

## MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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

**Present** : David Butcher (Chair), Alan Cavill, Keith Holdsworth, Chris Jager, Angela Smith and Lesley Thomas

**1. APOLOGIES:** Stefan Barbaruk, Julian Butler, Judy Clark, David Scull, Alan Woodward.

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

**3. MATTERS ARISING: 11. Proposed technology / business event in 2009** – Chris asked if there was any news on this. It was agreed to talk to Cllr Patrick Goldstone in the second half of the meeting to ask if the Town Hall could be available at no charge, with just a nominal fee being charged towards printing and promotion for businesses attending. There would be a surcharge for non-members. Possibly a sub-committee to be formed to organise the event. There was discussion regarding an alternative venue but it was felt that the Town Hall was the most suitable, being in the town centre.

**6. Treasurer's Report** – Lesley had received an email from David Butcher (Abbey Printing) requesting recent committee minutes and a copy of the constitution as discussed at the last meeting. The latter are uploaded onto the Chamber's website following their approval. As the constitution is not available electronically, Keith took the hard copy, to be scanned into PDF format and forwarded to David. The email also contained a request for a projected cash flow forecast showing our income, known and expected (historic) expenditure, for the financial year 1 November 2008 to 31 October 2009, to be circulated to all members with the notification of the AGM. David from Abbey Printing had explained that this, together with a copy of the accounts (to the 31 October 2008), normally circulated at or prior to the AGM, would give members a fuller financial picture on which to base any proposals on which they may be asked to vote. Alan explained that the accounts are currently undergoing the independent review by Denise Pickering and would be available, as usual, to table at the AGM. As December is a particularly busy time for accountants it would not be possible to produce a cash flow. Lesley circulated a questionnaire she had produced at Chairman David Butcher's request, to be circulated to all members to ask how they felt about the running of the Chamber and the information/support received from WACC. It was agreed not to send this out but to circulate it at the AGM. David (Chairman) suggested that all members of the executive committee meet David Butcher (Abbey Printing), before the AGM, on an informal basis, for an open discussion of his ideas. All were in favour of this. David will arrange this.

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

- Under its new ownership, Amanda's had joined as a new member.
- Email from Pauline Bucknell, regarding a spread for the next Wessex in Business, requesting comments from each of the town's Chamber presidents on their thoughts, predictions and wishes from a business perspective for 2009. Alan W. did not feel he was in a position to do this, and Alan C. volunteered to write a piece to send over.

**5. TREASURER'S REPORT:** Alan confirmed that 60 members had renewed their subscriptions to date. Three previous members had indicated that they were not renewing. Reminders had been sent out. The reported balances were: current account £81.36 and deposit account £2,991.60. The WACC affiliation fee had not yet been paid, but £1,200 would be sent for paid-up members to date. The VAT flat rate registration had produced an extra £240 of subscription income. There was discussion as to whether it would be of benefit to employ the secretary separately or for the secretary to become a proper officer of the Chamber, to avoid VAT on the salary. David and Alan to investigate this.

**6. LATE NIGHT CHRISTMAS SHOPPING FEEDBACK:** Lesley had written to thank Andy Nurden, Malmesbury Labels, Andy James and David Shelley. Alan would send a cheque with the letter to Athelstan House for their amenities fund, to thank them for wrapping the presents for Father Christmas, and David would send a gift to Terry Soule (Father Christmas) with his letter. There was £100 from the High Street stalls. Julian had the money from Father Christmas in his safe and therefore a full update would be done at the January meeting. Borrowing the signs from the carnival committee had worked well, but there had been a problem with insufficient cones as these had also been loaned to Wootton Bassett and Cricklade, as their Christmas shopping nights had been on the same evening.

ACTION

DB

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DB

**7. ARRANGEMENTS FOR AGM:** Lesley had tried to contact David Grogan at the new health centre to come and speak at the meeting but to no avail. (Please see notes on the meeting later in the evening with Ross Mackie of the Residents' Association and Cllr Patrick Goldstone regarding plans for the AGM speaker.) The papers would go out before the new year.

**8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:** There was none.

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

The meeting closed at 7pm, to be followed by an informal meeting with Ross Mackie of the Residents' Association and Cllr Patrick Goldstone.

ACTION

## TOWN PROMOTION MEETING – FOLLOW UP

Ross Mackie had provided two papers prior to the meeting: some notes reflecting the observations put forward at the Residents' Association recent Committee meeting and a copy of a briefing paper received from Cllr John Thomson last month. It was noted, however, that the latter paper was well out of date, being based on information from the last census.

### Town Hall and Tourist Information / Events Manager

One of the points noted at the Residents' Association meeting was their feeling that it is imperative that the Town Council appoints a manager to co-ordinate marketing of retail, services, industry and tourism businesses. Cllr Goldstone explained the present major emphasis of turning the refurbished Town Hall into an ongoing viable financial concern and the following points were noted:

- The coffee shop is still to be let.
- The government's Public Works Loan Board had provided the funds for the refurbishment before the financial crisis.
- The Town Hall had proved an asset on the late night Christmas shopping evening, with the information centre and the museum receiving many visitors.
- Andy Dawson, now running the information centre, has a degree in hospitality, and is trained to attract people into the town. His role will evolve into a combined Tourist Information / Events Manager. He is currently working 22 hours a week, and the extra 15 hours to be allocated for events will also enable him to liaise with other organisations in the area, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Tourist Board.

### 2009 Business Show

Cllr Goldstone indicated the Town Council's aim to stage and finance an exhibition for production and services industries around Easter time, when visitors start to come back into the town. If there are 800 businesses in the area, as has been suggested, many of them are widely unknown. The new housing in the town provides extra money for the Town Council. Ross queried if there would be some funding available within the new unitary authority but Cllr Goldstone confirmed that there would be none for commercial enterprise. David Butcher suggested running a combined event, as one of the items we had discussed that evening had been a similar event, and our intention had been to ask if the Town Hall could be available at no charge. This was agreed and ideas for the format of the event were discussed as follows:

- 100 stall places would be available (£10 a head to be charged).
- Need to put some emphasis on those businesses out of the high street area e.g. 'Did you know ...?'
- A marketing leaflet to be produced prior to the show (Town Council to arrange). Also a map of businesses, showing where they are located.
- A Friday – Sunday event.
- Continuous manning would not be essential but some representation on a continual basis.
- Not a sales outlet, but more to enable businesses to show 'who we are'.
- Local food producers and caterers to bring in food. The Garden Centre would provide coffee.
- Drop-in clinics, e.g. on websites.
- In line with the Chamber's original thinking, suggested dates to be over one of the first two weekends in June.
- Those present at the meeting who will be involved in the organisation of the event will speak to Chamber members following the AGM on 28 January (i.e. Keith Holdsworth, Chris Jager, David Butcher and Cllr Goldstone.)

Cllr Goldstone has the next scheduled meeting of the Town Promotion & Tourism Committee on 5 February 2009 but he will arrange a meeting before this.

### High Street Buildings

Other discussion involved revamping some of the High Street buildings to make them more inviting in the 21st Century and if the Town Council could talk to the landlords regarding this, although the impression was that most leases nowadays work on a repair and lease basis.

David thanked Cllr Goldstone and Ross Mackie for attending what had proved to be a very positive meeting.