

PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



NEWSLETTER



Issue 59

5 March 2012

Editor's Comments.

In this edition of the newsletter you will find:

- Details of the Penzance Harbour Preferred Option.
- Golowan's call for business sponsorship and business volunteers.
- The Cornishman's Go-To-Town Campaign.
- Portas Pilots and Town Teams.
- Development proposals for Port Penlee.
- Vansport Ltd - Moving from Long Rock due to high rent.
- Payment Card Industry – Card Data Security Rules for Merchants.
- Rural Community News

Penzance Harbour – The Preferred Option

The Town Council's Harbour Options Review reached a conclusion on the 23rd February. Following a well attended public consultation and exhibition in the Pz Gallery on 9 Feb the Town Council's Harbour Scheme Management Board met on the 16 Feb and agreed a 'preferred option' which turned out, as predicted, to be an amalgam of the two remaining shortlisted options. The Management Boards preferred option was approved by the Town Council at a special meeting on 23rd February.

The only point of concern expressed by Councillors was the impact of the proposals on Harbour businesses along Wharf Road which would required relocation under the scheme. The Town Council voted 15 in favour and 4 against.

The key elements of the 'preferred option' are summarized below:

Freight Facilities

- Gry Maritha remains berthed inside the Wet Dock.
- Rank Building knocked down and replaced with a bespoke freight building.
- North Pier widened on both external edges.
- Shell Shop and Dockers' Rest Café demolished to improve access and visibility at entrance to North Pier

Passenger Facilities

- Scillonian remains on South Pier
- Meadery demolished (approximate site of new passenger terminal)
- Green Sheds demolished to provide passenger drop off area.
- Covered walk way on South Pier (deemed desirable but not necessarily essential).

Dredging. The scope of dredging has been greatly reduced to reduce costs. The proposal to dredge a berthing pocket on South Pier to 4 metres below Chart Datum to aid IOSSCo with vessel replacement was abandoned on cost grounds. Dredging to -1 m below Chart Datum (to -2 m if budget allows) is proposed from the entrance to the Wet Dock to harbour entrance and beyond.

Rock Armour. The issue of rock armour on South Pier to reduce overtopping and protect the structure of South Pier was not addressed by the Options Review but will have to be considered during the detailed design stage. All necessary permissions exist for it to be added to the outer two thirds of South Pier because it was specified for Option A. The IOSSCo state it is essential to reduce overtopping. It was also required under the previous project to protect South Pier's structure over the planned life of the project. It is however an emotive issue for some people.

The Town Council's consultants have work to complete on the 'preferred option' but exploratory discussions are already taking place with Cornwall Council. There is no feedback on these discussions but it is understood that Cornwall Council is adamant about not financing the project.

The Town Council and Chamber Chairman met with Harbour businesses on 22 February to brief them in advance of details of the Options Review 'preferred option' coming out in the Cornishman. Most businesses have long leases remaining meaning they are in a strong negotiating position. The reality of the situation is that there is considerable flexibility in delivering an acceptable solution for the Harbour and especially as far as the Meadery and Green Sheds are concerned. Given the tight time constraints to qualify for EU (ERDF) funding, any business determined to stay would probably have to be worked around.

Editors Comment

Although a preferred option has been chosen it has not been easy going. Two out of three Forum Members (John Maggs & Hadrian Pigott) of the Management Board abstained in the vote on the preferred option on the 16 Feb. The Management Board was also misrepresented in an interview given by John Maggs to the Western Morning Press which implied that there were two potentially viable Albert Pier options which had not been put forward for the public to consider (the Management Board had agreed that there were no remotely viable Albert Pier options given the DfT funding constraints).

It is far from certain how the Town Council's preferred option gets taken forward. It is not risk free for whoever delivers the project because:

- There is the need to relocate businesses and there needs to be negotiated solutions with all affected businesses before the delivering authority can seek funding.
- There is a significant risk of the Penzance Harbour project delivery timeline exceeding ERDF funding deadlines.
- Rock Armour to reduce overtopping on South Pier may be essential for the project to have credibility with funders but it is known to be controversial.
- There is uncertainty about a consensus having been achieved within Penzance with opponents of the previous scheme abstaining from voting for the 'Preferred Option'.
- The Minister's 'strategy' of leaving vessel replacement entirely to the private sector may prove unachievable. This means assumptions concerning future link operations (that they will be similar to today) may be unreliable.

The results of the public consultation survey can be found here:

http://www.pzharbourfutures.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/SurveySummary_02142012.pdf

Golowan

The Golowan organizers are seeking "Friends of Golowan" (FOG) to help bridge the funding gap caused by reduced grant funding. You can be an "Individual" or "Corporate" FOG.

Individual Friend of Golowan: Cost: £15.

Bronze Corporate Sponsorship: Cost: £75

Silver Corporate Sponsorship: Cost: £150.

Gold Corporate Sponsorship: Cost: £500.

If you want to discuss sponsorship packages then contact F.O.G. Golowan Festival Office, The Barbican, Battery Road, Penzance, TR18 4EF. Tel: 01736 369686. golowan@hotmail.co.uk

Corporate sponsorship application form/bank mandate can be found here:

<http://www.golowan.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/FOG-Bank-mandate-Corporate-.doc>

Golowan Volunteers with Business/Finance Experience

Steve Ryman, Assistant Golowan Director, is looking for volunteers with a business and/or accounting background to help the festival management team. It is a role that might suit a retired business person(s).

The Future of our High Street.

Go To Town Campaign. The Cornishman's "Go to Town" campaign was kicked off on 'leap day' with free parking negotiated with Cornwall Council for the day. The omens were good because the sun shone and the Town was busy. The "Go to Town" campaign is not a 'one day wonder' or restricted to just Penzance. See the link below for more details:

Campaign website: www.creativehubs.co.uk/gototown

Cornishman contact: Cherie Woodhouse cwoodhouse@c-dm.co.uk

Cornishman online article: <http://www.thisiscornwall.co.uk/Town-grab-share-discounts-offer/story-15245342-detail/story.html>

Portas Pilots (Town Teams). The Government is offering local Town Centre partnerships the opportunity to become pilot areas to test the 'Town Team' approach and pilot some of the other ideas and recommendations set out in the Mary Portas Review. They are running a competition for local (town centre) partnerships to bid for a share of the £1 million funding. The closing date for applications is 30 March 2012. The Chamber and Civic Society have agreed to join forces and work with the Town Council on a strategy for the Town Centre. This may well include a bid under the Government's Portas Pilots scheme. Irrespective of whether or not the bid is successful (guaranteed to be over-subscribed) it is useful initial objective to help get organized. Members keen to participate in this project should contact the Chairman.

Link to scheme: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/regeneration/portaspilotsprospectus>

Peacocks. (From BBC news). Fashion retailer Peacocks has been sold out of administration to Edinburgh Woollen Mill, saving 6,000 jobs, but 3,100 staff will be made redundant. The deal will include 338 stores, 57 concessions, three distribution centres and the head office, said Edinburgh Woollen Mill. Some 224 stores have ceased trading with immediate effect. The Penzance branch has survived but the Austell branch is to close.

Click on the link for the full story: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-17128141>

Port Penlee (Planning Request)

A 'scoping opinion request' covering the proposed breakthrough from Penlee Quarry to the sea has been filed with Cornwall Council Planning Dept under planning reference PA12/01780 by MDL Limited.

Under the proposal the Newlyn - Mousehole road would be temporarily diverted inland onto a specially created embankment whilst a 12m wide channel was cut through to the sea and a bridge constructed. Armour stone and other quarry products would be transported from the site by barge once the channel to the sea was complete.

For more details go to <http://planning.cornwall.gov.uk> and search under PA12/01780. Click on 'documents' and then view 'associated documents' to find MDL scoping report dated Dec 2011.

Editor's comment. The scoping document provided by MDL is a fascinating read as it covers all aspects of the site and the proposed works. Penlee Quarry is a large brown field site and a rather obvious blot on the landscape. It would be good to see the site developed to contribute to the economy (rather than a green field site) if potentially thorny issues like traffic congestion can be satisfactorily resolved.

Long Rock Commercial Rents – Loss of Vansport Ltd/Euroglass Windscreens

Penzance is sadly losing another business but not due to business failure. Phil Martin, Director, Vansport Ltd, wrote to the Chamber to say (letter has been paraphrased):

I'm afraid Penzance has lost another business (ie mine!), although not on the same scale as those recently in the news, it is still another business abandoning Penzance. We have had to relocate to Redruth as we were unable to continue to pay the exorbitant 'London' rents charged at Long Rock and there are no other viable alternatives in Penzance.

Our rent at Long Rock totalled £24,300 for 2,500 square feet and our new, more modern unit is £14,000 for 4,850 square feet, a £-per-square-foot comparison of £9.72 - £2.88!!!

It is with regret that we have moved to the address below, although I still live in Penzance so have some interest in what's happening locally, in addition I thought this information may be useful to your Chamber and/or Members.

We regret the departure of Phil's business from Penzance and the loss of his membership from the Chamber but the need to move was clearly overwhelming. It is clear that exorbitant rents are not just the preserve of Penzance Town Centre. The Chamber successfully campaigned for new commercial rented premises for small businesses to be part of the Sainsbury's development. Vansport's new address is :

Vansport Ltd / Euroglass Windscreens
Unit 12d Barncoose Industrial Estate, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 3RQ, UK
Direct line: +44 (0) 1209 215240 Mobile: 07887 428988
Email: phil.martin@vansport.com
Website: www.vansport.com

Payment Card Industry – Data Security Standard (PCI DSS)

Businesses that accept credit cards will be affected by the new Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI-DSS) that all merchants are required to meet. The measures have been brought in world wide to clamp down on card fraud that exploits weaknesses in the storage and handling of customer card data by merchants. At least some banks are taking the opportunity to exploit customer's ignorance and sell them pricey solutions with the threat of hefty penalty charges if non-compliant with the new rules.

A good starting point for understanding what is required is provided in the PCI Security Standards Quick Reference Guide available at the link below.

<https://www.pcisecuritystandards.org/documents/PCI%20SSC%20Quick%20Reference%20Guide.pdf>

Editors Comment. My merchant services provider sent me a horrendous letter stating that a £50/month penalty payment would be added to my merchant account each month from the end of April unless I bought into their new security 'product'. I am considering alternative merchant services providers.

Rural Community Network News Highlights (www.rsonline.org.uk)

Tourism, agri-food, forestry and renewable energy are among the areas targeted in a new rural grant scheme. <http://www.rsonline.org.uk/business/new-grants-to-boost-rural-economy>

Government plans to revive tenants' rights to buy their council house are unlikely to work in rural areas, the government has been told. <http://www.rsonline.org.uk/community/right-to-buy-threatens-housing-supply>

One for Islanders: The government's competition watchdog (OFT) has issued a call for evidence of the challenges faced by people in remote communities.

<http://www.rsonline.org.uk/community/watchdog-probes-rural-challenges>.

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Our experts are trusted throughout Cornwall and Devon and we have recently streamlined our services. This means that we can provide you with a more efficient service. We understand that when you are running a business, time is money. When you become a Business Privilege Member, you will have a dedicated client relationship manager. This person will be your first port of call and will be able to coordinate all of the different matters that we may deal with for you.

There is not much we have not encountered. We have experts who advise on company formation, funding, acquisitions, disposals and reorganisations. We have others who specialise in ironing out complex issues surrounding employment law contracts, pensions or tricky civil disputes.

If you are unsure whether you need us, we are offering our clients a **FREE legal health check**.

To request our free legal health check either visit our website: coodes.co.uk/businesshealthcheck and leave your details or send an email to: christian.wilson@coodes.co.uk

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