attend a meeting should always send a substitute, which can be from their own or a different business organisation. *This ensures that the member's business is represented at every meeting even when the individual cannot be present, as well as ensuring an audience for the other members. Inviting a substitute has the added benefit of allowing other non-member businesses to experience the group as your guest, without any obligation*
- 8.2. An invited substitute should not overlap or conflict with any current members in their profession / occupation or service / product offering.
- 8.3. The member for whom the substitute is substituting is responsible for paying the meeting fee, and in addition the meeting fee of any accompanying visitor(s) with the substitute if they are representing the same organisation.
- 8.4. Substitutes are permitted to represent the member and subsequent organisation for which they are substituting.
- 8.5. Substitutes are additionally allowed to represent a trade, profession or range of services that does not overlap or conflict with any other member.
- 8.6. If the substitute overlaps or conflicts with an existing member it is the responsibility of the substituted member to outline this to their substitute and thus the substitute relinquishes their right to their own personal 60 second slot.
- 8.7. If a member is unsure if a substitute may overlap with the services of another member, they should contact that member and / or the leadership team before an invitation to substitute is proffered.
- 8.8. Substitutes cannot substitute for more than one member.
- 8.9. Members are to pass details of their substitute to the leadership team at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- 8.10. Members are requested to provide their substitute with a script / brief at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- 8.11. Members cannot be considered a substitute, and should not be requested by a fellow member to do so.

9. Visitor Guidelines

- 9.1. Members are encouraged to invite other businesses and organisations to visit Business First and experience the benefits of attendance.
- 9.2. A visitor is recognised as a representative of a company/organisation that is not a member of the group and is not substituting for a member of the group.
- 9.3. Visitors should not overlap or conflict with any current members in their profession/occupation or service/product offering.
- 9.4. Business First will pay the meeting fee for the first visit of a visitor (in regards to a single person) not a substitute.
- 9.5. Visitors are responsible for their meeting fees thereafter @ £10 per meeting.
- 9.6. Visitors may attend no more than 3 meetings before applying for membership, unless attending as a substitute.
- 9.7. Members must take responsibility for their visitors during the meeting, providing support and guidance throughout
- 9.8. Members are responsible for the conduct of their visitor.
- 9.9. If the visitor does overlap or conflict with an existing member it is the responsibility of the inviting member to outline this to their visitor and thus the visitor relinquishes their right to their own personal 60 second slot.
- 9.10. If a member is unsure if a substitute may overlap services with another member, they should contact that member and / or the leadership team before an invitation to substitute is proffered.



Weekly Meeting Agenda

Welcome to Business First.

06:30 Arrival and Open Networking

Please help yourself to tea and coffee. Breakfast will be served at approximately 06:45.

07:00 Meeting Start

Visitors & Substitutes will be welcomed by the Chair. Visitors & Substitutes: please feel free to pass your business cards (cards only, no promotional materials) around the table.

Members of the Leadership Team will be invited to introduce themselves.

The meetings time-keeper will be introduced.

07:05 Education Slot (2 mins)

This morning's education slot will be introduced by the education slot coordinator.

07:10 Members, Visitors & Substitutes 60 seconds. Part I.

The chair will invite each member, visitors & substitute in turn to stand up and talk about their represented business, occupation or profession. Please be courteous to others with your time keeping.

07:45 Coffee Break

07:55 Members 10 minute presentation

A prechosen member will be invited to give their 10 minute presentation on their represented business, occupation or profession.

08:10 Members, Visitors & Substitutes 60 seconds. Part II.

08:30 Contributions, Referrals & Thank You For The Business

Please take a moment to give any referrals you may have for other members, visitors or substitutes in the room. Please use the referral slips provided. The white copy is to hand to the other person. The yellow copy is for you to keep for your reference. The pink copy is retained by Business First.

Please take a moment to thank any other members, visitors or substitutes for any invoiced business they have passed you. Please use the slips provide which are retained by Business First.

Please be courteous to others with your time keeping.

08:40 Any Other Business and Closing activities

Any other business from the Chair.

Membership options explained for the benefit of any visitors or guests

Updates on Referrals & 'Thank You For The Business Passed' during today's meeting.

Any Other Business from members.

08:45 Meeting Closed

Once the meeting has finished you are welcome and encouraged to stay on for some Open Networking or to conduct 1-2-1s with any members or visitors