

MINUTES OF THE CHAMBER OF TRADE MEETING –

27TH MARCH 2007

ROYAL BRITISH LEGION CLUB

1. Welcome

The meeting was opened by the president, Alex Wilkinson

2. Apologies –

Apologies were received from the following members: Nikki Train; Jacqui Moore; Peter and Hilary Roberts; Brigitte Appleyard; Abby Hutchinson; Kate Brady; Glen Richards; John Cordwell.

3. Minutes of the January meeting

These were proposed by Claire Wilkinson and seconded by Gareth Kitchen

4. Review of the action points from the previous meeting –

i) Gareth confirmed he had checked with the Information Commissioner and the Chamber is required to have Data Protection registration. Gareth will register on behalf of the Chamber and will nominate himself as the Controller. The fee is £35, which the Chamber will pay.

ii) The cheques for the local charities have not yet been issued. We understand that The Groove Project, who were to receive £100, have recently been awarded a substantial grant. Therefore, it was felt that we should consider donating this sum to another local charity. Gary will issue the remaining cheques to the other three charities and the committee will discuss which charity should receive the final donation of £100.

iii) Alex has tried to contact Michael Rigby of Michael Rigby and Associates to ask for some advice on how the Chamber can be more successful in promoting itself. Unfortunately, Michael has been unavailable recently, but will contact Alex at some point.

iv) Jacqui did some research on the Nailsworth Chamber of Trade and reported that they have 80 members out of 200 businesses. A review of their minutes showed they, too, have issues with membership and support.

5. Issues concerning the way forward for the Chamber –

This was again discussed at some length by the members. There is a concern that we are not attracting new members or gaining much support from existing ones. It was felt that the main reason for this was because, other than running a successful Christmas event, members do not consider that we are active enough in providing any other matters of interest or benefit.

Membership has gone down and there is little support for the meetings. We discussed what events we could realistically put on that would interest members. Last year, the committee issued a questionnaire to all members asking for suggestions for topics or events that they would be

interested in. We received just three replies to this. The concern voiced at the meeting was that we don't know what our members are interested in, so it is very difficult to arrange such things as guest speakers. It is also potentially embarrassing if we do arrange a guest speaker and very few members turn up to the meeting. Some suggestions were put forward:

i) Gareth is going to speak to Terry Morgan of the FSB to see if he would be willing to attend a meeting and discuss the sort of projects the FSB gets involved with.

ii) Alex is going to ask Glen Richards of Squirrel Solutions, if he would like to give a presentation on effective use of a website in running a business. A proposed date for this is 26th April, which is the next Chamber meeting.

iii) Karen Pegler suggested a wine tasting evening, which she has volunteered to organise with Alex. A proposed date is Friday 18th May. This will be a ticket event and the likely venue will be the Town Hall (TBC).

iv) It was agreed that as the last committee meeting was cancelled, we should rearrange this with the specific purpose of coming up with proposals for the way forward. This meeting has been scheduled for 7.30 on 19/4 at Alex and Claire's home, 9 The Chipping, WUE. Proposals will be discussed at the next Chamber meeting.

6. Update on membership

Alex still needs to carry out reconciliation on numbers and subscriptions paid. He will arrange to contact Nicola to do this and then report back to the treasurer. Nicola suggested it might be worth handing the management of membership fees over to an accountant who could take care of the invoicing and receiving of the fees. Alex has agreed to contact a local accountant to discuss feasibility and cost. This will be reported on at the next meeting.

7. Proposed date for Christmas Under The Edge

Possible date is 1st December. This will be discussed at the next committee meeting.

8. AGM

The AGM of the Chamber will be held on 26th June, venue to be confirmed. Alex will be asking members to consider standing for election as the President and for committee positions.