

MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 17 February 2009 at 6 pm
at Malmesbury Garden Centre, Crudwell Road, Malmesbury

Present : David Butcher, Judy Clark, Chris Jager, Lesley Thomas, Michael Thomas and Alan Woodward (Chair)

1. APOLOGIES: Stefan Barbaruk, Alan Cavill, Jane Nurden, Angela Smith.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING: The Minutes of the committee meeting held on 20 January 2009, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3. MATTERS ARISING:

- i. **6. Treasurer's Report** – David confirmed that Kennet Band is still awaiting payment. Lesley will email Alan Cavill on his return on 23 February. It was decided that a reserve signatory was needed and Mark was nominated. Alan would need to arrange this and, if not already done, Ray Sanderson would need to be removed as a signatory.
- ii. **9. Any Other Business (i)** There was some discussion and criticism of the recent credit crunch clinic, but it was generally agreed that some useful information had been obtained. Mark has some information on the North Wilts small business rate relief, which Lesley would put in the forthcoming newsletter.

4. CORRESPONDENCE:

- i. A new membership form had been received from Mindvision Media Ltd, and Flowers Galore had rejoined.
- ii. Stefan had sent an email regarding the West of Swindon Study Update Public Consultation. Lesley would forward this to all members.

5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Alan had attended the North Wilts Economic Consultative meeting in Chippenham the previous week. This had been chaired by Ian Storey and had been a good meeting. Alan had advised the meeting of the need for WACC to bring more events to the north of the county. Alan had also raised the issue of WACC organised training, which is expensive. Training is apparently free if administered by the college but private providers do not necessarily have to apply this. There is concern that the training should be subsidised by WACC and that there is something wrong with the price structure. Stefan was concerned that he is being overcharged on this and it will be investigated. Regarding the new business competition, WCC has agreed to put in £20k. Stefan still needs to find sponsors for the remaining £16k, although WCC has asked to vet these sponsors. The new unitary authority had been generally discussed, especially the Area Partnerships who will look after the towns' interests.

6. TREASURER'S REPORT: In Alan's absence Lesley reported balances: current account £119.26 and deposit account £2,881.60. Kennet Band is still to be paid as mentioned above. The other outstanding liability is the secretary's January salary c.£230 (Alan has not yet received the invoice from WACC). In addition he has not paid the Wessex subscription. Lesley had sent off the cross funding claim to NWDC re late night Christmas shopping – it had probably been delayed in the post because of the recent snow, but if nothing was heard by the end of the month Lesley would follow it up.

7. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN: As several of the committee were missing it was decided to put this on the March agenda, along with the formation of the Christmas committee. It was agreed that the Finance committee would carry on with the same members as before – Lesley would check with Julian that he would be happy with this. The next meeting of the Finance committee was arranged for Monday 16 March at 5.30pm at Alan Cavill's office at Moore Stephens, 10 High Street.

8. INVOLVEMENT OF LOWER HIGH STREET: There was discussion on this issue, which had been raised by Francesca Caton of Cotswold Stitchcraft at the AGM. Unfortunately the police have specified that the position of the barriers to cordon off the roads cannot be changed for late night Christmas shopping; the situation is the same for Petticoat Lane organised by the carnival committee. Businesses there possibly need to have signs directing people further down the street and / or have a stand further up the high street. The Chamber does not charge its members for stands at late night Christmas shopping. Lesley will write to Francesca to explain this.

ACTION

AC

MJ/LT

LT

LT / JB

Regarding new premises for Cotswold Stitchcraft, David advised that Francesca is taking legal advice on the problems she has encountered over the old Lloyds premises, and does not now need the Chamber's involvement.

ACTION
LT

9. COLLECTION OF SUBSCRIPTIONS: Lesley was in the throes of reconciling the current directory with Alan Cavill's secretary, to check that all those members who had paid up were included, before the directory is sent out to all members, as agreed at the AGM. One or two members had queried the fact that they had joined the Chamber in the middle of last year but had been asked to pay again in November, therefore effectively receiving only 6 months' membership for their money. Alan Woodward proposed, seconded by Mark Jones, that anyone joining after 1 August will have a delayed start to their subscription, this in effect will be their joining fee; after that date they will be asked to pay the full amount on 1 November. This was unanimously agreed. Lesley would advise Alan Cavill and those members who had queried this.

LT

10. MAY BUSINESS SHOW: Cllr Patrick Goldstone had confirmed to Chris that the Town Promotion & Tourism Committee would approve the concept that evening, their previous meeting having been postponed because of the bad weather. There was also an offer of £750 support from the Council, but Chris would confirm what this would be for. Keith Holdsworth would be working with Chris on this project. The business area covered by the show would be flexible, as it is aimed particularly at small businesses. The Chamber had responsibility for the advertising and publicity, and Keith had been in touch with Malmesbury Connections. It was also hoped that the Wilts and Glos Standard would cover it as a recession beating initiative. There is to be a nominal fee for exhibitors of c.£10. Lesley would write to Cllr John Thomson, explaining that this is a joint initiative with the Town Council, and asking for some financial support.

LT

11. FUTURE EVENTS: Various ideas were discussed. Lesley will investigate a skittles evening with Cricklade and / or Wootton Bassett, with The Red Bull as the venue; going onto the waiting list for Highgrove; WCCR who are still keen to give a presentation (we will need them to really promote what they do on the flyer to encourage some interest); presentation by Sue Wilkin, Team Leader of Wiltshire Trading Standards Department, this time from the seller's viewpoint; the Easter Bunny event being held again.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS:

- (i) There was some discussion of the article in the Wilts and Glos Standard on the free parking scheme conceived by Piers Lavan of Hortico. It was felt that the minimum required spend of £25 would be difficult to achieve in most shops, particularly at this time of year.
- (ii) Michael asked for clarification regarding Abbey Printing's membership. If the wrong amount had been reimbursed an apology would be given, but the decision had been made to rescind the membership and the committee could not work with its proprietor, so that decision still stands. The exact amount would be checked with Alan Cavill.
- (iii) There was discussion regarding changing the date for late night Christmas shopping because of the clash with the annual event at Malmesbury School. Steph Kenny of WCCR has confirmed that there are 700-800 people who would then be potentially able to attend late night Christmas shopping. David would ask Steph to attend the next committee meeting in March, and she would also be asked to join the Christmas committee.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 17 March at 6pm at the Garden Centre.

The meeting closed at 7.25pm.