

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE WOTTON CHAMBER OF TRADE HELD AT THE STAR INN ON 21<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2005.**

1. Welcome by the President, Alex Wilkinson.
2. Apologies:  
Jacqui Moore, Hilary Roberts, Kate Lock
3. Minutes of the last meeting were approved by Michael Payne. Matters arising – minutes from the meetings will be put on the website in future for approval.
4. Proposal for a change to the joint presidency. It was agreed by the committee that Claire Wilkinson, wife of the current President, would take over from Jacqui Moore as the joint president of the Chamber.
5. Membership and subscriptions: Gareth Kitchen has produced a database with over 200 names and addresses. Letters, applications and agenda for the next meeting have been circulated to all. 20 applications had been received in the post, in addition to the current members, by the time of the meeting. A query has been raised by The Ark, which is a Christian charity, as to whether the Chamber would be able to grant a reduced membership fee for charities. Alex has agreed to look into this and provide the details at the next meeting. It was agreed that payments could be made by BACS. The banking details are as follows:- Barclays, Account Name – Wotton-under-Edge Chamber of Trade, Account number – 80657239, sort code – 20-33-83. The Chambers target is to get as close as possible to the Nailsworth membership of 70%. This would mean a membership of 150 businesses.
6. Website – Gareth Kitchen has constructed a website for the Chamber and has agreed to put all current and new members onto the Chamber's website. Future agendas and minutes will be put onto the website and will also be e-mailed to members as long as we have an e-mail address.
7. Security Issues – We have considered the use of police and dog whistles. We have also spoken to the local police officer who said that there is a rape alarm we can test. It has been suggested that we invite her to a future meeting to give a demonstration of this. Alex Wilkinson has agreed to contact her to arrange this.
8. Christmas – The Regeneration Partnership suggested that the Town Council could pass its budget of upto £1500 over to the Chamber to enhance the Christmas lighting in the town. Gary Keen, the Treasurer, is to formally request this on the Chamber's behalf. The Regeneration Partnership is approaching Tescos and Co-Op for local contributions.

It was decided that a Christmas working party should be formed to consider the following areas :- lighting, shop fronts, Xmas trees, a late night shopping event, Christmas fair, closing part of the town centre to accommodate this. The volunteers at the meeting to be part of this working party were :- Jo and Nicky (4 Market Street), Wendy (DIY), Diana (Farmers' Market) and Lynda (Clock House Jewellers). A volunteer from the party will attend the next committee meeting at Steep House on 11/8 to provide an initial report.

Alex Wilkinson will speak to the local electrician, Bill Andrews, to ask if he would be interested in helping with the lighting. It was suggested that the

Chamber should inform the Stroud Council of any proposed arrangements. Arrangements for the lighting need to be agreed by October. A proposal was put forward that every shop in or close to the town centre should have a Christmas tree and uniform lighting. John Dansie will approach Tortworth Court Estate for a price on fresh trees. He will also speak to the local Round Table for help and ideas.

Gareth Kitchen will approach the County Council for permission to close the centre of the town, once a date is decided.

9. Parking - the Regeneration Partnership is due to meet on 5/9 to further discuss this. There is also a proposal to consider the use of the Wotton Auction Room car park. Gareth Kitchen and Judy Parry to attend the meeting as a representative of the Chamber and will provide an update on this at the next meeting.

Gareth raised another parking issue. A previous agreement was reached with One Stop that an area would be coned off outside the store to enable the delivery lorries to unload. Tescos have now taken over from One Stop and have been failing to remove the cones after delivery, thus taking up 3 parking spaces. Alex Wilkinson has agreed to speak to Tracy, the Community Police Officer, to ask her to take this up with Tescos.

There was an opinion from some present at the meeting that Wotton should not charge for parking.

10. Proposed Planning Application for 37 Long Street – It was proposed by the owners of the local DIY that the Chamber should oppose the application. It was universally agreed that the committee should write to Stroud District Council and object under Section 9 of the local planning regulations, which states that Stroud DC will seek to uphold retail functions and preserve retail frontage. Alex Wilkinson will write on behalf of the Chamber. Individual retailers need to object on their own account, if they wish to.

11. AOB – Andrew from Martingales reported that a town in Somerset had recently secured funding of £100k to develop and regenerate the town. If the Chamber wishes to consider a similar scheme, a working party will need to be set up to put forward a structured business plan. Andrew has agreed to be co-opted onto the committee to lead the working party and to present a business plan to the Regional Development Agency. Andrew will attend the next committee meeting on 11/8.

Gary Keen, the Treasurer, raised the issue of Public Liability and whether it would be required at any time by the Chamber. John Dansie has agreed to look into this and report back to the next meeting.

The Christmas working party will need to seek an agreement for when the Christmas evening should be held.

The Federation of Small Businesses will meet at The Star on 4/8 (7:30pm). All from the Chamber are welcome to attend.

The next Chamber committee meeting will be held at 7.30 on 11/8 at Steep House, 2 Long Street.