

MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 16 September 2008 at 6 pm at Malmesbury Garden Centre, Crudwell Road, Malmesbury

Present : Stefan Barbaruk, David Butcher (Malmesbury Garden Centre), Mr and Mrs David Butcher (Abbey Printing Ltd), Julian Butler, Judy Clark, Keith Holdsworth, Chris Jager, Mark Jones, Jane Nurden, David Scull, Angela Smith, Lesley Thomas, and Alan Woodward (Chair)

1. APOLOGIES: Alan Cavill, Michael Thomas. Alan explained that this would be a normal business meeting – the open meeting planned had been cancelled due to lack of support.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: The Minutes of the committee meeting held on 19 August 2008, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING: There were none.

4. CORRESPONDENCE:

- Agenda for MALG meeting taking place the following afternoon. Lesley read the agenda items and indicated that, if anyone wished to attend the meeting, they should let her or Phil Rice know beforehand.
- Email from Stewart Shape at the Wild Food Shop indicating his intention to start a co-op in the town to sell fruit and vegetables and seeking help with its promotion and setting it up. He had also telephoned Lesley to indicate that he hoped to get Ben Fogle and the Hamiltons involved with the promotion. We felt it was an interesting idea, welcoming a new venture and support the idea in principle, but as a Chamber we need to be impartial and cannot promote one member above another. We would definitely be keen for more shops in the High Street as empty shops are not good for the town. The co-op idea was discussed and Stefan suggested that Stewart speak to Len Turner at WACC for help in setting this up. It would also be helpful for Stewart to come and speak to us when he has more concrete ideas, possibly at one of our open meetings, as there may be other Chamber members who would want to join such a co-op. David Butcher (Abbey Printing) has an NWDC list of all businesses in the area and was surprised that we, as a Chamber, do not have this. Lesley will speak to NWDC about this. It was agreed that Lesley would assist Stewart by sending an up-to-date directory of Chamber members, refer him to Len Turner and the WACC website, refer him to Cllr Simon Killane at MTC and Caroline Lightfoot in the Reperation Department of NWDC. The feeling was that organic fruit and vegetables being sold would not impact the other High Street retailers but complement them.
- Email from Shaw Trust suggesting a speaker for one of our meetings.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Alan reminded the committee of the correspondance from NWDC regarding return of monies to the North Wilts towns from car parking profit, c. 95k. At the recent meeting attended by Alan, NWDC maintained their three options with two free Saturdays prior to Christmas i.e. three other free days during the year, 10p off the first hour or 20p off the second hour. At our August committee meeting this had been discussed and therefore Alan put forward our request for the first hour to be at 30p (i.e. 20p off). However, this could not be accommodated and in view of the fact that the free Saturdays would be unpoliced, the Town Council, and Alan on behalf of the Chamber, decided this would be unacceptable, so they opted for 10p off the first hour indefinitely, as there was very little to vote on. Alan confirmed he would indicate our displeasure and also discuss the issue with Ian Storey, the local representative at WACC, at the forthcoming economic forum. The decision taken at the meeting had, it was felt, been a foregone conclusion.

Stefan reiterated that under the new unitary authority, where the county would be split into 20 regions, the local community boards would have a Chamber member on them to give views on issues such as this. In his opinion most of the Local Authorities are in freefall at the moment awaiting the new Wiltshire Council being formed in April 2009.

We had been informed that the Cross Hayes car park would be resurfaced on 6 October. Lesley would write to Danny Everett at Wiltshire Highways Partnership, WCC, to ask that all the businesses in Cross Hayes, and those backing onto it from the High Street, be informed of the new date for resurfacing and how long the car park will be closed.

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6. TREASURER'S REPORT: In Alan C's absence Lesley reported balances: current account £131.68 and deposit account £682.73. After a great deal of persistence Alan was pleased to report that he has now received our VAT registration which has been backdated to 15 May. If any new member signs up VAT will need to be added to the subscription (total amount now £52.87). Alan has now applied to join the VAT flat rate scheme effective from 1 October. We will be able to reclaim VAT input tax back of c.£120 in respect of the quarter to 30 September. There are no outstanding liabilities apart from secretarial costs for this month; the invoice is issued in early October. Alan had previously confirmed that he would send a note with membership renewals regarding the VAT. Alan W. confirmed that two donations had been received from non-members for Late Night Christmas Shopping - £25 from Boots and £50 from Clobber.

7. LATE NIGHT CHRISTMAS SHOPPING UPDATE:

- (i) Angela had arranged for the carnival committee to loan us their road closure signs.
- (ii) It was noted that once again, unfortunately, the school is holding a function on the same evening.
- (iii) The snow machine is on order.
- (iv) Mike O'Hara at Malmesbury Labels has agreed to do the posters once again.
- (v) David Butcher (Garden Centre) has arranged the Kennet Band. Malmesbury Concert Band does not wish to take part.
- (vi) Julian has arranged the juggler.
- (vii) Lesley has the road closures in hand with NWDC.
- (viii) Judy has the presents in hand and has confirmed the Athelstan Players.
- (ix) Lesley has confirmed the funfair will attend and will contact them a few weeks before to confirm that they can set up from 3pm (road closures allowing) and that there would be help available to do so.
- (x) David Butcher (Garden Centre) has confirmed the food van, and there was some discussion as to the location of this.
- (xi) Lesley showed the advert which she would send off after the meeting for inclusion in the three local parish magazines.
- (xii) Lesley would arrange the Town Crier, David Shelley.

8. SPOT THE MISTAKE UPDATE: This had run throughout August. The prizegiving would take place at the Tourist Information Centre at 4.30pm on Thursday 25 September.

9. NEW BUSINESS COMPETITION: The judging will take place on the evening of Thursday 23 October. Stefan confirmed that finding entrants for the competition generally was proving quite a struggle this year (six forms had been sent out in Malmesbury with one returned so far). The final presentation for all towns would take place at a black tie event at Bowood on Friday 21 November. Stefan had discussed the idea of a full county event for next year with Cllr John Thomson. The competition has a good track record as all the winners are still in business.

10. TOWN PROMOTION MEETING, TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER: In response to the idea that the High Street is dying in comparison with Tetbury's, we have invited Peter Martin, Deputy Mayor of Tetbury and a South Cotswold District Councillor, to come and talk to us to explain the concept of their town centre manager, who promotes businesses and finds funding for community and business projects. Peter is keen to promote all market towns. Lesley had already contacted Phil Rice to arrange a joint meeting with Cllr Goldstone and the Tourism committee of MTC on Tuesday 21 October. (Mark and Chris left the meeting, 7.15pm.) Stefan confirmed that other towns have this facility and we need to pursue this opportunity, as there will be a different approach under the new unitary authority. It was decided that all members would be invited to the meeting, along with the town council and Cllr John Thomson, on a first come, first served, basis. (Jane left the meeting, 7.30pm.)

Some more discussion ensued regarding the purpose of the Chamber and how to benefit and recruit its members. Alan reminded us of the idea of a business exhibition in Malmesbury in 2009 – in the past this had proved a good way of informing people and it would be a way of being pro-active. This would be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

11. CHILDREN IN NEED EVENT, FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER: This had been discussed at a previous meeting and the ideas previously mentioned were discussed. The general feeling was that there was not enough energy in the town at present for such an event, and it would need early planning for next year,

advertised around March. Meanwhile, Lesley would send for the current pack from the BBC to give us a general idea of what is involved and we will concentrate our efforts on Late Night Christmas Shopping.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- (i) Judy Clark suggested that the Town Crier, David Shelley, would make a good judge for the Christmas Window competition. Lesley would try and arrange this when she is booking him for the evening event.
- (ii) It was agreed that we would meet as a committee at 6pm on Tuesday 21 October for a short business meeting prior to the meeting with Peter Martin arranged for 7pm. Coffee and tea would be provided for this meeting, with a request for donations.
- (iii) Stefan reminded us that the free training opportunity is still available.
- (iv) David Butcher handed out match funding sheets for everyone to complete when they spend time arranging things for Late Night Christmas Shopping. Phone calls to be charged at £10 per hour and time put down at £15 per hour or the night rate if after business hours.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 21 October at 6pm at the Garden Centre.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm.

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