

# MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

30 JANUARY 2008 at 6.30 pm

at Malmesbury Garden Centre

Present: Honorary President – Alan Woodward, Secretary – Lesley Thomas, Treasurer - Alan Cavill, Stefan Barbaruk of Wessex Association of Chambers of Commerce, John and Kathy Lawton – Mayor and Mayoress of Malmesbury, Cllr Bill Blake of Malmesbury Town Council, and 19 members of the Chamber of Commerce.

1. **APOLOGIES** were received on behalf Ray Sanderson, Chairman, due to family illness. In his absence Alan Woodward, Honorary President, chaired the meeting. Apologies were also received on behalf of J M Forss Opticians Ltd, John Thomson, Keith Holdsworth, Kit Box, Malmesbury School, Mitchell McLure, Ology, Sport and Leisure, Stanton Manor Hotel and Wentworth Jigsaws. Alan welcomed the Mayor and Mayoress to the meeting. He thanked David Butcher for arranging the food and Andy Nurden for providing the venue for the evening.

### 2. **MINUTES OF LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting held on 31 January 2007, having been circulated at the meeting, were proposed by Chris Jager, seconded by Judy Clark, and signed as a true record by the Honorary President.

### 3. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

In Ray Sanderson's absence the secretary read his report. The report began by thanking the committee for all their help and assistance, especially the new secretary, Lesley, for running the organisation with professionalism, promoting the Chamber in the town and within Wessex.

Like 2006 the town had had major problems. Having just got over the road closures relating to the gas pipe replacement, and then the explosion in the Horse Fair, the closure of Cow Bridge followed and for some the 7 mile detour to reach the trading centre of Malmesbury. This centre has not really survived the impact of the gas works, let alone the closure of the major route into the town. However, there are not only new shops in the town, but at least six new businesses have started up. Ray personally wished them all the very best for the future and thanked Lesley for "geeing up" the support to encourage six companies to enter the "New Business of the Year" competition, which resulted in Wiltshire Psychology Service based at Brinkworth House winning our section.

May brought the towns and district elections, and headaches for your Chairman. Having been elected as one of the councillors representing Malmesbury, Ray had then been selected to be a member of the car parking committee. He found it impossible to serve two masters and during one committee meeting it was resolved that he would not enter into any debate relating to the subject. That helped a little, but he still felt uncomfortable. NWDC could not be persuaded to back off with regard to the free hours parking. "It is here to stay".

There have been lots of positives. Ray believed our monthly meetings have been lively, informative and well attended, and again thanked the committee, and especially Andy Nurden for agreeing that we could use the garden centre. The year shows the Chamber being represented on a number of occasions, these being:

March -The visit to Buckley Barracks. Re-opening of the Horse and Groom in Charlton (Lesley must chase their membership as they promised to join). W.A.C.C .Business Lunch in Chippenham. Economic Consultative Group meeting NWDC.

April -Annual dinner at the Hog, (very poorly attended).

May - Visit to Houses of Parliament. (we have guides this year).

June - Visit to Whatley Manor, a great evening.

July - Would have seen our visit to Abbey House Gardens but it rained and rained.

December -Late Night Shopping, another great evening, with thanks to all those that made it such a success, namely Dave and his team, the committee and the traders. Ian Nurden was thanked for sponsoring the snow making machine and Ray hoped we could find the money to have one this year. The new Christmas lights were the other added feature. Maybe we should run a competition to guess the time and day they will be taken down. Should they be increased next Christmas? Malmesbury Town Council would like members' thoughts.

Finally, Ray stated that it has been a privilege to chair the Chamber for the last two years. He could not say with honesty that the commercial viability is better now than it was when he took over, but he wished the new Chair all the very best and looked forward to being a member of the next committee if elected. He thanked everyone again for their support.

#### **4. TREASURER'S REPORT**

The accounts for the year ended 31 October 2007 were circulated. Alan Cavill said there had been an increase in subscription revenue, mainly due to the increase in the annual subscription from November 2006 to £45 to fund the benefit of a paid secretary. The secretarial cost showed an increase on the previous year because the previous secretary had started halfway through. WACC membership had increased to £20 per member but Alan felt this to be beneficial. The other main expense had been the redesigning of the Chamber website. The accounts showed a deficit for the year. Alan explained that it was necessary to run down the balances for the year, leaving enough to run on a year to year basis. Alan thanked Denise Pickering of Pickering Chartered Accountants for reviewing and finalising the accounts.

#### **5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

Chairman: Alan Woodward – proposed by David Butcher, seconded by Judy Clark  
Treasurer: Alan Cavill – proposed by David Smith, seconded by Alan Woodward

#### **6. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

David Butcher - proposed by Angela Smith and seconded by Judy Clark  
Judy Clark - proposed by Paul Hyams and seconded by Martyn Rendle  
Ray Sanderson - proposed by Lesley Thomas and seconded by Keith Holdsworth  
Mark Jones - proposed by David Butcher and seconded by Keith Holdsworth  
Keith Holdsworth - proposed by David Butcher and seconded by David Scull  
Chris Jager - proposed by Alan Cavill and seconded by Alan Woodward  
David Scull - proposed by David Butcher and seconded by Keith Holdsworth  
Jane Nurden - proposed by Alan Woodward and seconded by Julian Butler  
Michael Thomas - proposed by Julian Butler and seconded by Alan Woodward  
Julian Butler - proposed by Judy Cross and seconded by Ian Stafford  
Angela Smith - proposed by Alan Woodward and seconded by Judy Cross

Alan Woodward thanked everyone for standing and noted that this year there would be a full committee. He thanked Ray Sanderson for his work as Chairman over the past two years which has been much appreciated.

#### **8. UPDATE BY STEFAN BARBARUK, WESSEX ASSOCIATION OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE**

Stefan was pleased to confirm that Mere had now joined WACC. With 15 towns in total and 1200 businesses, WACC was now the second largest Chamber group in the south west, next to Worcester. WACC aims to lobby for businesses, and there would be an interesting time ahead with the proposed unitary authority. Stefan asked those present to give a round of applause to the committee for all their hard work. He spent some minutes promoting the Business Privilege Card, with its benefits, and urged members to take advantage of all the support offered by the local Chamber and WACC.

#### **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chamber had received an email from New College in Swindon regarding training opportunities, for small businesses, in Wiltshire colleges. Lesley had copies if anyone was interested and she would forward the email to all those Chamber members for whom she held email addresses. Lesley also asked for names of those interested in the forthcoming trip to the Houses of Parliament on Monday 3 March.

David Butcher reported that WOMAD would be providing a town bus again this year on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

---

The speaker, Dr Chris Simons from *mars* (Malmesbury Abbey Restoration Scheme), gave an interesting and informative talk on the proposed work to take place at the Abbey.

The Chairman thanked the speaker, the Committee and all members for attending and invited them to share the refreshments.