



PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held in The Workbox, Pz360 Business Centre, Penzance on Tuesday 7 Jan 2014

Present:

Dick Cliffe (Chair) , Janet Mogford, Teresa James, Barbara Hanik, Margaret Cass, Susan Home, Emily Kavanaugh, Sally Bodinar, Lucy Kean, Andrew Fawcett. Nigel Pengelly (Town Council Rep.).

Item 1. Apologies.

Nina Minear, Hazel Trembath, John Garrison.

Item 2. Previous Minutes.

The minutes of the Members Meeting held on 3 Dec were agreed (proposed by BH, seconded by MC).

Item 3. Matters Arising.

Matters arising from the previous meeting are included in the agenda.

There were outstanding actions on the Chairman to:

Write a welcome to letter to A Fawcett

Meet with Nick Nicholas re: review of administrative procedures.

Item 4. Applications for Membership.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome new members Andrew Fawcett (Fishboy) and Teresa James (PRH Estate Agents) to their first meeting. The Chairman also welcomed Susan Home (Brooklands Travel) who has applied to join the Chamber.

The Committee approved a membership application from Susan Homes (Brooklands Travel). Proposed DC and seconded E K.

Item 5. Correspondence

There had been no correspondence of special significance during the previous month.

Item 6. Penzance Christmas Retail 'Washup' - Recommendations for 2014?

Feedback indicated that trading had been better than expected over the Xmas shopping season. Some retailers had detected a conscious choice by some shoppers to shop in Penzance this year, perhaps because of the debate about out-of-town shopping (Sainsburys) had made the public more conscious of the issue.

Road closures for the Penzance Xmas Lights Switch-on had harmed Chapel St trading. It was agreed that Chapel St needed a member on the Town Council's organizing Committee to ensure their interest were safeguarded.

Road closure signage "closed for Montol" on the Ross bridge was also believed to have deterred shoppers.

Free parking on Saturdays (£21K from Sainsbury's S106 fund) had been very popular indeed with everybody (traders and shoppers). It was felt to have improved footfall substantially. The free parking was of both of practical and symbolic importance - symbolic because it signalled the Town Centre was welcoming shoppers. It was noted that traffic wardens were out in force to catch people parking illegally.

The advertising posters were a success (inc Pz Presents website). 20,000 had been ordered and approximately 16500 used. For 2014:

- Suggest 12,000 copies.
- Explicit identification of free parking dates and times / no licence to park illegally.
- The 3 supermarkets had been supportive distributing leaflets and should be approached again.
- Better coordination with the media required.

Thursday evening free parking associated with late night opening was not a success. It had been agreed late, there was limited entertainment and not many shops opened. The conclusion was that late night opening should be targeted closer to Xmas and be driven by a programme of events (to draw people into the Town Centre).

Pop-up-Penzance had organized a diverse programme of events in December and should be consulted over the 2014 Christmas programme.

Item 7. AGM Arrangements

It was agreed that the AGM should be moved to later in Feb or March to avoid the BID launch on 12 Feb. Andrew George had been the guest speaker last year . Options for this year included Derek Thomas (Conservative Parliamentary Candidate) who had recently surveyed businesses in the constituency and perhaps Sainsburys. An update from the BID Steering Group Chairman was also desirable.

Item 8. BID Launch Event 12 Feb 2014

The launch of the BID to the wider business community was to take place on the 12 Feb at the Zennor Building. Every business insider the proposed BID boundary would receive an invitation. It was important to encourage as many businesses as possible to attend and engage in the development of the BID.

Item 9. The Star Inn (Work to make building safe)

Scaffolding blocked access to New Street for 2 days and continues to discourage pedestrians from venturing down the street. Cllr Tim Dwelly had taken up the issue with the Council on behalf of the businesses affected – Mackerel Sky, Harris' Restaurant, New St Gallery, Exchange Gallery and Cycle Centre. The Star Inn is owned by pub chain (Star Pubs, originally Scottish & Newcastle Brewery but not part of Heineken). Cornwall Council needed to use it's powers to ensure the work was completed as quickly as possible. Andrew Fawcett was disappointed more and earlier action had not been taken as it appeared the entire wall facing New Street would have to be dismantled soon. Building owners allowing old historic properties to become dangerous was not an isolated incident. Business owners need to consider sending solicitors letters. Some coordination was desirable to keep the pressure on Star Pubs. The Chamber would be happy to write a letter of support. There was scope for Star Pubs to pay for signage and even adverts to allieviate loss of footfall. Part of the building was thought to be Grade 2 listed and it was not known whether conservation considerations were delaying repairs.

Action. Chairman to speak to Cornwall Council Planning to encourage them pursue early resolution of the problem.

Item 10. Sainsburys Section 106 update.

Out of £1.6m Section 106 funding £1,.2m had been assigned for creation of a park and ride scheme. Such a scheme was not the Town's highest priority although it might be important in the future. The Chamber/Town Council/local Cornwall Councillors needed to present a united front on this issue to ensure the money can be spent on the town centre instead. A meeting with

local Cornwall Councillors and the Town Council was imminent. Purchase of the land for the park and ride is in the form of an 'option' costing £1. The park and ride land was valuable (possibly over £1 million). If not taken up the land remains with BIH. If the option is exercised but the site does not open as a park and ride in a prescribed time then BIH have the right to buy the site back for the price of £1.

The situation was clouded by the expected loss of private parking space in the town due to development of the Coinagehall Site and eventually the Jewsons site. The Chairman could not be absolute on the matter of the need for the park and ride because loss of private parking spaces and the loss of Cornwall Council owned capacity (referred to in the Local Plan) could easily cause a problem if the planned Penzance BID grew visitor numbers. The Planners believe a park and ride could be built for substantially less than £1.2 million and the remainder could be spent on 'substantially similar' mitigation measures in the Town Centre (S106 agreement allows this flexibility).

The Section 106 agreement can be viewed here: <http://tinyurl.com/kdeqtdt>

Item 11. IOS Transport Update / Penzance Harbour Proposals

The work to lay hard runway surfaces at Lands End had been delayed by the need to re-tender the project as cost items had been missed off the original tender documentation. The precise scheduling of the work was now uncertain.

Work on St Mary's and Penzance Harbours awaited confirmation from the EU that 'state aid' rules were satisfied (EU declaration required by the DfT as a condition for funding).

Andrew George MP was holding a meeting on 10 Jan of stakeholders in Penzance Harbour. He was responding to concerns that little was happening beyond dredging and some minor highways improvements. The Chairman was attending to represent the Chamber.

Item 12. Update on Coinagehall St & Other Developments.

There were no significant changes to report regarding development sites within the Town.

Item 13. Date of next Committee Meeting.

The time and date of the next meeting were confirmed: 5.45 pm on 4 Feb 14 - The Workbox.

Item 14. AOB.

Cuxhaven Twinning Association. It was agreed the Chamber would join the Cuxhaven

Twinning Association as the cost was modest (£7) and the local economy benefited greatly from German tourists.

Pirate Day 26 May 2014. Pirate Day was planned for late May Bank Holiday Monday. EK ran through the programme for the weekend which was continuing to grow. In the past marketing had been a weakness in the organization of the Town events but with the RNLI involved it was less likely to be an issue as they were a national body.

St Piran's Day. Chamber support also discussed for the St Pirans Day Parade on 5th March which goes down Causeway Head and through Morrab Gardens, with a Play by Humphrey Davy School at 11.15am and a concert at 7pm on 4th March which is the last to be held in St Johns Hall before it is redeveloped. The St Piran in Penwith Organizing Committee had asked the Chamber to promote the event by encouraging suitable shop window displays. It was agreed that Chamber would put flyers through retailers doors encouraging decoration of shop windows. The 'Silver Salver' would be presented to the retailer with the best display. Cornwall Animal Hospital had won the competition last year. The Salver was in the Chairman's possession.

Websites. AF raised the issues of websites and the poor image created by the old website on www.penzance.co.uk. The Chairman explained the background to the issue. Bocaina Business Services owned the site and the domains including www.penzancechamber.co.uk. He had agreed to redirect www.penzancechamber.co.uk to the current website (hosted on Google's Blogger) but did not want to take down the old site which formed a substantial part of www.penzance.co.uk.

Dick Cliffe
Chairman