



Minutes

Friday, 13 July 2018

wotton-under-edge
chamber of trade

www.wotton.biz

Annual General Meeting

7:00pm at The Star (rear function room)

Present: Martin Tucker (Chair), Trevor Mason (Acting Secretary), Mo Morgan, Jill Tebb, Janet Walshe, Dave Harrison, Claire Wilkinson, Sue Hunt (Wotton in Bloom), Mark Lovell (Wotton in Bloom), Derek Thomas (WH Thomas & Son), Anthony Atkinson (Wotton DIY)

Apologies: Jeff Walshe

1. **President's report (transcript)**

Good evening and welcome

I would firstly like to thank the Wotton in Bloom Committee and volunteers who put in all of the hard work to make the town look so fantastic over the last few months. I and all of our members wish you all the very best for September when the judges' results are announced. Good Luck.

I would also like to thank the Committee and all those that have helped in the last ten months since I became your President.

So what have I been up to?

I supported Nicki Palmer in getting the money to start planning the Christmas event. I purchased 51 Christmas trees and along with several volunteers I put lights on them and erected them around the town. I must also thank the Town Council who gave us a grant of £510 to support the cost of the trees.

I have joined both the Gloucestershire First Local Enterprise Partnership Group and the Association of Gloucestershire Business Groups which has enabled me to get grants of £21000 for members developing their businesses.

I have joined debates on panels at Emerson Green's Science Park to discuss the current challenges to small businesses and judged the Cirencester Chamber of Commerce's business awards. I am also supporting towns which are setting up Chambers or business groups where currently they don't have them.

With the Committee's help I have written a Constitution and Trevor helped produce a remuneration policy for any member who incurs expenses while working on the behalf of the Chamber.

I have been meeting with people and organisations that I believe will add value to our members and have attended as many Town Council meetings as I can, asking questions and making comment on the behalf of our members on anything which is relevant to the

membership. I have been co-opted onto the Regeneration Committee to help support the Town Council in regenerating the town.

Recently I agreed to set up a permit scheme with the Auction House that allows members registered with me to park in the Auction House private car park. This has released ten parking spaces a day in the town for others to use.

We have had several Breakfast Meetings and an evening 'speed dating' for businesses to help members meet new businesses and get to know one another.

We ran a session on GDPR and I'd like to thank Claire Wilkinson and Linda Cohen who put in all the hard work to collect all of the information together for a very eye-opening and informative presentation.

Going forward this year we have plans for the following events:

On August 15th (to be confirmed) we are to visit the new Bath Ales brewery.

On September 29th there will be a talk on how Gin is made - along with tastings!

There will be fancy dress on October 29th for Halloween plus the opportunity to join the Ghost Trail around the Swan Hotel.

We are hoping to have a wine and cheese tasting evening in November and the town's Christmas event will be on December 1st with our own Chamber Christmas Buffet on 21st.

I am also looking at a meeting with the Highways Agency (now known as Highways England) who want to come and talk to us about their work and plans for the future and to give us an opportunity to ask them questions.

I also have plans to organise both a trip to Aerospace Bristol and their Concorde and also a presentation from the Gloucestershire Cyber Crimes unit on how we can avoid fraud within our businesses.

Ladies and Gentlemen, that concludes my report.

Thank you.

2. Treasurer's report

The end of year finances were fully reported in the last set of minutes (23rd April). Since then £120 has been paid in with no expenditure.

3. Ratification of the Constitution

The Chairman introduced this item with the statement that applications for some grants require there to be a constitution in place.

There were a few comments made on the draft with some alternative wording suggested.

With the proviso that the new wording be incorporated into the draft the motion to accept the

Constitution was put to the vote.

Vote proposed by Jill, seconded by Sue with all in favour

The new and finalised Constitution will be circulated to Committee Members and placed on the Chamber's web site

Action: Trevor

4. Remuneration criteria

The new policy document to cover expenses incurred by any member in the course of representing the Chamber was discussed. Gareth Kitchen (by message) suggested that any tariffs mentioned in the policy be separated out and placed in an independent document so that changes to the amounts could be made and agreed by Committee without the need to formally alter the policy document.

It was agreed that the Committee should take responsibility to produce and vote on a new version.

Action: All Committee

5. Forthcoming events

The President reminded the meeting that he had already mentioned some events planned for the future in his report.

Claire pointed out that the Committee had previously discussed the possibility of raising money for sponsorship of some projects, eg helping the local British Legion to support the sending of two representatives to a mass gathering in Flanders. She suggested that the Chamber's 'Final Friday' activity might be a way of doing this.

(Explanation to members – Committee member Linda Cohen used to have a social gathering at the end of each month for the members of her previous Chamber; the aim being for them to meet and chat informally. Over the last few months Claire and Jill have taken this into their homes where anyone could come along with a dish and a bottle and join in. It was at a meeting like this that Jill raised around £450 for RNLI).

It was suggested that the Final Friday event be revitalised after the summer and that it be discussed at a later meeting.

Action: All Committee

6. “Should the Chamber have a ‘Social Responsibility’ ethos?”

Martin explained that recently there had been a number of issues with which the Chamber was beginning to be involved, such as the problem of dog fouling in the town and raising the awareness of dementia locally. He questioned whether these were appropriate for the Chamber.

It was agreed that the Chamber should aim to follow the objectives set out in the new Constitution but that it could help by acting as a facilitator to spread the word locally; passing any such information to its members but not to become directly involved.

Dave suggested that we ask those who the Chamber has helped for a report of some form

outlining how they got on.

It was suggested that many in the town were not very clear on what the Chamber does and how it functions. There appeared to be little or no understanding of just how the Chamber has helped its members. It was felt that some recognition was due.

Anthony suggested holding an open day of some sort and issuing special invitations.

Trevor undertook to edit Martin's Presidential Report for inclusion in the Wotton Directory and the Wotton Times.

Action: Trevor

Sue pointed out that the small charities in the town need a forum and that it would be good if they could join the Chamber (at a reduced rate)

Mark stated that "a vibrant business sector is essential to a town" and that "without businesses you haven't got a High Street".

7. Any other business

a) Christmas trees, lights or lamp patterns?

There was discussion about the fact that there were several Health & Safety implications with the erection of Christmas trees and lights around the town each year and that in reality neither the fees, grants for this activity actually covered the costs.

Jill, Janet and Jeff have walked the town with a representative of a festive lighting company.

A couple of options were discussed and Dave offered £500 towards the scheme stating that the town needed something to bring in customers.

Depending on the outcome, Anthony offered to obtain items through the trade at cost + VAT

It was agreed that Jeff Walshe and Anthony research and investigate.

Action: Jeff, Anthony

b) Tackling litter and dog fouling in Wotton

This topic was covered under Item 6.

c) Town Heritage Centre

Janet requested that the Heritage Centre be kept informed of any events being organised in the town as they receive many visitors asking about what might be going on.

d) Symn Lane Car Park

The decision on the Planning Application for the new car park and houses behind the fire station is to be made on Tuesday 24th July.

e) Town car parking charges

It was stated that the town's councillors on Stroud District Council have made it known that they will be voting in favour of the proposal.

The need for the consultation process was queried as it appeared that the outcome had already been decided.