

MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

31 JANUARY 2007 at 6.30 pm

at Malmesbury Garden Centre

Present: Chairman – Ray Sanderson, Secretary – Lesley Thomas, Treasurer - Alan Cavill, Michael Williams and Stefan Barbaruk of Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce, Jeff Penfold and Joanne Macleod of Malmesbury Town Council, Lord Andover, Thomas Brooman and Chris Smith from WOMAD and 14 members of the Chamber of Commerce.

1. **APOLOGIES** were received on behalf of Abbey Communications, Graley Accountants, Kit Box, Malmesbury School and Sue Austin. The visitors from WOMAD and the Town Council, Lord Andover and Councillor Doody were welcomed.

2. MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 30 January 2006, having been circulated at the meeting, were signed as a true record by the Chairman.

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Ray Sanderson began by thanking the committee for their support during the year. Mark Jones was given special thanks for allowing the committee meetings to be held at his office. At the previous AGM Sue Mellows had been welcomed as the new secretary, and this year Lesley Thomas was welcomed. Sue Mellows had done a great job in promoting the Chamber and it was hoped that Lesley would do the same.

There had been ups and downs during the year; trade suffering badly prior to Christmas with the closure of Oxford Street and Abbey Row. Tempers on a couple of occasions had been rather high and some traders had spearheaded a campaign with the national media. Following the Christmas period work started again in mid January, but not before a public meeting aired the concerns of not only the traders but also the general public. Their views seemed to have been heard and work is progressing extremely well. Sadly, there has also been the closure of a few shops in and around the High Street.

On the positive side the New Business Competition had been very successful, with Ceri Collingbourn not only winning our heat but then going on to win the North Wiltshire competition. She has promised to give an evening demonstration early this year. The Spot the Mistake competition was revitalised in 2006 as an attraction for the children. Hopefully this will be considered again this year.

Christmas Late Night Shopping on Friday 1 December was a success, especially after poor trading in November. There were problems with the lights but hopefully this year's events will be bigger and brighter with the promise of NEW lights. The Chamber will endeavour to work with the Council to ensure this will happen.

There have been a couple of social events – a visit to Wentworth Wooden Jigsaw Company and a game of skittles with ourselves as Tetbury did not turn up. There was to be a visit to Buckley Barracks and this is still in the offing.

Ray hoped he had not missed anything or anybody and thanked the Chamber members for the privilege of being their Chairman for the year.

4. TREASURER'S REPORT

The accounts for the year ended 31 October 2006 were circulated. Alan Cavill said there was a loss of £994 caused by the secretarial expenses which had improved the efficiency of the Chamber. The significant cash reserves on hand at the beginning of the year had been used. Subscriptions had subsequently increased to £45. Outstanding subscriptions had now been recovered and were shown as income. The figures for Late Night Shopping were for 2005. There are sufficient reserves for the future and Alan thanked Denise Pickering of Pickering Chartered Accountants for auditing the accounts.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman: Ray Sanderson – proposed by Alan Woodward, seconded by Alan Cavill
Treasurer: Alan Cavill – proposed by Keith Holdsworth, seconded by Judy Clark

6. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

David Butcher - proposed by ???
Judy Clark - proposed by Paul Hyams and seconded by Alan Woodward
Mark Jones - proposed by Alan Woodward and seconded by Alan Cavill
David Scull - proposed by Keith Holdsworth and seconded by Alan Woodward
Keith Holdsworth - proposed by Judy Clark and seconded by Mark Jones
Chris Jager - proposed by Ray Sanderson and seconded by Lesley Thomas

7. IDEAS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMME

There were none forthcoming but Ray urged that if any come up to let the committee know. Stefan Barbaruk suggested that it would be worth spending an hour before a meeting working on a programme for the year, to be shown on the website. Ray emphasised that the Chamber is working for everyone to make trading in Malmesbury better.

8. UPDATE BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, WESSEX ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

Michael confirmed that the last twelve months had been extremely busy. With the fourteen member Chambers and their membership approaching 1,200 businesses, 3,500 people had attended the various events. The Association is truly representative of business, and a few years ago the North Wiltshire Economic Consulting Group had been set up to liaise with District Councils. Alan Woodward, Honorary President, had been attending on behalf of the Malmesbury and District Chamber.

Car parking was still an ongoing concern, with charges now implemented by North Wiltshire. RTA Associates Ltd had now been engaged as a consultant to review the impact of the charges. Michael suggested that the committee resubmit the work done by Alan Woodward.

Michael explained that for their subscription of £45 members are represented by the Wessex Association who lobby and speak on their behalf and provide networking opportunities. He emphasised the importance of sustaining and increasing membership and gave some details of the new Members Privilege Card. The benefits derived from this card will more than pay for their membership. Michael thanked members for their support.

The speakers, Thomas Brooman and Chris Smith from WOMAD, gave an interesting and informative talk on the festivals organised by WOMAD and, in particular, the 25th anniversary festival to be held in July at Charlton Park.

The Chairman thanked the speakers, the Committee and all members for attending and invited them to share the refreshments, kindly provided by Mr A C Nurden and the Manager and staff of Malmesbury Garden Centre.