

# CHEPSTOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## Minutes of General Meeting

### Thursday 2nd February 2012, 6.00pm at The Beaufort Hotel

#### PRESENT:

##### Members:

Melanie Phillips (MP) - President  
Griff Rogers (GR)  
David Burton (DB)  
Andrew Griffith (AG)  
Judy Griffith (JG)  
Ben Pugh (BP)  
Sarah Whitty (SW)  
Brian Colley-Priest (BCP)  
Alyson Hunt (AH)  
Cllr Paul Rutter (PR)

Steve Sullivan (SS)  
Dawn Floyd (DF)  
Gayle Teague (GT)  
Peter Traynor (PT)  
June Traynor (JT)  
Nikki Colley-Priest (NJCP) - Secretary

##### Guests:

Moira Teague – Barclays Bank  
Lia Hind – Free Press  
Mark Elson – Forest Review

1. **Apologies:** Cllr Jacqui Sullivan (JS), Michelle Dalley, David Cummings, Paul Hardy, Debbie Allaire.
2. **Minutes** The minutes of meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 had been circulated and were approved by GR & DB
3. **Matters Arising:** PR reported that there were still on-going issues with the bollards in St Mary's Street. MCC wish to remove the bollards entirely as a faulty bollard had damaged a vehicle and instead patrol the area more frequently to ensure vehicles comply with access regulations. PR & JS were to make further representations to MCC and hope to resolve the issue. DF commented that there were still issues with taxis accessing the street at night. When challenged taxi drivers reported that regulation do not apply to them. PR to investigate whether taxis are excluded from access restrictions at any time.
4. **Marketing Update:** GR reported that:
  - I. **Marketing Budget:** The group were in the process of drawing up a working plan for the use of funds available for year 2012-13
  - II. **Walkers are Welcome Scheme.** Chepstow Town Council had given its support to this scheme which was one of the criteria for Chepstow to be accredited. Another criterion was that it had the support of local people and a petition had been circulated for people to sign and was also available at Chepstow TIC.
  - III. **Town Signage** A survey of all the towns in Monmouthshire had taken place and the group had been asked to complete a questionnaire on the initial results. Among other issues, the group felt that there was poor signage from outside the area directing tourists to the castle. A final report will be available for discussion shortly and it was hoped that there would be further discussion about signage in Chepstow with MCC at that stage.
  - IV. **Monmouthshire Tourism Futures Project.** Representatives from the group had attended a workshop to hear the results of a consultation MCC had commissioned on tourism in Monmouthshire. The main outcomes from this meeting were that:
    - a. The tourism Brand is likely to be Monmouthshire and the Wye Valley
    - b. The USP of the county will be "Food capital of Wales"
    - c. The group felt that the USP was inappropriate to the County. Further consultations were expected soon.
  - V. **Events in Chepstow over the current year** Chepstow Festival will be taking place 22<sup>nd</sup> June – 15<sup>th</sup> July this year. The group was in the process of collating/ co-ordinating/planning other events that will be taking place in Chepstow over the current year.
5. **Help and Advice for Businesses:** Alyson Hunt – Senior Customer Services Officer, Welsh Government Regional Centre Service gave an informative presentation explaining how her role fitted in to accessing **free** support covering all the sectors, service, retail and tourism, from various schemes available via the Welsh Government. This included advice and support on:
  - Employment & equality issues
  - Confidential environmental support and advice
  - Business advice and support, including preparing business plans and diagnostic reviews

- Financially supported work based learning opportunities, apprenticeship and graduate schemes, training and leadership schemes (70% funded by government) with 1000s of courses covering all sectors. Schemes for taking on redundant persons with a £3000 grant to train them for the job
- Rural Development plan grants for tourism industry
- Financial support available for businesses and community projects under various schemes
- Free ITC advice and support for e-businesses for protecting against fraud.

Alyson urged anyone who was interested in seeking assistance, or who wished to obtain advice as to what help might be available to them, to contact her in the first instance and she will arrange an appointment with an appropriate adviser. She suggested seeking her department's assistance with completing application forms as it was vital that these were completed in the correct fashion.

Melanie thanked Alyson for a very useful presentation and for the information provided, she felt several members would be interested in contacting her for help.

## 6. Feedback on Other Meetings – Melanie Phillips

- I. **Car Park Charges.** There was no more news to report at the present. MCC will not be making any decisions until after the local elections in May. The Chamber is still intent on campaigning for 2 hours free parking. At a recent Executive meeting it was highlighted that there was considerable frustration from the public with the current requirement to supply a car registration number before purchasing a ticket.
- II. **1 Rifles.** Melanie would be attending a meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February with other groups about introducing a covenant with 1 Rifles and will report back to the Chamber.
- III. **Peacocks** – The Executive members had raised concerns about the possible closure of Peacocks and felt that preparations should be made to send out a brochure about Chepstow to various national businesses as was done when Woolworth closed. GR suggested updating the information sent out previously. GT offered to review the documents and see what could be done.

## 7. March Meeting:

- I. MP asked members to invite a business colleague to the next meeting with the aim of recruiting more members to the Chamber. At the meeting we would be discussing how to grow your business making use of the activities taking place in Chepstow over the year.
- II. AH reported that MCC intended to hold another 'Back to Business' day this year in June. There is also a business road show planned in for Chepstow in April.
- III. June asked if any further information had been obtained about the missing silver cup that used to be awarded for the best dressed shop window. MT said she would look to see if it was in the bank's vault.

**Meeting closed 20.10**

**Next Meeting Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> March 6.00pm The Beaufort Hotel**