



## Cirencester Chamber of Commerce

### **Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2008**

Present: President: Simon King (SK), Peter Stringfellow (PS), Karen Gaisford (KG), Liz Gibson (LG), Carol Whereat (CW), Jonathan Davies (JD), Mike Johnson (MJ), Maggie Parker (Minutes Secretary)

Simon King started the meeting by welcoming the Committee to the Royal Agricultural College.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Andrew Frazer, Gemma Renna, Simon Musgrove-Wethey, David Fowles

##### **Not present**

Simon Large, Roger Brown

#### **2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

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

#### **3. Correspondence and Feedback from President**

Cotswold Life – approached the Chamber for an up to date statement on trade within the town. This was dealt with by PS who gave them the usual 'company line'.

Remembrance Service – Chamber received a letter advising of road closures in the Market Place on 11<sup>th</sup> November for the Remembrance Day Service. **KG** reminded the Committee that it was usual for a representative of the Chamber (normally the President) to attend and lay a wreath.

GCC – Roads and Pavements – **JD** has written to the contact forwarded to him by **RB** regarding the state of the roads and pavements in the town and is waiting for a response

Wilts & Glos Standard- **JD** was contacted regarding the situation with Viners restaurant and was asked to comment on the situation on behalf of the Chamber – he made no comment as deemed it not an area that the Chamber should be involved with.

#### **4. Local Authority Updates**

Cotswold Town Council: (**SL** not at the meeting)

Planning - the Chamber currently receives planning information from CTC. It was agreed that the Chamber should become a nominated consultee and contact CDC to request this.

If the Chamber is asking to become a nominated consultee on planning applications then it must be prepared to comment/reply on all applications and have a confirmed

framework regarding its stance. Although **SL** has offered to deal with all planning issues this is a 'global' responsibility and it may be necessary on occasion to go back with both plus and minus points regarding an application.

**SK to arrange a ½ hour session with SL to discuss further**

**JD will be writing to CDC on an issue regarding funding and will include the request regarding plans within that communication. JD to cc SL into the letter and confirm who is to receive the information.**

The Chamber regularly receives an invitation to the CTC meetings and a copy of the minutes but tends not to follow this up.

**KG to pass agenda and minutes to JD who will read through and either attend the meeting or pass on the Chambers apologies. JD to fully brief the Committee on all relevant items.**

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Market & Coastal Towns Initiative (Community Plan):

**PS** attended the last meeting. The situation pertaining to the business side of the community plan basically consists of two areas, town centre management and making the town a sustainable and identifiable area. The initiative will be getting a £20K grant from Rural Renaissance to be used to pay for consultants who will be chosen by the initiative management and who will produce a professional study of the plan.

**DF/PS to keep committee informed (distribute minutes)**

Cotswold District Council: (**DF** not at the meeting)

Nothing discussed.

**DF to forward contact details relating to comments on business waste collection to LG for inclusion in Newsletter (from July meeting).**

Gloucestershire County Council: (**RB** not at the meeting)

Nothing discussed

**RB to forward contact details for reporting problems with roads etc to LG for inclusion in Newsletter (from July meeting)**

Other external organisations:

Nothing discussed

## 5. **Committee Structure and Roles**

Future roles and responsibilities were discussed at the last meeting and detailed in the July minutes although there were still some areas to be assigned.

**KG** has taken on the role of secretary and the Chamber is not looking to recruit a replacement although **MP** has returned as minute secretary.

**MJ** commented that there are now people within the Committee who are carrying out duties that were previously part of a paid role and that the Chamber should be aware that if a role becomes too onerous then things should be reviewed. It was agreed that this will remain part of the ongoing agenda and should be reviewed/discussed in the future.

The structure was agreed as:

<b>Membership:</b>	<b>Andrew Frazer Karen Gaisford (secretary)</b>
<b>Finance:</b>	<b>Karen Gaisford/Mike Johnson</b>
<b>IT:</b>	<b>Simon Musgrove-Wethey Karen Gaisford (secretary)</b>
<b>External Comms:</b>	<b>Liz Gibson</b>
<b>Advent:</b>	<b>Gemma Renna</b>
<b>Marketing:</b>	<b>David Fowles</b>
<b>Press:</b>	General press enquires <b>Peter Stringfellow</b> – 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.
<b>Events:</b>	<b>Liz Gibson and Carol Whereat</b>
<b>Projects:</b>	<b>Simon Large</b> (Planning and Development)
<b>External Liaison</b>	<b>Jonathan Davies</b>
<b>Admin/Secretary:</b>	<b>Karen Gaisford (paid role)</b>

6. **Finance**

**KG** handed out an up to date financial summary – there is little change from last times figures although the Chamber does have a couple of new members  
**KG** also handed out a budget for the remainder of the year. The subscription income is based on the year to date figures and the assumption of 2 new members per month ongoing. (The Chamber currently has 110 members). Expenditure can be budgeted for quite easily however income is more difficult as the Chamber does not tend to make money and in the past has come out at a loss.

**SK to look at the constitution documents and any previous strategy documents.**

**ALL to look at what other clubs/chambers/organisations are doing and bring information to next meeting.**

**Next meeting – discuss what we want to fund and how we go about increasing income in order to do so.**

**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.

**SK to consider what the Chamber gets out of its membership to the Gloucestershire Chamber of Commerce and to think about direct**

## **membership to the British Chamber of Commerce – what would be the benefits?**

### 7. **Advent 2008**

Lights: CTC have ordered and paid for the lights (via a gifted donation from the Chamber) and therefore own and have responsibility for them.

Event: This is a community not a business event and therefore should not come under the remit of the Chamber of Commerce which concentrates on the business community within the town. As an organisation we should not be spending so much time on something which lasts for just a few hours each year but should be concentrating on the wider issues affecting our members.

Currently it would appear that there is a possible shortfall in funding of £6K for this year. The Chamber can contribute £2K leaving £4K unaccounted for.

**KG to arrange a meeting with CTC (AT), PS, MJ and herself within the next 10 days to discuss.**

To clarify the position as far as the Chamber is concerned:

- 2008 – event in hand and being run by the Chamber but there is a funding issue
- 2009 – Chamber will support with a cash donation (max £3K) to CTC but will not run the event

Advent meetings have started and the minutes are available from KG if required.

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

**AF** not at meeting so no discussion around membership other than that covered in previous points.

**DF** not at meeting however he had passed some information regarding a proposed 'Discount Passport' to **SK** for discussion.

This is a booklet which will be given to the public on an annual basis in order for them to get discounts from local businesses. **DF** has obtained permission from CTC for use of the town crest and proposes selling advertising space to local businesses. The Chamber would benefit by receiving 10% of advertising revenue.

The Committee raises several issues:

- there are a number of local publications currently in the town in which local businesses can advertise and many offer discounts to the public
- members can already benefit from discounts offered to them by other members
- does the Chamber want to be linked to a commercial exercise in this way?
- This may jeopardise the 'Shop Local' initiative

Posters and window stickers were not discussed due to **DF** not being at the meeting however **KG** said that we should look to send out the stickers with the next membership renewal paperwork next year rather than rush things now.

**DF to design and quote for window sticker**

### 10. **Events and Networking**

28 people attended the September event held at the Town Hall/Parish Church and this included several new faces. **KG** has received several thank you emails.

When planning future events we should remember that we are the Chamber of Commerce and should be focusing on the business element of the town. A major part of the town planning initiative discussed under point 4 is identifying what local business want and we may be able to get valuable information out of the final reports. We could also offer the consultants the opportunity to take over a network event as an 'open meeting' for comments and feedback. This could be held somewhere like the RAC or museum.

**KG to write to the Town Clerk suggesting this for future consideration.**

The Chamber is often approached by people who want to host an event but quite often these are not members.

**It was decided that the policy is that only members may host events as this is a way of showcasing their premises.**

**KG to liaise with LG and CW with regard to networking going forward.**

Future Events:

October	Venue and speaker to be confirmed (CHRM possible speaker)
November	Ingleside School and the Organic Farm Shop have offered their premises however neither are members – speaker to be confirmed
December	New Brewery Arts have confirmed that they would be happy to host our Christmas event and Chloe of Midnight Story Tellers has offered to perform (tbc).

Stratton House Hotel have offered to host the AGM for next year.

**Note:** Where a member offers to host an event the Chamber would not expect to have to pay towards the venue

**LG and CW to discuss and present a plan at the next meeting.**

## **11. Communications**

In July **KG** sent out a newsletter via Constant Contact however she has received no feedback and would like some comments on the concept of newsletters in general. Previously there was a newsletter section within the website although it is not known if this was an area that people/members ever visited.

**KG to promote the newsletter at the next networking event and get feedback and comments from attendees.**

**LG** – if the newsletter is sent out via Constant Contact in the future the format should be changed so that it is not the same as the network invitations.

Best of Cirencester has approached the Chamber offering to send out the Chambers newsletter to its mailing list if the Chamber will send out the Best of Cirencester Newsletter in the same way.

**KG to reply to Best of Cirencester that the Chamber does not want to do this**

**Note:** a question was raised regarding mailing lists and **KG** confirmed that where the Chamber is asked for details of its mailing list the policy is that a charge is made and then information sent out on behalf of the company from the Chamber via Constant Contact.

12. **Website/IT**

**SMW** has proposed changes to the website and is preparing a proposal. The current site is starting to look dated and could do with refreshing.

**SMW to prepare website proposal for the next meeting.**

13. **Any Other Business**

There was no further discussion of the following subjects discussed at the July meeting:

Summer Festival

Constitution (length of service for President and succession planning)

Water Park Bus Link

Advertising on Wildmoor Hoardings

14. **Dates of Future Meetings**

It has been noted that some people would prefer not to have the network event and committee meeting in the same week.

Following discussion it was decided that the committee meeting would be held two weeks before the network event.

**The meeting closed at 7.55pm**