



Wadebridge and District chamber of Commerce
President: Mr G Stanbury

Chairman: Mr D Rowe Vice Chairman: Mr D Walford
Hon. Secretary: Mr A M Gregan Hon. Treasurer: Mrs A Jackson

Minutes of the December Monthly Meeting of the Wadebridge and District Chamber of Commerce
which took place on Wednesday 19th December at The Churchill Bar, Wadebridge

Present: Darren Rowe (IFA), Dominic Walford (IFA), Harriet Wild (Elixir), Sarah Hargreaves (The Bridge On Wool), Grenville and Susan Stanbury (Kittows), Steve Knightley (Mayor), Ann Jackson (Treasurer), Rachel Daniel (One Step Ahead), Andy Jolley (NCA), Eric Gill (Town Council), Mike Walford (Folk Festival), Philip Mutton (Trebur Estates)

Apologies: Randi and Jason Henderson (Elixir), Robin Moorcroft, Phil Chanter and Helen Lentern (D & C Police), Mel Hardie (Arty Crafts)

The minutes of the December meeting were proposed by Grenville Stanbury and seconded by Dominic Walford.

Matters Arising:

WREN: Here's a recap of what WREN is!

WREN is a community project with the aim of encouraging both public and businesses to generate energy by environmental means and selling back to the National grid and to reducing the town's carbon emissions by 30%. Profits generated will be put back into community projects to the benefit of all in the town and surrounding area.

Membership costs £1, which allows you to be part of the co-operative and have a voice in decision making.

There are two ways to get involved on the Wadebridge Renewable Energy Network project. First; by allowing a solar panel installed on your roof for free, you benefit from reduced energy bills, and the money made from selling surplus energy goes into our community fund. The other option is for you to invest in solar panels with a group of people, so you benefit from large economies of scale. You then keep all the revenue you generate from the feed-in tariff (roughly 9% return per annum a year) and a donation will be made via the provider to the WREN project.

There has been fantastic press response about WREN, both locally and nationally. Darren added that this has been great for generating awareness of Wadebridge and creating an image of being a forward-thinking town, which will benefit the local businesses. Talk has even reached Westminster and Brussels, portraying WREN as an ideal pilot scheme.

Steve Knightley reported that at a meeting that himself and Stephen Frankel attended in New County Hall, the Senior Council members and Cabinet members were impressed about the progress that WREN has made and have spoke about possible investment in this community scheme.

Christmas Lights: Darren said that they broke their record in getting the Christmas lights down – they were in the pub before 1pm! He especially thanked Sarah from Bridge on Wool for her lovely bacon butties and coffee, YB builders for their help and lending equipment for free, Stephen Frankel, Stephen Knightley, Robin, Phil and all the police who helped on the day.

He pointed out that once again it was mainly non-retailers helping. Darren and Sarah reinforced that it really is a good laugh, and a social task. He pleaded for local businesses to put their hands in their pockets if they can't spare any time to help manually. It is possible that the Chamber may not receive any funding this year so it is all the more crucial for local businesses to help out.

Sarah spoke passionately about how useful it is for the town. She said that every business in town benefits from the Christmas lights, late night shopping and other activities the Chamber puts on, whether that's directly or indirectly.

Philip Mutton asked whether the Town Council could help as retailers may be finding these financial times hard, to which Eric Gill responded that the Chambers application could not be met this year, but they would still contribute. Steve Knightley said that this will be talked about in the next meeting. The Town Council would like to make a more hands-on support in the future, and work more closely with the Chamber.

Dominic said that Philip has a valid point about retailers who might be trying to retain their profit in these difficult times, but in most other towns it isn't the responsibility of the Chamber to pay for late night shopping / promoting events such as our folk festival, and it is the retailers that benefit more. He said that we should all appreciate the work and finance that goes into Wadebridge from the Chamber. The chamber would hugely benefit even if every retailer donated £10 or signed up as a member. Sarah felt that every business could afford £1 per week, and that was a small price to pay for the benefit the town receives. Stephen Frankel said that the lack of Chamber members could well be down to a breakdown in communication, and suggested a couple of people went to chat to local businesses. Darren and Dominic said that this was a great idea and encouraged members to get more people involved.

Rachel said that it's a shame retailers are poorly represented at the Chamber. Often, they have strong views about how the town should / could be run, but they don't do anything about these views. These people should at least be members, even if they can't make the monthly meetings. Darren confirmed that the chamber is run by subscriptions of £25 a year and this keeps all of our events going and helps to promote the town. It's not just about two lively late night shopping evenings, it's about keeping the town trading as profitably as possible 365 days a year and we need numbers and fees to make this work. Dominic added that this year will be a tough year financially for traders. What we need is to work together – to get all the retailers under one roof to discuss what we can do as a town to try and overcome this.

New ideas

We chatted about some possible ideas for the town that could help-

- Steve Knightley would like baskets of flowers on the old bridge again, as it created a great first impression for the town and draw more people into the town
- Darren said we should erect a gazebo in Jubilee green for the summer months and use it for events that help build the community like musical events and fete's etc
- Steve Knightley talked of a Wadebridge regatta with having a raft race again and pram race through the town.
- Rachel felt that as Wadebridge is an ageing population, we need more housing around Wadebridge to increase numbers.

Benefits to being a Chamber member

- Forum to voice your opinions and share your ideas
- Free advertising on the new chamber website. This is building in success as members join and will be a great local directory of businesses

- Join a group of businesses that are looking at ways to get more people into the town by organising events and activities to benefit the businesses and boost their sales
- Support in dealing with issues to help your business. i.e Financial issues, planning and structural.
- Reduced costs of stands at the Royal Cornwall Show
- An opportunity to influence the towns development and future by getting involved in planning and development via the Town Forum

Remember:

- You do not have to be a member to attend the meetings, come along and join in
- You do not have to attend the meetings to be a member. We desperately need more funds and new members to fund projects this year to benefit the town. We will email the minutes to you and you can have your say via the email with Dominic or Darren.

Any Other Business

Mike updated us about this year's Folk Festival. He said he is currently fundraising and getting businesses to advertise on their flyers and programmes. He has met with the council. Wadebridge Folk Festival has had a great reputation not only in the county, but nationally too, which is building once again in reputation after a few years. He is also organising musicians to play for that weekend. The festival will be held on the last bank holiday weekend in August and there will be some local bands playing this year as well as some international line ups.

Darren read out a thank you letter from Mill Valley Yurts who needed our support for their retrospective planning permission. They were successful and wanted to thank the Chamber for all their help.

Andy from NCA updated us on the Royal Cornwall show news. He said the Wadebridge Stalls are the same format as usual. There are 20 single stalls, with first refusal to regulars. Darren suggested businesses who book a stall to pay a deposit up front now with final payment within the next few months. There are huge savings with the Chamber of Commerce Street at the showground. You have to be a member to gain these savings.

This meeting will be our annual AGM

Next Meeting: 16th February at The Churchill Bars (upstairs) 5.45pm.

We would like as many members and no-members as possible to attend please – especially retailers! Bring your thinking caps.

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