

CHEPSTOW CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of General Meeting

Thursday 3rd October 2013, 6.00pm at The Beaufort Hotel

PRESENT:

Members:

David Burton (DB) – Vice President
Griff Rogers (GR)
Cllr Paul Rutter (PR)
Alyson Hunt (AH)
Ben Pugh (BP)
Julie LePeltier (JR)

Nikki Colley- Priest (NJCP)- Secretary

Guests:

Nikola Greening – (NG) Chepstow Accountancy Services
Cllr David Dovey (DD)

1. **Apologies:** Andrew Griffith, Judy Griffith, Dee Griffith, Jayne Bennett, Melanie Phillips, Sarah Foster, Mark LePeltier
2. In the absence of the President it was agreed that Executive member PR chair the meeting.
3. **Approval of Minutes.** The draft minutes of the meeting held on 5th September 2013 had been circulated. These were taken as read and adopted following a proposal by DB seconded by AH.
4. **Welcome and introductions** PR welcomed members in particular the newest member Julie Peltier of Le Peltier Properties, and also guest Nikola Greening who has just opened Chepstow Accountancy Services in Chepstow.
5. **Matters Arising**
- 5.1. **Car Parking Charges** DD reported that this decision was behind schedule and no date for the decision had been confirmed. PR commented that the discussion about increased charges had been on-going for over 3 years now. He explained that MCC were not permitted to use the revenue from parking charges for anything other than transport/road improvements.
6. **Marketing Update.**
- 6.1. **Bench Marking**
GR reported that the Bench Marking exercise had highlighted 3 points
 1. Chepstow was a typical small town profile
 2. 70% of businesses felt that there was more potential to be gained from tourism
 3. Car Park charges were an issue
- 6.2 **Road Closures** Negotiations for the monthly road closure were on-going, however, it had been noted that other local events conflicted with the proposed 1st Saturday of every month. The Town Clerk had requested that the Chamber consulted business on their views on having a regular monthly High Street closure on the 4th Saturday of the month as this Saturday did not conflict with other events in the locality. It was agreed to contact businesses by email explaining the proposal to adopt the 4th Saturday of the month for the road closure and asking if anyone had any major reason why this should not be adopted. BP suggested putting this out via social media, however, it was agreed that just businesses were to be consulted about the closure date as this could affect their trade. Social media would be appropriate, after a closure Saturday had been agreed, when the general public would be asked for ideas on what type of events they would like to see held in the High Street. BP suggested looking for some historical link for events as held in other towns.
- 6.3 **Vintage Fayre** This would be taking place on Saturday 12th October in and around the centre of town. The event is being organised by 'Vintage Vision' a social enterprise that has just opened a shop in St Marys Street.
7. **Google Plus and Your Business** BP explained Google Plus has been gradually moving towards being one of the most active social networks with hundreds of millions of people having active accounts - More people search for businesses online than anywhere else, so it's important to make sure your local business listing can be easily found as Google seems to be the most popular search engine it seems sensible to use Google Places to make sure your local business listing can be easily found. BP outlined the advantages to businesses using Google platforms, circles etc. PR thanked BP for making members aware of the opportunities out there for promoting their businesses. BP agreed to give NJCP a resume of his presentation to circulate to members. DB commented that if members take advantage of this by following each other it would be another good reason for businesses to join the Chamber

8. **2013-2014 Programme.** NJCP distributed copies of the proposed programme for the year. PR explained that the executive had taken up the suggestion of the Chamber adopting a charity for the year. It had agreed to adopt Chepstow Street Pastors for this year's Charity They do sterling work limiting issues that might arise late at night with those that might have over indulged with alcohol and have on-going costs for the flip-flops, emergency blankets and First Aid items that they regularly give out, plus their continuous training schedule includes recognised training organisations with fees and expenses to be paid.
NJCP explained that the Zip wire event might only be available at a weekend but this was to be confirmed.
9. **AOB.**
- 9.1 Late Night Christmas Shopping** NJCP had had an enquiry about a date for late night Christmas shopping. It was agreed to email retailers once a date for the Christmas Lights switch on had been confirmed.
- 9.2 Rail Services.** DD informed the meeting that the transport group were making progress slowly for better rail services for Chepstow.

Meeting Closed 19.15 Date of Next Meeting Thursday 7th November