



Cirencester Chamber of Commerce

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
Held on Wednesday 15th July 2009
at AV8, Kemble Airfield

Present: **Committee**
Simon King (President), David Fowles (Vice-President), Mike Johnson (Treasurer), Karen Gaisford (Secretary), Roger Brown, Simon Musgrove-Wethey, Jonathan Davies, Darren Gadd, Richard Ashwood
Chisanga Kasonde (Intern)

Members

Kelsie Hall, Alison Brown, Kathy Wilson, David Young, Nigel Musgrove, Colin Wakefield, Edward Allsop, Lisa Rowles, Helen Bassett, Adam Baggs, Martin Ling, Nigel Chute, Nick Howard, Stephanie Allison, Bob Allison, Annette Farrow, Clare Davies

Guests

Bryony Leatherbarrow, Craig White, Catherine Edmond, Richard Fairlie, Jonathan Nicholls

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Geoffrey Adams (Mayor of Cirencester), Andrew Tubb (CTC), Rachel Wright (Committee)

2. **Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting**

The minutes of the previous AGM were approved.
Acceptance of the 2008 minutes was proposed by Simon Musgrove-Wethey and seconded by Jonathan Davies.

3. **Matters Arising**

There were none

4. **Presidents Report**

Introduction

The Chamber has had a mixed year of opportunities and progress but not without some disappointment and sadness. The opportunities progressed this year have arisen from the foundations put in place by past work of the Chamber's Committee and past Presidents and all the other stakeholders and influencers on Cirencester and its economy.

On that point I wish to go no further into this report without mentioning the untimely loss of Peter Stringfellow and the sadness and vacuum this has caused with those that have worked closely with him within the business community of Cirencester and those beyond, our condolences go to Celia and the rest of his family.

Again this year the Chamber has led or been involved with many projects and activities that impact on the business of Cirencester and its Community.

Early this year the Chamber Committee agreed to consider its own vision and strategy. We agreed and launched an action plan for 2009 and beyond. Going forward, this initial plan will be developed in September for 2010 focusing on the longer term.

Activities and Projects:

Advent

2008 Advent was again a great success this year with a total of £16,500 being transferred to CTC towards the purchase of more Christmas lights. A significant amount of time and

effort went into running this event from a group of committed people both within and outside of the Chamber

Advent 2009 will be led by the Town Council as part of 'our Future Cirencester', but the Chamber will continue its support

Parking review

The Chamber is leading a working group to consider options for car parking in the town led by Jonathan Davies

'Our Future Cirencester'

Members contributed to the consultation workshops and committee members attended working groups and the steering group

Cirencester Local Business Group

This group was formed following the consultants' report, to focus on the business aspects of the community plan led by the Chamber, chaired by Jonathan Davies

I love Cirencester

This event took place on 20 and 21st of June. It received great press and is being held up in the county as Cirencester being proactive in the down turn. Well done to Jonathan and Karen for leading this event. More events are planned.

Internship

With any plan, resource is required to deliver it, so an opportunity to obtain government funding to support this years graduates in businesses was grasped to employ a person to support the Chamber through the RAC Graduate Internship Scheme. We now have Chisanga Kasonde joining us in August for 6 months to take our plans forward.

Committee

The Chamber would not function without all the time and commitment of the Chamber Committee. The drive and determination of the individuals who voluntarily give their time to all the projects already mentioned is very much appreciated.

Next Year (2009 - 10)

We are all aware of the current economic situation and the vulnerability of public finances. The true extent and the long term impact from the recession is still to be felt and emphasis has to be on business and communities to drive themselves forward. Cirencester is unlikely to gain significant economic support for its businesses and the Chamber has to focus on providing for the needs of its members and to be appealing to the wider business community as increasing the membership is critical to provide resource for future promotion, activities and events.

We want to continue our support of the local authorities through their objectives in support of Cirencester and in particular Cirencester Town Council in our leadership of the Business strand of 'Our Future Cirencester'. We totally support developments such as the Market Place development and it is pleasing to see such positive steps.

There will be more events such as I love Cirencester and we are planning the Cirencester Business Conference in September, high profile speakers and other seminars and more business to business events.

Of course there will be challenges:

Increasing the Chamber membership and ensuring its sustainability

Drawing together all the plans and visions for Cirencester, from Action Cirencester, Our Future Cirencester, and other groups.

Working with all the other Business groups and other organisations that support business to bring more to the business of the town.

Delivery of Town Centre developments in realistic time scales.

Having a Town Centre that appeals to retailers to fill the increasing number of vacant retail premises

For the Chamber to attract members and engage more with a wider range of businesses in the town, particularly the Industrial estates and beyond.

You will see from the minutes that last year the President(s) highlighted a series of issues for the Chamber, I hope you feel that we have risen to that challenge and will encourage others to join and be part of the success.

Thanks

Finally Special thanks must go to:

All the speakers and contributors at the networking events

Cirencester Football Club, Ingleside House and other venues for Hosting Networking events and meetings.

The members that have given up their offices or meeting rooms.

Corinium HRM for leading and supporting us through the Chamber Strategy review.

Karen for secretarial and administrative support and keeping everything and us, on track.

All the committee members but in particular: Jonathan Davies, David Fowles and Mike Johnson.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

Mike Johnson talked through the Accounts for the year to 31 March 2009; these have been independently examined by Andrew Miller.

Again, this year the Chamber and Advent accounts are shown separately.

The Accounts are presented in their usual format:

Income & Expenditure for the Chamber Account

Income & Expenditure for the Advent Account

Balance sheet (combined) and notes and independent statement

The main points to highlight are:

Chamber Account

Income shows an increase from subscriptions as a result of increased membership in 2008-9.

A word of warning that 2009-10 doesn't look so good.

Expenditure. Secretary: Maggie finished as Secretary part way through the year and Karen has had to cover her duties. This is not seen as a permanent solution, and will be reviewed once the Intern is on board.

Insurance wasn't renewed in view of the transfer of responsibility for the Advent Festival.

We have a surplus of £3,000 for the year which ended in March 2009, but our budget for the current year to March 2010 shows a deficit of about £2k.

Advent Account

This was a much smaller event in November 2008 reflected in the expenditure. However, a major donation was made to CTC to help with the purchase of new Christmas lights as part of our ongoing commitment to this scheme.

Earlier this year it was agreed that responsibility for the Advent Festival would be transferred to 'Our Future Cirencester', and the balance of the funds in the Advent account was transferred to CTC in April to fund the event.

Balance Sheet

This shows significant money in the bank at the year end, before the transfer of £6,000 to CTC. We had also received some membership subscriptions for the current year early.

As you have heard, we have agreed to fund an intern for 6 months, with the contribution from the Chamber being £2,000.

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Roger Brown, seconded by Jonathan Davies, and the Accounts were accepted by the meeting.

6 **Membership Update**

Karen Gaisford gave a brief update on member numbers. At the year end (31st March 2008), there were about 120 members, with 20 new members having joined through the year. However, for the current year, 20 of these haven't renewed their membership, so we are again looking to new members to increase the numbers.

An up-to-date list of members was available at the meeting.

We are keen to increase numbers so we would appreciate all members spreading the word throughout the town and local area.

7. **Election of Officers**

Simon King confirmed that he is willing to continue as President for the coming year.

Election of the President:

Nominated: Simon King Elected

Election of the Vice-President

Nominated: Jonathan Davies Elected

Election of the Treasurer

Nominated: Mike Johnson Elected

Election of the Executive Committee:

Carol Wheareat, Gemma Renna, Liz Gibson and Andrew Fraser stood down during the year and Simon Large does not wish to stand again.

The remaining Committee Members have agreed to stand again and were duly elected to do so, these are:

Karen Gaisford, David Fowles, Simon Musgrove-Wethey, Roger Brown, Darren Gadd, Richard Ashwood, Rachel Wright.

8. **Annual Subscriptions**

In view of the current economic situation, it was proposed that there will be no increase in subscription fees for 2010 – 11. The meeting approved this proposal.

9. **Amendments to the Constitution**

The following amendments were proposed and approved by the meeting.

1. The President to hold office for no more than 2 consecutive years. The rationale for this was queried, the main reasons being that it is an onerous role requiring commitment and energy, and that there was no wish to deter people from taking on the role.
2. Gloucestershire County Councillors to be included as ex-officio members. Again there was some discussion, and it was felt that as CTC and CDC representatives are already ex-officio members this should be extended to the County representatives.
3. Membership year to run from 1st April. This has already been instituted but the Constitution had not been amended.

10. **Open Forum**

David Fowles made the suggestion that a reciprocal arrangement is established with Fairford & Lechlade Business Club, meaning that members can attend each other's meetings free of charge. Some businesses are members of both organisation and the point was made that this might cause some to cancel one of their memberships. It was agreed that this will be discussed in detail at the next committee meeting, and a proposal will be drafted and distributed in the newsletter.

11 **Any Other Business**

Simon King ended the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. Particular thanks to Darren and the team at AV8 for their hospitality.

The next Network Event will be 9th September 2009 – venue to be confirmed, please check the web site for details.

The date of the next AGM is to be confirmed – provisional date 14th July 2010.

The meeting closed at 7.10pm