



Cirencester Chamber of Commerce

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 11th November 2008

Present: Karen Gaisford (KG), David Fowles (DF), Simon Large (SL), Andrew Frazer (AF), Simon Musgrove-Wethey (SMW), Maggie Parker (Minutes Secretary)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Carol Whereat, Jonathan Davies, Simon King, Mike Johnson, Peter Stringfellow, Liz Gibson

In the absence of the President, Simon King, the meeting was chaired by the Vice President, David Fowles.

2. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes from the October meeting were approved and accepted with any points raised being covered below.

3. **Correspondence and Feedback from President**

Any specific points to be raised by **SK** have been passed to **KG** and will be included in their relevant sections below.

Correspondence received:

Invitation to a private viewing by Cirencester Arts Society at New Brewery Arts on 28 November 2008 – **DF** to attend, if anyone else is interested please contact **KG** for details

Invitation from Stone King Sewell to a presentation on their services and ideas on 26 November 2008 – please contact **KG** for details

Invitation from Stone King Sewell to a reception at their London offices on 27 November 2008 6pm – 8pm – **KG to reply on behalf of Chamber**

4. **Updates**

Cirencester Community Plan (formally Market & Coastal Towns Initiative):

This consists of a management group who report directly back to CDC, a steering group (**DF and PS** members on behalf of the Chamber) and individual working groups looking at four specific elements:

- Infrastructure
- Children
- Heritage
- Business

The individual groups consist of around 12 people, **PS, DF, JD** are on the Business group which also has a representative from the FSB and Wildmoor. Keith Rogg from Park Life is also a member. If anyone else would be interested in joining then please contact **DF, PS or JD** for details.

DF reported that all businesses in the town should now have received and taken part in the survey which would identify projects to be moved forward. A version of the survey had been distributed to members via Constant Contact.

SL and SMW commented that they had not received the survey by any other method than Constant Contact.

On the 19 November there will be the first of two planned engagement exercises in the Bingham Library. Businesses have been invited to attend one of three sessions to be held during the day, each session will last around 2 hours and a minimum of 40 businesses must attend in order to secure the grant required.

A follow up session is planned for the New Year when a decision will be taken on what will be implemented and how funding can be secured. The group is looking for bid status as a business improvement centre however this would lead to an increase in business rates to fund the budget.

Generally from the town's point of view things are starting to happen and this is being driven by the Town Council. Anyone who would like to find out more should contact **DF, PS or JD** for details.

SL – raised the point that this is yet more consultation and what we need to see is action, that point must be pushed at all meetings.

Cirencester Town Council:

SL – is now receiving notification on all planning applications submitted in the Cirencester wards which include Love Lane and the RAC. This means that he is able to view details and decide on those which are relevant for discussion by the Chamber. **KG** will continue to forward details received directly from the CTC.

Currently there are three applications which impact on the business community:

1. The Metric site in Love Lane – CDC granted consent last week for the Wicks store and trade counters. This issue was first raised some time ago and the Chamber made representation on behalf of the town – the concern being that this would be a retail site that would detract from those businesses already located in the town centre. At the meeting the planners said that the offer would not compete with current businesses but that remains to be seen. Wicks is owned by the Travis Perkins Group who already have an outlet in Love Lane so there is a concern that the site may be let to other retailer.
2. Wildmoor – Kings Head/Corn Hall development
3. Wildmoor – Post Office development

Both of the above are new plans slightly altered from the existing versions. The Post Office development is looking at linking into Swan Yard.

There is a certain amount of frustration over the length of time things are taking and there is no harm in the Chamber making some comment regarding the overall state of the town and the need for planners and developers alike to just 'get on with things' and move these

projects forward for completion. With the current economic situation it is important to move on and the Chamber should voice its opinion with out any implied criticism of the parties involved.

DF – would like to raise the issue of signage for the current road closures in and around the town. The closure of the London Road is causing problems for those people coming in and out of the town but there is nothing to say when the work will be completed and the road reopened. Similarly the closure of Black Jack Street requires some official signs as currently there are just some hand written 'road closed' signs. **DF** has spoken to Chris Vickery about this problem. The lack of efficient signs makes moving around the town difficult.

DF – reported that 50% of the new units in the Corn Hall and a large percentage of those in the Post Office development have already been let.

Cotswold District Council:

CDC has a new Joint Chief Executive – David Neudegg (DN). David has been seconded to the CDC and will be shared by CDC and West Oxfordshire DC. This has enabled CDC to get someone on board quickly. His expertise lies in the areas of leisure and town centre development.

DF – to arrange for DN to meet with the Chamber committee and speak at a forthcoming network event (which could be held at the council chambers)

DF – to forward DN contact details to **KG** so that he can be added to Constant Contact

Gloucestershire County Council:

RB – not at meeting.

SL – following the comments above regarding a meeting with the new Chief Executive of CDC, it would be good to meet with the relevant person from GCC at some point.

Other external organisations:

Nothing discussed

5. **Committee Structure and Roles**

The following people have confirmed that they will be leaving the committee due to personal/business reasons:

Carol Whereat – with immediate effect
Andrew Frazer – from end of December 2008
Liz Gibson – to be confirmed
Gemma Renna – with immediate effect

This means that there will need to be changes to the previously notified structure and roles document and we are looking for a least four new committee members. In the interim **KG** will take back communication and events but there is a limit to what she is willing to do on an unpaid basis.

DF – thanked all of those who are leaving on behalf of the Chamber and asked for volunteers to take over some of the roles.

The need for new committee members should be raised at the next network meeting and all current committee members are asked to think about people who could be approached with a view to joining.

6. **Finance**

KG handed out an up to date financial summary – there is little change from last month with two new members and a few payments from the three year Advent plan. As yet there is no major expenditure showing on the Advent account but this will change for the next meeting.

Report from **SK** – we need to consider how to generate income going forward and what the Chamber wants to fund in the future. This was raised and discussed at the last meeting and is something that needs to be considered. Given that all are busy in the run up to Christmas this will be a point to be discussed in the New Year but some points to consider:

- B-2-B events
- Links with CTC
- Trade/Business Fair at the RAC
- Engaging with other business associations/bodies

KG – we have been approached by another business who would like to use our mailing list facility.

Report from **SK** – the issue of Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce was raised last month. **SK** is to attend their next breakfast meeting on 27 November and will discuss the benefits of our membership and if we should join the British Chamber of Commerce instead.

AF – CCoC appears to be out on a limb with no linkage to other chambers. We should encourage meetings with other local chambers such as Tetbury and Stroud.

7. **Advent 2008**

DF – raised a vote of thanks to all those on the Advent Committee with special mention to Karen, Gemma and Peter A.

8. **Membership**

AF – produced an in depth report which is attached to these minutes. During the meeting he went over the key issues and points raised.

All committee members are asked to read the report and send their comments to **AF** by the end of November, specifically:

- Comment on 2 strategic ideas for the future
- Comment on 2 quick wins that can be implemented now

These do not have to be items that are already covered in the report – any new ideas would be welcome.

9. **Marketing**

There has been some good coverage on the Advent Festival in the Standard.

The Chamber is currently well represented on other local bodies such as the working group, Action Cirencester and the Civic Society – this enables us to work with others rather than in isolation in order to drive through initiatives.

10. **Events and Networking**

As **LG and CW** will be leaving the committee this will be taken over by **KG** in the short term but if anyone would like to volunteer the position is available.

The Christmas event will be held at New Brewery Arts. Steppes Travel have kindly donated £250 worth of travel vouchers as a raffle prize.

There was some discussion over how to run the raffle and it was decided that people submitting their cards for the prize draw would be asked for a minimum £5 donation for the lights fund.

Andrea Pellegram would like to give a talk in the New Year – this could be held at the Bingham Gallery.

SL – it would be a good idea to get various committee members to give a short talk alongside the invited speaker in order to publicise what the Chamber does. He would like to talk alongside AP with regard to planning applications.

11. **Communications**

Again, with the departure of both **LG and CW** this will come back to **KG** in the short term.

There was discussion around the possibility of a regular newsletter going out to all members and contacts with links to the website.

12. **Website/IT**

It is now possible to get more information in the form of stats – if anyone would like details on how to do this they should contact **SMW** directly.

13. **Any Other Business**

Report from **SK** – has been looking at the constitution document and considering a possible tender process for the future. As no changes can be made without going through a voting process at the next AGM this is not something that needs immediate thought but all committee members should start to consider the current constitution document, specifically:

- The implications of being an 'executive' committee
- The approval process for new members
- The reporting of attendance at meetings

And also the possibility of a tendering process and separate policy documents. This item will be raised again next year.

Report from **JD** – seeking approval from the committee to look at car parking initiatives such as vouchers issued with tickets enabling people to get money back

from various retailers. He is currently looking at things in conjunction with CDC including a possible survey of car park users.

14. **Dates of Future Meetings**

Network Meetings

Committee Meetings

2008

December 10th

11th

2009

January 14th

29th

February 11th

26th

March 11th

26th

April 8th

23rd

May 13th

28th

June 10th

25th

July 15th (AGM)

30th

No meeting in August

27th

September 9th

25th

October 14th

29th

November 11th

26th

December 9th

17th

The meeting closed at 8.15pm