

## MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 15 April 2008 at 6 pm  
at Malmesbury Garden Centre, Crudwell Road, Malmesbury

**Present :** Stefan Barbaruk, David Butcher, Julian Butler, Judy Clark, Keith Holdsworth, Chris Jager, Mark Jones, Jane Nurden, Ray Sanderson, David Scull, Lesley Thomas, Michael Thomas and Alan Woodward (Chair)

1. **APOLOGIES:** Cllr Bill Blake , Alan Cavill, Angela Smith.

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:** The Minutes of the committee meeting held on 18 March 2008, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. **MATTERS ARISING:** Alan W confirmed that a 'nil' return had been signed and sent to NWDC for the past year regarding the lottery registration.

#### 4. **CORRESPONDENCE:**

- A letter from Samantha Hearn, a specialist in supporting adults with learning disabilities and helping them find paid employment. Samantha would like to come and talk to members.
- An email from David Butcher from Abbey Printing regarding suggestions for future events and activities.
- A letter from Jeff Penfold, Town Clerk, regarding 'Malmesbury in Bloom', listing the various locations where sponsorship is being sought. Cllr Doody has indicated that she is looking at elevated baskets on 27 electricity poles from the Cross Hayes to the Triangle. On the basis of 100 businesses she is looking for £20 from each organisation. The colours for the year were discussed as many businesses do their own baskets.
- Lesley had been approached by the ex-Governors of Burton Hill School as the owners, Groom-Shaftesbury Society, would shortly be putting the building on the market. They wished to know if the Chamber would be prepared to write a letter of support to the Society suggesting that a new hotel would be advantageous to the town, as it would allow public use and provide business through tourism and employment. Following discussion we agreed that any local business would be supported. Lesley would write accordingly and invite the Society / any potential purchaser to give us a presentation on their plans.

5. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** In Alan Cavill's absence Lesley reported balances: Current account £98.68 and Deposit account £1,784.20. Andybus had now been paid for the trip to Parliament and all other creditors have been paid.

7. **UPDATE ON PUBLIC MEETING – MALMESBURY COMMUNITY SAFETY FORUM:** This item was discussed in advance of item 6. as the two Town Councillors had to leave early. Ray Sanderson confirmed that NWDC had ringfenced £50k for CCTV in the district and he had submitted a bid for Malmesbury. Five High Street traders had been present at the meeting, which was disappointing considering that the Chamber was trying to protect the livelihoods and businesses of Malmesbury. Wiltshire Police, The Wiltshire Crime Reduction Team and North Wilts District Council's Anti Social Behavioural Officer had been present at the meeting. Ray confirmed that three CCTV cameras would be 100% funded by NWDC, whilst he would look at fundraising for the running costs and licence at around £500-£600. The police had recommended the following locations: corner of the town hall to monitor Cross Hayes and Oxford Street looking towards the High Street, on the travel shop and on the Indian Restaurant by the Market Cross. They would record on a 24/7 basis, to be monitored at certain times (which could be done from home) and they would also be capable of number plate recognition. Ray has until 10 May to do the paperwork and gain the approval of NWDC, and the aim is to have them up and running before WOMAD. David Butcher queried the location of the camera near the Market Cross as it would not see Birdcage Walk, but the one on the travel shop should pick up the missing areas. Ray confirmed that the acquisition of the cameras should be approved at the Town Council meeting he would be attending that evening. The Council would need to give a letter of support for ensuing years when the cost could be added to the precept.

A joint Pub and Shop Watch scheme had also been discussed where shops will have open wave radio linked to the Community Support Officers. A forum was to be set up and police would have regular meetings with

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shopkeepers. This would include pubs in the outlying areas such as Brokenborough and Crudwell. Licences were now issued by NWDC.

Alan's view was that it had been a good presentation from the Chamber's point of view and we should feel positive about the outcome.

From his work with the car parking working group at NWDC Ray reported that lines and signs were now patrolled from 8am – 8pm. Under new legislation traffic wardens are responsible for these and the police can no longer book people causing obstructions. A copy of a letter received by Michael Williams at WACC from NWDC was distributed regarding car parking concessions. £96,000 could be realised across the area to offset some of the adverse effects of the car parking charges. Malmesbury should receive about £13k of this. The car parking income referred to the long stay car park as Cross Hayes is owned by WCC and managed by NWDC. Although the turnover for Cross Hayes was unknown Ray confirmed £20k profit there, which has to be spent on transport and facilities for the disabled. Alan confirmed that this return of money to the community was a result of continued pressure from all the North Wilts Chambers of Commerce and a positive outcome from the Economic Consultative Meetings. Recommendations on how it should be spent are invited from the Town Council and the Chamber; also on how best the monies should be allocated, i.e. either by Car Parking income (12 months to 31 March 2008) or by Community Area Population.

Ray and Michael left the meeting at this point (6.45pm).

Stefan updated the committee on the situation in the West Wilts towns and, although this is a limited amount, the funding could be there for next year when we will be dealing with one unitary organisation, who will be keen for people to live, work and spend money in Wiltshire and will not want to see retired communities. Following discussion it was agreed that Lesley would write to Caroline Lightfoot, with a copy to Jeff Penfold, to suggest the money is spent on either a free first hour period; a 2-part ticket for exchange in certain shops, enabling the car parking money to be refunded when a certain amount is spent; or free policed parking on the three Saturdays prior to Christmas (to avoid exploitation by people parking all day). The Town Council has opted for allocation by population and Alan W recommended we also do so.

**6. MEMBERSHIP AND PROMOTION OF CHAMBER:** Alan C had provided a budget review sheet for discussion in advance of the meeting. Lesley confirmed that paid-up membership was very similar to this time last year. There are currently 81 in the directory, of which 71 have paid, 4 have been chased and seem keen to pay, 4 were given free membership following their participation in the 2007 New Business Competition, and there is one honorary member and one associate member. Of the six 2006 New Business Competition entrants only one has agreed to pay for this year, and it was unanimously decided not to give free membership in the future. The Christmas lights were staying up so there would not be the outlay this year of setting up and taking down. Stefan pointed out that the other Chambers do not give money away in this way but concentrate on "looking after their own". It was decided that Lesley would write to Jeff Penfold, as for 'Malmesbury in Bloom', explaining that no funds are available from the Chamber this year and suggesting that individual businesses are approached, but we will concentrate on running Late Night Christmas Shopping as we have always done. Jane's idea of boxes on shop counters and in the hotels, for the subsidy of the evening's entertainment, was met with approval, and this needs to be instigated as soon as possible. Alan W pointed out that WACC has been paid for this year and the secretary needs to be paid. David Butcher suggested once again that the secretary could be employed by the Chamber, to avoid the VAT. Alan C would be asked to consider VAT registration as he had suggested in his budget review.

Julian proposed that a finance committee be set up to meet two to three times a year, with Alan C as the Chair, composed of five people. We would still receive a Treasurer's report at our meetings, but there would be no need to debate the finances at our monthly meetings. This committee would concentrate on the budget and chasing membership, and would comprise Julian, Chris, Lesley, David Butcher and Alan C. Lesley would inform Alan C of this on his return from holiday. Meetings could be arranged at the end of the working day to fit in with Alan C and there would not then be the requirement for him to attend our monthly meetings so regularly. There was discussion of subscription increases as we had effectively had cheaper membership to WACC until now, and Stefan explained that although we increased our subscriptions at the outset by 50%, the other Chambers pay £63, with WACC retaining 60% and 40% returned to the local Chamber. Each time WACC organises an event they add at least £1 for profit. Malmesbury could organise some joint events with other Chambers, such as Wootton Bassett or Cricklade. These were issues the finance committee would need to discuss.

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Due to a declaration of interest Lesley left the room while the secretary's salary was discussed.

Alan proposed that we hold business meetings bi-monthly, with the other meetings being open meetings with speakers, where members could raise issues for discussion by the committee. A charge would be made at these meetings for tea and coffee. The first of these would be on Tuesday 24 June (exceptionally the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday) when Sue Wilkin from Trading Standards had arranged to speak to us. A technology event at the Town Hall for 2009 was also discussed. Alan indicated that some forum money could be available from Caroline Lightfoot. Stefan emphasised that sufficient planning time must be allowed. Alan thanked Jane for the success of the Easter Bunny event. Lesley and Alan would get together to compile a programme of events which could go in the forthcoming newsletter. Stefan suggested that a sponsor for the newsletter could be found. It was agreed that the Chamber needs to be seen to be pro-active and Chris suggested that we are positive on issues which may not have been seen as achievements, such as car parking and Cowbridge, where we have tried to make an impact.

David Scull, Julian and Jane left the meeting at this point (8pm).

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

- (i) Judy felt that the "parking siege" on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> had been unfair, in that the wardens were over-zealous in a small community, considering that there had been no prior warning of the new regulations regarding the policing of lines and signs. The wardens had arrived at 5.35pm. Lesley would write to Dick Tonge at NWDC to voice these views.
- (ii) Judy asked about WOMAD this year and it was agreed that this would be a good place to promote the Chamber. Lesley was attending a meeting with Cllr Doody in the Tourist Information office on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> April at 11am to discuss various forthcoming events.
- (iii) Stefan confirmed that the New Business Competition would be going ahead as in previous years. He was meeting with the Chamber secretaries on Monday 28 April. Cricklade Business Association had offered to hold the local presentation evening in October. Stefan was hoping that James Dyson would speak at the final presentation, which he hoped to be a black tie event.
- (iv) Lesley asked for suggestions for the forthcoming newsletter and briefly outlined the ideas she had.
- (v) Chris confirmed that he would be representing the Chamber at a discussion day in Lyme Regis on Friday 18 April organised by S W Tourism.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 20 May at 6 pm at the Garden Centre.

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

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