



Cirencester Chamber of Commerce

Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 9th October 2008

Present: President: Simon King (SK), Peter Stringfellow (PS), Karen Gaisford (KG), Liz Gibson (LG), Mike Johnson (MJ), David Fowles (DF), Roger Brown (RB), Simon Large (SL) Maggie Parker (Minutes Secretary)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Andrew Frazer, Simon Musgrove-Wethey, Carol Whereat, Jonathan Davies

2. **Minutes and Matters Arising**

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

3. **Correspondence and Feedback from President**

SK – is still struggling to get through specific actions and is aware that he still needs to catch up with DF regarding certain points.

Cotswold Observer – an email has been received and forwarded to **PS**. No one on the committee has heard of this particular publication.

Remembrance Service – **SK** to attend.

Student Questionnaire – **KG** has received a questionnaire from a student requiring information on planning etc – forwarded to **SL**

Business Link Annual Report and GWE Business West Directory – **KG** has received both of the above publications, should any member of the committee wish to look at them please contact her. The GWE Directory contains a useful list of business contacts for the area.

4. **Updates**

Market & Coastal Towns Initiative (Community Plan):

SK has been approached by Andrea Pellegram (AP) who is keen to involve the college in the community plan and this is an area he will pursue. From a Chamber perspective the more people it has involved the better from an information gathering point of view.

DF

A list of 52 local businesses has been produced and these will shortly be receiving letters detailing the plans etc; in addition there will be street interviews and a web survey. A cross section of the 52 businesses will be invited to join focus groups – there will be three groups, one meeting in the morning, one at lunch times and one

in the evening and it is hoped that this approach will mean that all businesses will be able to attend a meeting and actively participate. Going forward all of this will be project managed by Hyder.

All of the working groups are now up and running. Hyder will be the main driver of the business group and the Chamber will be expected to contribute. All of this work will have a bearing on any funding that may be secured for the project.

PS/DF to be the Chambers link to the initiative

Cirencester Town Council:

SL – following a conversation with Andrew Tubbs (AT) – there has been a commitment from GCC for two highways engineers to work on the Market Place scheme. The Chamber should seek to influence the brief if possible so that it benefits the business community of the town. Any plans drawn up will be used to gain funding – which is likely to be matched funding.

SL

Going forward **SL** will endeavour to get a more official consultee status for the Chamber so that applications are received at the start of the process which would give us around 4 weeks in which to properly debate applications, find out more information if required and formulate a reply. This would also raise our profile in the media and make us more of a 'voice for local business', however it will not give us any actual influence on acceptance or denial of an application. There is currently no central body in the town that represents local businesses with regard to applications and the Chamber should seek to become that body.

RB - the Chamber has not mentioned the other big application that is making the news at the moment which is the Waste Transfer business in Love Lane. This is causing a lot of problems with the business community on the Industrial Estate. **SL** - the application is on the CDC list and currently the Chamber is only privy to those on the CTC list.

Cotswold District Council:

DF – CDC is currently focussing on budgeting, medium term financial planning and how it can make savings.

Cirencester Visitor Information Centre – now fully up and running, the new location allows for longer hours and is saving money.

SL – better signage is required as no-one knows where it is

RB – there needs to be better information in the car parks as the current information boards are old, faded and in need of repair.

DF - the council is aware of the issue. It would appear that some of the new signs have been vandalised. It is planned to have a banner at the top of Black Jack Street to direct people down towards the museum and to have better signage on the front of the building. The comments have been noted and will be passed back to the council.

DF – there are currently issues around Y Waste which was given a grant to look at the collection of commercial waste. Following the departure of two of Y Wastes directors their waste contracts have been taken over by Smiths and there are now concerns about the future of Y Waste.

DF – the council has agreed to support the Advent Festival by providing the usual free parking arrangement. This will be the same as in previous years and will not provide for all day free parking as the Advent committee had been hoping.

Gloucestershire County Council:

RB – this has been discussed previously by **SL** under the CTC point with regard to the highways engineers. It should be noted that this scheme will form part of the local transport plan for funding purposes and will have to score highly in order to gain any funding.

SL – this is why it is important for the Chamber to get involved, understand the process and exercise some influence on the bidding if possible.

Other external organisations:

Nothing discussed

5. **Committee Structure and Roles**

Everyone has now had a chance to look at the structure and roles as detailed in the September minutes. There are still some gaps to fill in and if anyone has any comments, feedback or ideas they should forward them to **KG** as soon as possible.

It should be noted that those people who have agreed to take on a role do have a responsibility to the committee to carry out any actions agreed. It is understood that roles are taken on a voluntary basis but if you have made a commitment it is expected that you will endeavour to honour it. It is hoped that action points will not be left to continually roll over from meeting to meeting.

Going forward it is expected that there will be changes to roles and responsibilities as different priorities arise etc.

The structure agreed is:

Membership:

Andrew Frazer

Develop range of member benefits
Identify reasons for membership

Karen Gaisford (secretary)

All admin relating to new members and renewals

Finance:

Karen Gaisford/Mike Johnson

Deal with receipts and payments
Reconcile monthly bank statements
Maintain financial records
Year End Accounts

IT:

Simon Musgrove-Wethey

Overall design and maintenance

Karen Gaisford (secretary)

Update events, directory, job vacancies etc

External Comms:

Liz Gibson

Network Meeting invitation (Constant Contact)
Monthly Newsletter
Copy for CBN
Deal with paid for promotion of events

Advent:	Gemma Renna
Marketing:	David Fowles Increase awareness of Chamber and benefits of membership
Press:	General press enquires Peter Stringfellow – it was noted that the Standard tend to approach both Jonathan and Mike for comments on specific items and it was agreed that this would be allowed to continue. Where either Mike or Jonathan make a comment they will fully brief Simon/Peter on what has been said.
Events:	Liz Gibson and Carol Whereat Plan timetable of speakers, book speakers/venue Arrange prizes for business card draw
Projects:	Simon Large (Planning and Development)
External Liaison	Jonathan Davies
Admin/Secretary:	Karen Gaisford (paid role)

6. Finance

KG handed out an up to date financial summary – there is little change from last month with one new member (Ingleside – formally a school but now a conference centre) and two very late renewals.

Note: The Chamber currently pays a subscription to the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce however it should be noted that Gloucestershire does not belong to the British Chamber of Commerce and therefore, by default, Cirencester Chamber of Commerce has no affiliation to the British Chamber of Commerce.

7. Advent 2008

Advent funds – CTC have a shortfall in funds with regard to the stress testing and are likely to ask the Chamber for a contribution (c£3K). We currently have £10.5K earmarked for lights – this will provide new lighting displays for the Market Place, 460 low energy white bulbs for the Market Place and four new sets of tree lights to replace those that got broken last year. The old lights will be used for the rest of the town. Displays will cover the Market Place, Cricklade Street, Dyer Street, West Market Place and Castle Street – exact details are in the Advent meeting minutes which are available from **KG** if required.

It was agreed that the Chamber would contribute up to £3K towards the stress testing but it was noted that this would almost completely deplete current funds.

It is not known how much money will be raised this year and as collection boxes will not be collected until after Christmas the totals will not be available until the new year.

MJ and KG to continue working with AT and CTC with regard to this years event and the future.

KG – if anyone is able to help on the day they should contact Michael Gray.

8. **Membership (incorporating 9. Marketing)**

AF not at meeting.

Concern was raised about the lack of new members and the fact that there appears to be no plan in place to encourage membership.

DF – following points raised at the last meeting regarding the 'Discount Passport' – both AP and AT are supportive of the planned 'Passport'. CTC will have two free pages for advertising and CCoC can have a free page if they wish to support it. CCoC members will be eligible for discounts on advertising.

CTC like the idea and feel it will encourage people to 'shop local'. Advertising will be restricted to those businesses within the town – those on the outskirts such as Dobbies will not be able to advertise. A similar initiative is being rolled out in Tetbury and has the support of their Chamber of Commerce.

10. **Events and Networking**

LG has started booking speakers for 2009 and has confirmed dates with the Football Club.

The events are a way of attracting new members and committee members should ensure that they network and talk to members and visitors who attend.

11. **Communications**

This has been covered under previous points.

12. **Website/IT**

SMW not at meeting

The committee discussed the current website and debated if any changes were in fact necessary. It was decided that **SMW** should prepare a report on the site to detail:

- Current stats on usage
- Why he considers the website needs updating
- As a minimum what needs to be done
- What would be the benefit of a complete re-write of the site

Following on from this the committee will consider its next move and will go out to tender for any work to be done. 310k will be invited to tender along with two other companies.

13. **Any Other Business**

Those points raised under any other business were in regard to outstanding actions from the previous minutes and have been included in the relevant points above.

14. **Dates of Future Meetings**

Network Meetings

Committee Meetings

2008

November 12th	13th
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 7.55pm