



PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MINUTES OF PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 4th September 2012

Present:

Dick Cliffe (DC)(Chairman), John Garrison (JG), Nina Menear (NM), Margaret Cass (MC), Hazel Trembath (HT), Sally Bodinar (SB), Barbara Hanik (BH), Arnaud Reutsch (AR), Chris Edwards (CE), Lucy Kean (LK) (Secretary)

Item 1. Apologies

Stephen Richford (SR),

Item 2 . Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting.

Minutes of the meeting that took place on 3 July 2012 were agreed. There was no meeting in August 2012..

Item 3. Matters Arising

The Chairman had the following outstanding actions:

- Circulate guidance on 'A' board use.
- Write to Sainsbury's seeking a review of the footpath design (running parallel to A30) as pedestrians appeared excessively vulnerable to traffic.
- Resolve the issue of Chamber involvement in the Twinning Association.
- Confirm with the Pirates RFC in writing that the meeting room was no longer required and that no monies were outstanding.

Item 4 Applications for Membership

Three new members had submitted all required paperwork and were formally voted in:

Member	Proposer	Seconded
HSBC – Penzance Branch	DC	AR
Cornerways Guesthouse	CE	BH
Newlyn Cheese and Charcuterie	MC	HT

Item 5 Correspondence

There had been no incoming correspondence of special significance.

The Chairman had written to The Rt Hon Justine Greening MP (24 July) on the matter of the Great Western rail franchise competition.

Item 6 Closure of BIH Service / IOS Transport Issues

6.1 BIH – At the beginning of August BIH formally announced that the heliport would not relocate and that they were saddened to have to withdraw the IOS helicopter passenger service with effect from 1st November 2012. The delays in the sale of the land due to legal challenges had closed off any possibility of a relocation of the Heliport even if such a relocation was being considered. As the service was stopping for commercial reasons (increasing costs and competition from Skybus) it was unlikely that the route would be attractive to another helicopter operator although various enquiries were being pursued.

Three applications for Judicial Review had been mounted, one by Tesco and two by individuals. Since their submission two of these (including the Tesco application) had been withdrawn. Sainsbury's have reported that although the legal challenges would cause delay it did not change their commitment to building a store in Penzance.

The closure of the helicopter link will leave a restricted service to and from the islands and especially in the winter months when no ferry ran.

Skybus, who had previously only leased the airport at Land's End, had now purchased the site. They were also making a major investment in a new ATC tower and improved facilities for passengers.

The loss of the Heliport would be substantial economic blow to Penzance given the number of full time jobs lost. The impact on visitors to Penzance was difficult to assess as Lands End Airport was the likely alternative route for most of BIH's customers.

6.2 IOS Transport Issues - FRIST A campaign group named Friends of Isles of Scilly Transport (FRIST) had been created to campaign for reliable affordable all year round transport links between Scilly and the mainland. The Chamber was a founder member of the group as the issue of transport to the islands was vitally important to the business community in Penzance and West Cornwall. The Route Partnership controversy had demonstrated that the islanders were too small a group by themselves to have any significant political clout (electorate 1770). By broadening out support for the campaign to include business interests in West Cornwall and the large body of regular visitors to the islands the campaign could have more political impact.

FRIST already has a website site plus supporting Facebook and Twitter accounts. The campaign was already attracting a lot of interest and was being followed by Clarence House (Prince Charles) and the Department of Transport. The Telegraph, Guardian and Lloyds List had all published articles about the difficult transport situation facing the islanders with unfavourable comparisons with services to the Scottish isles.

FRIST has an Advisory Group comprising representative from the islands and the mainland. The Chamber Chairman and Mike Adams (Future Penzance) were Advisory Group members and both had attended the inaugural meeting of the FRIST Advisory Group in St Mary's on 31 Aug 2012.

Members are encouraged to support this campaign by signing-up at www.frist.org.uk .

6.3 Harbour – A meeting with Norman Baker to discuss the harbour alterations at Penzance and St Mary's was imminent. The Minister had made it clear that he wanted one project rather than two separate ones. Although relatively small in terms of many projects it would be impractical for Penzance Town Council to deliver such a project. The support of Cornwall Council was therefore essential.

The recommendations of the Penzance Harbour Options Review did not appear to be deliverable in the timescale required to qualify for ERDF funding. The DfT had indicated that fully worked up project plans were needed by them by Apr/May 2013. The contracts for the project had to be let by Dec 2013 to qualify for ERDF funding under the current ERDF programme. There had been a dispute between Cornwall Council and the Town Council over whether plans for widening North Pier required an Harbour Revision Order (HRO). Irrespective of whether an HRO was required, the Penzance project could not be worked up, legal agreements sorted with harbour businesses agreed and all permissions granted in time to meet the DfT deadline of Apr/May 2013.

Discussions were continuing between Penzance Town Council, Cornwall Council and the DfT on a package that could be delivered for Penzance within ERDF timescales.

Action: Chairman to obtain more details of proposals using FOI if necessary.

Item 7. Sainsbury's new Penzance Store

The applications for Judicial Review delayed completion of the sale and therefore the Section 106 funds of which approximately £245,000 was allocated to the Town Council for mitigation measures. See Section 106 agreement here: <http://tinyurl.com/2d9xvmd>

Sainsburys expected a delay of up to one year. The detailed design of the proposed new store is available on the Cornwall Council planning website – click on 'documents' at the following link: <http://tinyurl.com/cce4ks3>

Item 8 . Penzance BID & Town Centre

Cornwall Council are looking to support an application from Penzance for a Business Improvement District. The cost of setting up a BID is considerable as all businesses in the BID area have to written to and a vote taken to find if there is support for a scheme.

Cornwall Council had asked the Town Council if they would commit £20,000 from Sainsbury's Section 106 funds and the Town Council had agree. Work on the BID application was due to start in November but the legal challenges had put the Penzance BID on hold as funding could be delayed 12 months.

The BID scheme required the support of 51% of affected businesses (by rateable value). If approved it guaranteed an annual fund of between £90,000 and £180,000 a year for 5 years. The amount raised depended on the tariff which could be 1% , 1.5% of 2% of the business rate.

The Truro scheme had run for 5 years and was being renewed. The Falmouth bid was doing a great deal to promote Falmouth. Once Penzance had the go ahead, the Chamber would arrange for business representatives from BID towns in Cornwall to brief Penzance business owners on their experience with BIDs.

8a Town Centre – Unfortunately the second Portas Pilot application had been unsuccessful. It is now hoped that some of the individual projects within the Penzance Portas bid can be

progressed independently. The Town Centre Market project was the favourite to take forward.

8b CCTV - Following a well attended Town Council meeting, the recent decision to cease funding of the monitoring of the town's CCTV had been reversed. The original decision in June was a result of Councillors not being adequately briefed on the statistics which demonstrated the benefits to the Town. Crime in Penzance over the 6 month period ending Mar 2012 dropped compared to the same period a year ago whereas there was a slight increase in other towns in Cornwall. The figures showed a drop in incidence of anti-social behavior in Penzance – the type of crime that CCTV was effective at 'nipping in the bud' by alerting the Police early. The Penzance Civic Society and the Chamber had worked with the Police to present a compelling case for reversing the decision. The Street Pastors, a organization supported by Councillors against CCTV funding, explained at the Council Meeting that in Falmouth they relied upon CCTV monitoring to protect their members when on duty at night spots in the evening. The Council voted unanimously to provide the necessary funding for the CCTV to continue.

Item 9. Parking

No further work had been carried out over the previous month on the issue of parking charges.

It was noted by various members that the new ½ hr rate (for 50 pence) in the Harbour Car Park was well received and used. The Chamber had written to Cllr Andrew Wallis, Cornwall Council, thanking him for responding to the Chamber's letter on the subject.

Of the various concerns over parking charges the 4 pm change from hourly charging to the flat rate evening charge was the most annoying. Somebody popping into Town after collecting the children from school for 30 minutes shopping had to pay £2. It was agreed that the Chamber would pursue, via the Town Team, moving the transition point to later in the day (perhaps 18.00).

Item 10. Public Toilets

No further developments had taken place. A meeting was planned with St Ives and Hayle Chamber representatives for 12/09/12 and the topic was expected to be a common issue.

Item 11. Any Other Business.

11.1 Accounts - Although there are liabilities to be considered there is approximately £1000 in the Chamber accounts.

11.2 Website. SB raised concerns over the appearance of the Chamber website and its accuracy. Despite the extensive work carried out by the Chamber the current website gives the impression that the Chamber has been inactive since 2010. The Chairman explained that although other website options had been explored the old site could not be removed until any new website was fully functional. The new website would need to be smart phone compatible and easily maintainable. The Chairman was exploring the use of Google's Blogger. Updating the website was essential before the Chamber embarked on a major recruiting campaign.

11.3 Tourist Information HT reported that the old Tourist Information website was still available to people and that it had the loyalty card scheme on it. CE agreed to investigate who was involved in managing it and would consult the Town Clerk. LK would speak to the previous Chairman about arrangements for managing the scheme.

11.4 Appearance Following a visit to Portsmouth, BH raised the issue of Penzance's poor appearance. Portsmouth had many more hanging baskets, had a higher level of street cleanliness, shops were smarter and the seafront was attractive. DC acknowledged the problem and was hoping to encourage other Town Team members to support the Chamber in issuing a checklist to Town Centre businesses with guidance on the low cost measures to smarten up their premises. Causewayhead Traders were good examples of what can be achieved by businesses working together to achieve a common high standard of presentation. The Penzance Flora Group had done good work in Causewayhead but needed more resources to extend their work. DC would approach the Civic Society to see if they were interest in supporting a campaign to smarten up the Town Centre. The practice of keeping the Town Centre flags in place after Golowan was welcome.

11.4 Rail Franchise. There had been media reports that the DfT was reducing the minimum number of direct trains between London and Penzance in the new rail franchise competition. Penzance was already disadvantaged with a slow service compared to Newcastle, a city almost exactly the same distance from London (~300 miles). The fasted train to Newcastle took ~2 hrs 50 min (typical time 3 hrs 10 mins) whereas for Penzance the time was 5 hrs 4 mins (typical time 5 hrs 30 mins).

The Chairman had written to the Secretary of State for Transport outlining the negative impact slower services to London would have on tourism. In Cornwall. Cornwall Council, the MP and the LEP had all made representations.

Action:

CE to discuss old tourist information website with Simon Glasson with a view to it being disabled
LK to discuss loyalty card scheme with Mike Waters.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 2120hrs



D Cliffe

Chairman

28 Nov 2012