



WELLINGTON CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE

**Executive Committee Meeting
Wednesday 24th November 2010 at 6pm
The Town Council Rooms, 28 Fore Street, Wellington**

Minutes

Present: Sue White, Des Hawkins, Helen Thorne, Emma Blake, John Pragnell, Judith Goss, Beryl Griffiths, Clare de'Ruyter, Sally Hooper, Cathy Wiggan, Julia Thorne, Ian Stock, Janet Reed and Andrew Govier

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Terry Sanford, Frank Morris, Jackie Govier, Louise Tredwin, John Thorne, Sam Parr, Jill Parr, Michael Coate and Andrew Hunt.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The mistakes in the minutes of October's meeting were noted and corrected. The minutes were then agreed and signed off by Sue White.

3. Matters Arising

Food Town

John Pragnell informed the Chamber that the Christmas event would not be running this year due to a lack of interest from local producers. There has

only been 15 stalls booked which would mean the event would run at a loss, as a minimum of 30 stalls would be needed for it to breakeven.

The Food Festival will be going ahead next year though, possibly in spring or summer of 2011.

Clare de'Ruyter questioned the possibility of holding it the weekend before Easter, which is a long weekend just before the Royal Wedding. John Pragnell said that it could be a possibility, however the dates still need to be discussed with the Food Town Committee.

Farmer's Market

Michael Coate sent in a report regarding the Farmer's Market which was read to the Chamber by Sue White. Michael Coate said that the special Christmas Market is all set for Saturday 18th December and will extend to 2pm. It is hoped that The Operatic Society will attend, as there will be a gazebo on the pavement of Fore Street available for them. The Committee is also hoping that they will have some carol singers. There will be extra producers and craft stalls coming along to make the market a thoroughly enjoyable and atmospheric event.

On a separate note regarding the market on 4th December, the Farmer's Market Committee were hoping to have a sugarcraft demonstration, however their usual demonstrator is unavailable. Michael asked whether anyone in the Chamber knew of someone who may be able to help with this. Clare de'Ruyter said that she has a sugarcraft contact, so will pass Michael Coate's number on to her.

Town Council Report

Julia Thorne reported that the town's Christmas lights would be switched on on Saturday 27th November. The event will take place between 4pm and 7pm, with Wellington Majorettes, local primary school children in the Big Sing, a procession with Mary, Joseph and a donkey from Sidmouth Donkey Sanctuary and Kevin Stratton as compere. There are also a number of traders getting involved with late night opening and special events.

The town council wanted to make special mention to Cloud 9 and all the hard work they have put into the event including organising competitions and arranging street dancers.

Christmas Trees

Sue White mentioned the fact that due to personal circumstances, Terry Milton would not be organising and putting up the Christmas trees on the shop fronts this year. It was commented that it would be up to the individual traders to do themselves if they so wish.

South Street

Sally Hooper commented that from last month's minutes she had been made aware that there was some animosity from some of the town traders towards the whole 'South Street Speciality' idea. She said that she felt that rather than isolating themselves from the rest of the town they were trying to work as a team in their own area to support the town as whole. Their committee was

hoping that the other 'sections' of town, ie High Street, Fore Street, Lancer Court etc, should try and get together as a unit as well and do a similar thing.

Sue White said that she agreed and felt that if other traders had an issue with this and felt they were unable to get themselves together to do this that the Chamber are here to support them.

Sally Hooper said that other traders are more than welcome to go to the South Street meetings to see what goes on and get ideas, they are just unable to expand their 'group' anymore. For more information about this, traders can go and see Sally Hooper in Mad Dog.

Superfast Broadband

Vivienne Stock-Williams informed the Chamber that the bid for Superfast Broadband was in the hands of Taunton Deane Borough Council officers who would be writing the town into their plans.

Julia Thorne advised that she is waiting for information from them and she will then provide a Press Release regarding this.

5. Chamber Christmas Social Event

Sue White pointed out that there was an error in the Wellington Weekly News regarding the event, saying that it would be starting at 9pm instead of 6pm. Despite this there had already been 49 confirmed replies.

John Pragnell was to contact Fred Domellof with the intention of obtaining two crates of his Somerset Commando 'Hoofing' beer which would either be raffled off or offered for a donation, any extra proceeds would then also go to the Somerset Commando Fund. It was also hoped to have a crate of the alcohol free cider for those driving.

There was also 6 bottles of mulled wine to be collected from Waitrose, and the mince pies were to be purchased from the local Artisan Bakery.

Although the event would probably cost more than last year's to stage, it is hoped that many non-members that come along to the evening could then be encouraged to join the Chamber.

6. Treasurer's Report

Helen Thorne informed the Chamber that the account balance currently stands at £1,351.55. This has increased due to some subscriptions that have come in as Standing Orders, however the invoices for the 2010/2011 period have yet to be sent out.

7. Any Other Business

The subject of the increase and standardisation of car parking charges across the town was raised. The proposal is that in standardising the car parks,

South Street would lose its current one-hour charge to be brought in-line with North Street and Longforth Road which only offer two hours or more. The increase in charges means that a 2-hour stay would now cost 90 pence instead of 70 pence for a one hour stay.

The Chamber argued that shoppers may only want to park for an hour, but are then getting penalised as they are having to pay the same price as those that are parking for two hours. John Pragnell pointed out that this is totally against the current principal of trying to bring more people into the town. It was felt that it would be in the town's best interest if an hour tariff could be kept at a charge of about 50 pence.

Andrew Govier told the Chamber that he had tried to put forward something similar to Taunton Deane Borough Council, but that it would mean that the council would lose revenues in the region of £14,000 per year which would then have to be recovered elsewhere, so they are not willing to support this proposal.

The Chamber agreed to stick to its guns and wholeheartedly object to the rise, and encourage members to submit their own individual objections in writing to Taunton Deane Borough Council.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm.