

MALMESBURY & DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday 23 October 2007 at 6 pm at Malmesbury Garden Centre, Crudwell Road, Malmesbury

Present : Stefan Barbaruk, Bill Blake, David Butcher, Judy Clark, Keith Holdsworth, Chris Jager, Ray Sanderson (Chair), David Scull, Angela Smith, Lesley Thomas, Michael Thomas and Caroline Williams.

1. **APOLOGIES:** Alan Cavill, Philipp Egli, John Thomson.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:** The Minutes of the committee meeting held on 12 September 2007, having been circulated, were approved and signed by the Chairman.
3. **MATTERS ARISING:** Bill reported that the Town Promotions & Tourism Committee would be happy to work with the Chamber on a new website.
4. **CORRESPONDENCE:**
 - (i) Email from Phil Rice, Deputy Town Clerk, regarding Malmesbury Conservation Area Liaison Group. Ray would try to attend the next meeting on Wednesday 30 January at 2.15pm.
 - (ii) Email from Understanding Modern Government regarding 35 courses they can offer. Lesley will circulate to all members on email and if anyone is interested in these, but is unable to make the specified dates, she will try to arrange for a talk/course specifically for the Chamber as one of our future events.
 - (iii) Email from Bill Blake suggesting a letter to WCC requesting a firm completion date for the reconstruction of Cowbridge. To be discussed under item 8 on the agenda.
 - (iv) Email from Chris Jager suggesting John Jackson from the Malmesbury Abbey Restoration Scheme steering committee to give a presentation at the AGM. Lesley will contact John.
 - (v) Letter from NWDC regarding petition for the introduction of free parking in Cross Hayes, explaining that charging is enforced by WCC; NWDC merely manages the car park. Bill had tried to establish when traffic wardens come to Malmesbury but with no success. Ray confirmed that revenue received funds improved car parking. There was concern from the committee that there had been chaos in the long stay car park the previous weekend as the French market traders had been allowed to park large vans and lorries (without purchasing tickets). Lesley will write to Chris Major, Senior Parking Officer, NWDC, stating that the Chamber is not happy with this. Bill would report back to the Town Promotions & Tourism Committee meeting later that evening on the Chamber's views.
 - (vi) Letter from NWDC regarding confirmation of chargeable parking hours in Cross Hayes. Ray confirmed that the large sign there would be relocated so that the white part of it is covered by the pay machine.
 - (vii) Letter from Maureen Starr at Stitchcraft confirming her retirement and mentioning that the new owner, Mrs Franchesca Caton, is hoping to join the Chamber.
 - (viii) Letter from James Gray MP confirming the Chamber's visit to Westminster on Monday 3 March, with guides for two parties of 20.
5. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** Ray had already reported on car parking. He thanked everyone who had been involved with the New Business Competition judging at the Red Bull on 9 October.
6. **TREASURER'S REPORT:** In Alan's absence Lesley reported balances: Current account £64.10 and Deposit account £2,483.36. The only outstanding creditor is the invoice for the October secretarial services, which strictly speaking is not due yet.
7. **FARMERS' MARKET:** Michael Thomas had surveyed retailers that day on both the Farmers' and the recent French markets. Although he is unaffected by the markets the vegetable seller nearby loses £600 on a normal market day. Regarding the French market it was generally felt that, apart from the bread and cheese stalls, the products were of poor quality and, in the case of the clothing stall, not selling genuine French products. Retailers cannot park outside their premises in the same way the markets traders did and they have to pay to have their rubbish collected, whereas the market traders were happily stacking up the bins. Even some of the other long-established

ACTION

(i) RS

(ii) LT

(iv) LT

(v) LT

shops, not directly affected by competition from the market, felt it was unfair on their fellow traders. It was understood that the Town Council received a very small amount of money for holding the market, which had been organised by the Town Promotions & Tourism Committee.

Bill confirmed that the Farmers' Market would come to an end after 26 October as it would not be a viable proposition for the Town Council to take it over and he appreciated the concerns regarding the French market. Lesley would write to the Town Clerk with these points, emphasising that the Chamber would support a larger, genuine French market, possibly using the whole of the High Street. If organised and advertised properly, and held maybe 4 times a year, with retailers informed in good time, this would be good for the High Street, as people need to be encouraged to come into the town.

LT

Some retailers wished to know how Ray can combine the roles of town and district councillor and Chairman of the Chamber. Ray confirmed that this is sometimes difficult but it can have its advantages, for example when dealing with the Town Clerk. Ray thanked Michael for conducting the survey. Bill left the meeting at this point.

8. COWBRIDGE: Caroline was concerned to know if anyone has actually been to the site to check how work is really progressing. Ray confirmed that tractors have crossed, using the concrete of the new bridge and the pavement of the old, as they were too wide to go through the villages, and that there would be escorted shuttle traffic crossing for the two weeks leading up to Christmas, in both directions. Caroline asked that this be extended to a minimum of four weeks and David Butcher suggested that it could be open at all times with a weight limit. Ray agreed to visit the Site Manager for a real update and to email Lesley with the outcome to circulate to the committee.

RS

9. MALMESBURY WEBSITES: Chris had been to visit Jeff Penfold, Town Clerk, and had circulated a proposal document to the committee. He was looking at organising a meeting to give a 30 minute presentation on the proposal with questions / comments to follow, to which the whole Chamber would be invited. It was agreed to hold this meeting at 7.30pm on Tuesday 13 November, following the next committee meeting, at the Garden Centre.

10. FUTURE EVENTS:

- (i) Houses of Parliament visit arranged for 3 March 2008. Ray to organise a coach, possibly to pick up from the Garden Centre, with an exact cost for the trip to be given to members in advance.
- (ii) Stefan stated that the Bank of England wished to host an event in Malmesbury to receive feedback on how businesses are performing. This assists them in fixing interest rates. Stefan wil suggest Tuesday 14 October 2008, preferably at 6pm.
- (iii) Sgt Dave Stephenson of Malmesbury Police wished to give a presentation on new policing changes, CCTV, etc., open to all Chamber members. This was agreed for the meeting on 15 January 2008.
- (iv) The AGM was fixed for Wednesday, 30 January 2008.
- (v) Lesley to approach Sue Wilkins of Trading Standards to give a presentation in May 2008.
- (vi) Ray to check if an event at Abbey House Gardens could be held in July.

(i) RS

(ii) SB

(v) LT

(vi) RS

Judy reported on the canapé reception on 17 October at Abbey House to promote their wedding and conferencing opportunities. This had been poorly supported by Chamber members.

11. NEWSLETTER: Lesley and Ray would be putting this together, to go out before Late Night Shopping on 7 December, and were seeking ideas for the content. Francesca Caton, the new owner of Stitchcraft would be given a welcome.

RS/LT

12. NEW BUSINESS COMPETITION: Ray would say a few words at the presentation on 30 October. Committee members were welcome to attend but would need to inform Lesley by Friday 26 October for catering. Alan Cavill has agreed to be Malmesbury's judge in the next round of the competition.

All

13. LATE NIGHT CHRISTMAS SHOPPING:

- (i) The 'Souled Out' band is booked at £150. There are 12-14 members of the band, needing cover in the event of bad weather, and electricity. They will play under the Market Cross between 8-9pm.
- (ii) Lesley will email the contact re road closure to David Butcher to see if it can be extended to an earlier time.
- (iii) Signs, banners and posters still to be arranged.
- (iv) David Butcher to contact the local police for their help on the day and to check with Mark Jones regarding loan of equipment from Lux.
- (v) Lesley to send out invitations to entertainers and stalls as last year. Each to pay £20. Ray had arranged for the Rotary Club to have a stall to make everyone aware of their work and Malmesbury School to sell some goods on behalf of the South African creche project.
- (vi) Malmesbury Library had offered to accommodate Father Christmas but it was agreed to keep the grotto in the High Street to attract people into the shops.
- (vii) Lesley to contact the local press, the town crier and the bus/coach companies.
- (viii) Judy to contact the Vicar of the Abbey and Mike Westmacott for permission to site the trees on the Gunplot and at St Mary's Hall respectively.
- (ix) Michael Thomas agreed to contact Richard Pilkington, the street entertainer.
- (x) Lesley will accept Francesca Caton's offer to bring some crafts and kiting activities out on to the street outside Stitchcraft and to provide some mulled wine.
- (xi) It was agreed that Ray would approach his contact for the use of a snow machine.

It was agreed that the committee would get together in the Kings Arms at the end of the evening.

14. AOB

Ray had received a request from the local police to support a review of licensing in Malmesbury. Now that the two CCTV cameras have been removed the town was particularly vulnerable to crime with no CCTV or Shopwatch. It was agreed that the Chamber would support the review. Caroline recommended that only £50 be kept in tills.

The next meeting is on Tuesday 13 November at 6 pm at the Garden Centre.

The meeting closed at 7.50pm.

ACTION

(ii)LT/DB

(iv)DB/MJ

(v) LT

(vii) LT

(viii) JC

(x) LT

(xi) RS