

CHEPSTOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of General Meeting

Thursday 4th September 2008, 6.00pm at The Beaufort Hotel

Present

Griff Rogers – President
Alison Ferrimen - Treasurer
Patrick Long - NGB2B
Cllrs Steve & Jacqui Sullivan
Cllr Paul Rutter

Cllr Ned Heywood
Melanie Phillips
Brian Colley-Priest
Cllr Martin Brady
Cllrs Mr and Mrs Dovey
Rachel Thomas – Chepstow Guide

Ian Fellowes – First 2 aid
Dr Sian Jones – Fairlight Dental Practice
Hana Calland – Free Press
Marcus Perrin – Transition Chepstow
Rosemary Parkhouse - Transition Chepstow

J Goslin - Energy Surveyor
N Peregrine

Apologies; Andrew Griffith, Dee Griffith, Peter Traynor, Leah Ashby

1. **Welcome.** Griff welcomed members and guests to the meeting
2. **Minutes of July meeting.** Approved Paul Rutter seconded Jacqui Sullivan
3. **Matters arising.** None
4. **Marketing update.** Paul Rutter reported that:
 - a. There had been 100% take up of space in publication and it was hoped to make a modest profit. Over 40,000 would be delivered by Royal Mail commencing in October. He offered his thanks to Rachel for her hard work over the last two years.
 - b. Events planned for the remainder of the year included; The Continental Market, Hoggin the Bridge, Creative Cultivators Market and The Town Council's Christmas Lights turning on Ceremony.
 - c. Most of the events this summer had been successful despite poor weather. There had been an issue between retailers and traders with a reported impact on trade which the Marketing group is looking to address.
 - d. There had been a problem as previously reported, with the cost of road closures for events. Thanks to Tim McDermott's efforts, a reasonable deal had been obtained for some events. There is a possibility of an arrangement with MCC for a trial period next summer, negotiations are continuing.
 - e. The Marketing Group is in consultation with the Town Council regarding what appropriate publications are required for the town. 'The What's on Guide' was an issue as Annie Rainsbury no longer has the time to produce this due to increased workload.
5. **Presentation: Lobbying for improvements in local transport.**

Jim Jenkins – Better Trains for Chepstow gave the meeting an update on their activities since his presentation last May and thanked the Chamber for their support.

 - a. **Objective A All cross country trains to stop at Chepstow instead of passing through town.** A final attempt to influence Arriva to agree to a stop at Chepstow on the Cardiff to Birmingham hourly train service has failed. At a meeting with Tom Harris MP transport Minister, DfT on 30th June he agreed to BT4C request to again look into this service, although he offered little hope.
 - b. **Objective B run an extra train to fill the 2 hr gaps in the local ARRIVA TrainsWales service to provide a regular hourly service throughout the day and match other services.** SWETAs Regional Transport Plan Consultative Draft Policy July 2008 out for consultation until 30th September 2008 includes a proposal for an hourly service in 2010. Another proposal will be implemented to see this service increased to half hourly in 2014. Jim emphasised the fact that the proposal for hourly services needs to be publicized in the hope that this will not be dropped in the consultation process.
 - c. **To restore a regular and convenient service to and from Bristol** Chepstow Bristol by train is now 85mins as opposed to the previous 51mins. The wait for a connection at Severn Tunnel Junction is now 47mins. And the journey to Portsmouth now takes an hour longer each way, passengers having

to change at Newport instead of STJ. BT4C and STAG(Severn Tunnel Action Group) are continuing to put pressure on First Great Western.

- d. **Chepstow Station Car Park.** It has been shown that when there is insufficient space for car parking at stations rail travellers are deterred from using trains. Chepstow station car park is full by 9.00am BT4C have asked Network Rail to add this requirement into their Route Utilisation Strategy programme. There is space for 150 cars in the old siding area.
- e. **Chepstow Station Booking Office** is now open regularly from 6.00am to mid afternoon weekdays and Saturday mornings. This is a great help to passengers as advice on which way to travel is available to both locals and visitors. The ticket machine is of a simple train type so advance (cheaper) tickets are not able to be issued. A more advanced machine would cost £8000 and is considered not worth while to purchase.
- f. **Passenger Survey** This was under taken on 18th August 2008 and the results were:
 - i. The total number of passengers had increased on the day of the survey by 8% from the previous survey.
 - ii. 85% of the journeys are to destinations within 30 mile radius of Chepstow
 - iii. 70% of passengers embarking journey did not involve changing trains.
 - iv. 2% of the passengers were travelling to BristolGriff commented on the fact it was surprising with the high number of Chepstow residents commuting to Bristol how few were using the train (only 4 passengers on a Monday). Jacqui commented that as the Station car park was full by 9.00am the Chamber needed to lobby MCC to make parking cheaper in Chepstow to encourage more people to use the trains

6. Any other business

- a. **Programme events.** Griff distributed the planned programme of events for the coming year which included a varied list of activities which is hoped to suit all needs. There will now be a monthly meeting and the Chamber will be sending out regular updates to the program which can be adjusted to suit current topics as they arise. The Chamber will welcome as many people as possible to come to these meetings in the aim of attracting new members.
- b. **Drill Hall.** Ned reported that the management of the Drill Hall had now been handed over to a voluntary management committee and it is hoped that this will be well utilised as a community venue for Chepstow. There will be an open evening at 5.00pm on Thursday October 2nd at 5.00pm with entertainment and refreshments, giving members a chance to attend this before the Chamber Meeting at 6.30pm. There are several events planned for the Drill Hall the first being 'Undressing Mr Darcy' due to take place on 5th September.
- c. **Chepstow Bags** Jacqui Sullivan reported that there were vouchers in the Free Press this week to claim free Chepstow bag.
- d. **Plastic Bags and Convenience stores.** Cllr Dovey asked the Chamber if they could distribute an email regarding the devastating effects of plastic bags to all their members. Griff asked him to forward this to Nikki for distribution.

7. Meeting closed 7.00pm Date of Next Meeting Thursday 2nd October 2008 6.30pm Beaufort Hotel.