

## **Crewkerne & District Chamber of Commerce**

Committee Meeting, 7th August 2007, 6pm, The Public Bar George Hotel, Crewkerne  
Minutes by Alan Pyle

### **Attending**

Marcus Barrett (Chair)	Enterprise House
Rick Allen	Royal Oak
Malcolm Broadhurst	Crewkerne PO
Neil Mackintosh	Treasurer
Eileen Mills	Prelude Sports
Pamela Pickford	Ninis
Hilary Leamon	Crewkerne Town Council
Alison Farrow	ABCV
Alan Pyle	

### **Meeting Opened 6pm**

Marcus thanked Frank Joyce for kind permission of the venue and Alan Pyle for kindly agreeing to take short minutes.

### **1) Apologies**

Mike Banks, Anton Jordi, Shirley Marsland, Veronica Venables

### **2) Committee Matters.**

#### **a) Introduction of new Committee Member**

Marcus introduced Alison Farrow of Recruitment Consultancy new to the area, ABCV, and proposed her as a new member of the Managing Committee. Alison's portfolio role is to be 'Crewkerne Future' a brief including liaison with Wadham Business School (esp on up-coming interviews), Young Enterprise and major planning developments affecting the business future of the area. The proposal was approved nem con.

Marcus tabled the revised list of Committee members and their special interest portfolios on behalf of the Chamber and reminded that the Chamber succeeds because of the experience of the team; items will be delegated to portfolio holders in due course.

### **3) Brief feedback on Garden Party, 31/07/07**

The event was considered a success with well over 60 guests from a wide range of businesses and from villages and neighbouring Chambers. In wonderful weather 7 new members were signed up on the day. There was favourable publicity in the View From Crewkerne & more to come later in Western Gazette and Advertiser. The Committee noted with thanks the contributions to publicity material from Rick West at Footprintz

and Tom Griffin at Eazeeprint, and the excellent hospitality at the venue from Rick and Jenny Allen at The Royal Oak.

There was discussion about Budding in Business 2008 and Marcus asked the Committee to consider who would like to help run the event next year; Marcus suggested arranging packages with the nurseries early in 2008 and that the Chamber investigate paying a modest fee to someone next summer to keep plants watered during the key summer months – such a scheme would aim to make it simpler and cheaper for businesses so that more businesses find it easier to get up a summer colour display. It was suggested that watering work would fit in well with town shop window cleaning

**ACTION:** Malcolm Brocklehurst undertook to follow-up watering idea with a contact.

#### **4) 2008 Directory Project**

The committee reviewed a report on progress from Marcus. The proposal is for a modern design 36 pp A5 format in full colour print with 3000 households in CREWKERNE printers were asked to quote for a run of 4000. The launch is planned for February 2008 to include around 300 businesses drawn from a database which is being built from scratch. Businesses will get a bare entry but may buy extra space from a range of options to be advertised, ranging from £35 to £250 for a prestige full page. The listing headings will have artwork based on the Town Cryer.

Distribution was discussed. The Town Council delivers a newsletter quarterly. Hilary Leamon will explore possible distribution via the Town Council's usual sources. It was discussed that ABCD might contribute as the Directory was mooted in the Community Plan and is inclusive to all villages.

A range of print quotations were presented. It was agreed to accept the quotation from Eazyprint. Marcus recommended that this project have an appointed Project Manager, to ensure the efficient selling of space and to co-ordinate with him the timely production of copy, print and distribution of the directory. It was proposed and agreed that Dee Newman be appointed to this task.

Members agreed that some remuneration was necessary to cover expenses and to recognise the effort involved. Suggestions included a share of any profit from selling space in the directory, say 20% and a sum of £50 to cover incidental expenses. The treasurer to review this proposal. Eileen Mills donated a mobile phone from Prelude Sport so that there is Chamber phone contact for such projects.

#### **5) Chairman's Progress Report**

##### **a) Membership**

We have 9 new members thus exceeding our initial target of 25% increase (target was 8 in first 6 months). The Committee was asked to keep promoting the Chamber to prospective new members. A number of new initiatives for members were discussed: a

certificate of membership, a window sticker. The design of a 'Membership Pack' needs to be taken forward

**ACTION:** Marcus to forward current window sticker design to Eileen for a quotation.

**ACTION:** Pam & Alan agreed to investigate members' pack and report back.

**ACTION:** A sponsor is required for a 'Join Us' flyer.

#### **b) Security for Businesses**

Mike Best will be holding a CCTV training meeting on 17th August, which will show how volunteers can supervise the monitors of the town CCTV cameras. Committee members were asked to volunteer for this duty on Friday and Saturday nights. There was discussion about the clearance needed before observational evidence can be accepted in law. The training event should clarify this point. The quality of the town lighting was questioned. An inspection was carried out some time ago. Marcus reported that following a recent window breakage the culprit was likely to be issued with an ASBO.

**ACTION:** Hilary to report on the lighting issue

**ACTION:** Marcus to ask police for current view of Shopwatch.

**ACTION:** Hilary to find out how Chard and Yeovil fund and operate their town centre patrols. Is there a package?

#### **c) Pre-emptive Action**

Meeting has been held with a Falkland Shopping Centre representative.

A finger post signing the George Shopping Centre has been funded in part from the Chamber, in part from the land owners and in part from the Town & District Councils.

**ACTION:** The A-board for the centre needs to be progressed.

There was discussion about the misdirection to Crewkerne due to badly worded signing of warnings of roadworks. Strong representation has been made by Marcus on behalf of Crewkerne businesses and changes were made in response.

The Chamber needs to determine how this misleading signage came about. A further example of poor County Council comms was discussed, viz. works at the junction of Market Street with South Street, Hermitage Street and West Street. No detailed proposals appear to have been seen by any representatives of the town's interests.

**ACTION:** Marcus to follow-up

#### **d) Innovation**

A regular newsletter is now produced by the Chamber & is also available on-line. Frequency of editions was discussed. There will be a quarterly report to the Town Council. Western Gazette & View from Crewkerne are likely both to have more features from Chamber in future.

A proposal for a business award was discussed. A succinct, positive and practical five point 'Code' was suggested as a standard for judging. Marcus referred to the noticeboard at the Yeovil Quedam Precinct for an exemplar.

**ACTION:** Alison and Pam to begin work on a Crewkerne Code of Customer Service

Marcus drew the attention of the committee to the uncertain future of two public houses in Crewkerne: the planning application by the Antelope public house for a change of use to 10 1-bedroom flats - this is on the agenda of the Town Council's Planning sub committee on Monday 13th August; and the imminent closure of The Nag's Head Inn.

The Chamber Committee agreed that all avenues should be explored to keep these premises in suitable commercial use, though it was noted that employment use should be interpreted widely.

Marcus resolved to send all remaining agenda items by e-mail as Additional Business

**Meeting closed at 7pm**

### **Post-Meeting Additional Business**

#### **5e) - External Links**

i) Other Chambers: Marcus has contact Chambers of Commerce at: Ilminster & Yeovil, (the latter suggesting a plan jointly to host an event 'Locating Your Business to the Country') Wincanton, Wellington & Axminster; can't reach Chard / Sherborne. Marcus now on Cmte of Taunton Chamber.

ii) Wadham's Business Forum promo mtg in July - want to start by getting business volunteers to take a few hours to do mock interviews with students about to leave school. Short training is provided by Rotary (organisers). Alison has kindly agreed to head this project with Wadham using her own recruitment expertise for which many thanks

**ACTION:** Volunteers needed to do brief training & short mock interviews in Oct/Nov please contact Alison or myself and pass on to others.

iii) China Link-up: First stage will be working with a Taunton school who already have plans to exchange; Bath Travel have helpfully put us in touch with Wendy-Woo agency in China who are keen to be involved with any travel links.

iv) Marcus has had contact with SCC re signage & Market Street works - both ongoing points of contention. Jill Shortland (Leader SCC) now knows Crewkerne business will not be ignored. Continued liaison with SSDC Economic Dev. but Marcus noted Chamber's disappointment at inadequately pro-business response to keeping Bonsoir employment use land - avoid in future by lobbying personally harder and earlier. Angie Singleton (SSDC) has suggested we put proposals forward to market the town as place for relocation in key hotspots around the country - in light of CLR.

v) David Laws has tried to get SWRDA to link to the town website business pages but they are still refusing on basis it is a 'commercial site'. So the next step is to urge him to take it to the relevant Minister. SWRDA is there to promote investment in the region.

vi) Marcus has met with Andy Peters who has exciting practical ideas for eco-self build home-work units: ie affordable and eco-friendly (ie no power bills..!) homes with space for working from home.

## **6) Correspondence & Actions:**

i) Xmas Lights Cmte have asked us to help with their annual fundraise. Marcus has asked them for specific suggestions as to how we help. The Chamber must follow the rule that we are NOT a general funding organisation but we will look at any request on the merits of what the request does to back business in the area. In the case of Xmas lights the advantage for town centre businesses is clear.

**ACTION:** Marcus suggested two-fold response a) discretionary donation of £200 b) a joint marketing campaign with Chamber / Xmas Lights cmte (practically we will promote where we can) AND in response the Xmas Lights cmte must give us a breakdown of how they are building on previous years (to show progress) and acknowledge the Chamber on appropriate published material.

**THIS TO BE VOTED ON AS MATTER ARISING AT NEXT MEETING**

ii) ABCD Urban Design Framework grp has now met. Marcus attended and shall rep the Chamber henceforth. Urged that costs should not be put on businesses in town, that any public money spent must be publicly justified and that the design should bring in the private sector as well as planners.

iii) Methodist Chapel Refurbishment / modernisation appeal - have asked the Chamber for help with fundraising; Marcus asked for proposals for how this will benefit businesses in area - being open-minded as to how we interpret - we await response.

## **7) Next Meeting:**

David Laws MP Business Breakfast

Bilby's Coffee Shop

**8am Friday 28th September**

### **Advanced Notice:**

Chamber AGM [venue TBC]

**6pm 16th October**

[nb Marcus will be proposing a change to the constitution - detail later]