

PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



NEWSLETTER



Issue 61

10 June 2012

Editor's Comments.

In this edition of the newsletter you will find:

- Sainsbury's Penzance Store plans move forward.
- IOS Link & Penzance Harbour Proposals becalmed.
- MP contributes to Rail Franchise debate.
- Portas Pilot Bid Outcome.
- Highlights from Town Team Meetings / Penzance Discovery Map Project.
- Currys Digital to close it Market Jew St store..
- More on Business Directory Scams and how to combat them.
- Penzance Business Improvement District (BID) – there is movement!.

Peter Woods, Wharfside Shopping Centre Manager has kindly allowed the Chamber Committee and Town Team to use his Conference Room for meetings (next one on Tue 12 June at 7.30). Future Committee meetings may use this facility so please check on the venue if planning to attend and do not assume a Chamber meeting will automatically be in Pirates Rugby Club.

Sainsbury's Penzance Store.

Cornwall Council issued outline planning consent for the new Sainsbury's store on the 1st May 2012 (see link to decision letter below). The Strategic Planning Committee had voted in favour of the plans late last year but the decision could not be formally published until after the Government Planning Unit had endorsed it.

The next stage in the process is the submission of the 'reserved matters' application which is expected later this month following consultations with Penzance Town Council, Ludgvan Parish Council and other affected parties. Publication of their final proposals is imminent.

If all goes well and the plans are approved then BIH will move out later this year and work will begin in early 2013. Amazingly the store would be open by late 2013.

There has been much speculation about BIH's intentions but Chamber has no special insight into BIH's intentions.

Decision letter: <http://tinyurl.com/7xaoksl>

IOS Link & Penzance Harbour Proposals

Penzance Harbour. The Minister (Norman Baker, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Transport) wrote to the Town Council on 7 May expressing his “*concern about the very tight timescale that remains, given the time limited nature of the Convergence Programme funding, the consents and licences that may still need to be obtained, outstanding property issues and the lack of progress so far in agreeing a firm plan for delivery which I understand the Town Council does not feel undertake on its own*”.

This is a peculiar letter for a Minister to send to a Town Council which only has the powers and resources of a parish council. Cornwall Council was not an addressee. The Town Council has already well exceeded its obligations by delivering the Penzance Harbour Scheme Options Reviews. See Editors comments below.

It is understood that the DoT senior civil servant responsible for IOS Link projects, Bob Collins, is convening a meeting involving all of the affected parties in Plymouth on 15 June to work out a way ahead.

IOSSCo to Extend Scillonian III to 2018. (From Scilly Today 21 May 2012). IOSSCo Chairman, Andrew May, announced the directors’ decision to keep the Scillonian III in service until at least 2018 during the vessels 35th birthday celebration on Sat 19 May. Andrew May is reported as saying the decision to maintain and update the current boat rather than buy a new one now, follows an “arduous twelve-month vessel option review” which sought “expert independent opinion.” The news article went on to say the decision to extend the working life of the vessel will give the company more time to investigate options for the future. Follow link for more: <http://tinyurl.com/bsjswg8>

IOS Transport Report (comparison with Scottish Islands). The Council of the IOS has issued a 108 page report entitled: Isles of Scilly Transport - a Comparative Study of the Isles of Scilly and the Scottish Islands. The report addresses the both the inequalities in the existing services and the questionable sustainability of current arrangements. The foreword to the report states: *the minimum service considered necessary to put Scilly on a level playing field with islands elsewhere would be an all-year ferry to and from the mainland with the minimum of a daily service for both passengers and freight and with affordable fares and freight charges. The challenge which lies ahead, if these islands are to survive as working communities, can only be addressed if an efficient and affordable transport system to the mainland is recognised as key to the economy and accorded the same importance as that granted to the Scottish Isles.*

IOS Council Report: <http://tinyurl.com/bt947f3>
The Guardian, 4 June 2012: <http://tinyurl.com/cssvtdy>

Editor’s Comments.

It is understood that Cornwall Council is sticking to its position of not having any financial involvement in the new Penzance project. It is understood that they see the Minister’s plan as flawed as responsibility for funding replacement vessels is left with the private sector (IOSSCo) and appears unachievable. The decision to extend the life of Scillonian to 41 years is seen as evidence that funding a replacement vessel is problematic. Cornwall Council also sees the issue of sea defence (rock armour) of South Pier as unresolved. It was proposed originally to reduce overtopping and to protect the structure of South Pier. The IOSSCo sees improved sea defences on South Pier as essential but it is not part of the Town Council’s harbour proposal.

The suggestion in the Ministers letter that Penzance Town Council could deliver the project is laughable given the Council’s modest budget and the size of the financial risks it would be exposed to if delivering the proposed Penzance Harbour Project..

Rail Franchise

It was reported in Scilly Today (1 June) that our MP has recently written to the Department of Transport on the subject of the terms for the renewal of the Great Western Rail franchise.

See Scilly Today for more on this item. <http://tinyurl.com/cz6c6m2>

Portas Pilot Bid Outcome.

The Penzance Portas Bid had been unsuccessful (one of the 359 unsuccessful bids). All unsuccessful bids will automatically be reconsidered in the second round for which the deadline was 30 June 2012. Bidders had the option of revising their bids.

Town Team members discussed the matter at a Town Team meeting on 29 May. They concluded that the basic content of the Town Team bid stood up well against the competition but that its presentation could be substantially improved (the bid was put together in a very short timescale). It was agreed that Penzance TT would refine its bid and re-submit it with a new video.

Topics from Penzance Town Team Meetings (2 May & 29 May 2012)

Discovery Map Project. The Penzance Town Team met on 2 May to discuss a project to develop a "Penzance Discovery Map". Veryan Jones (Cornwall Council Sustainability Team) and 2 representatives of SR Studios (graphic designers) attended the meeting and briefed members on the history of the initiative, past map projects (Newquay, St Austell, Camborne and Hayle) and proposals for Penzance. At a second meeting on 29 May the Town Team agreed it would pursue a project but only in partnership with the Town Council. All other map projects had received strong Town Council support and the project needed VAT registered body through which to reclaim the VAT on design work and printing (circ £6,000). The Tourism Association, Chamber and Civic Society would lead the Town Team effort. Ruth Grant of Penwith College had project managed earlier map projects and would provide invaluable guidance to the project team.

For more information see:

Town Team Meeting Notes 2 May (Discovery Map): <http://tinyurl.com/bsyugz6>
Newquay Discovery Map website (example): http://www.newquaymap.co.uk/map_town.htm

Town Centre Market Working Group. The Town Team agreed that it should form a Markets Working Group to develop in more detail plans for markets in the Town (part of the Portas Bid proposal). Causewayhead Traders Association were tasked with convening the first meeting of this new Working Group. Its members were:

- Penzance Farmers Market (Brenda Lemon)
- Penzance Country Market (invitation to be extended)
- Causewayhead Traders Association (Paul Shaw/Hannah Wallis)
- Future Penzance (Robin Turner)
- Town Council (Cllr Axford)

The site of Charter Market (top of Causewayhead) was being proposed for a weekly (Saturday) antiques market that would operate during the summer months (Apr – Sep). The first market was planned for 7 July. Town Team members saw no conflict between this specialist market and the proposed future Town Centre market aimed at shoppers in general.

Both the Farmers Market and Country Market currently used St Johns Hall. Cornwall Council were planning major building works on the site and the two markets may require temporary relocation when the works start. This was a further issue needing consideration.

Town Team Strategy Working Group. The Town Team has decided to create a Town Team Strategy Working Group to develop further the strategy and vision outlined briefly in the Portas Bid. The Chamber Chair would lead this activity. Any Chamber member interested in getting involved should contact the Chairman (your Editor).

Penzance Town Team Meeting Notes from 29 May: <http://tinyurl.com/cugpfek>

Currys Digital to Close.

Currys Digital, 1 - 2 Market Jew Street, Penzance, is to close on the 16 June. The closure is part of plan originally announced in 2008 by DSG International, the owner of Currys and PC World, to cut 77 of its 177 outlets as their leases expired over the next five years. Retailers of digital goods have been especially hard hit by online competition. DSG Group still retains a large store at Long Rock (next to B&Q).

More on Business Directory Scams/TAPA

As mentioned in the last newsletter, business directory scams are widespread and identified by the Office of Fair Trade as the most prevalent type of business scam in operation in the UK today. Business directory scams are part of a broader group of scams referred to as “support publishing scams”. They include scammers masquerading as charity publishers!

A local business contacted the Police over harassment from one such scammer and was put in contact with the Telephone Advertising Protection Agency (TAPA). TAPA is a private, for profit, business partnership that deals with various types of unwanted advertising telephone calls. Their website includes a register of over 500 support publishing businesses (free to browse) for which they have received multiple complaints. Your Editor spotted “Online Business Directory Limited”, a company known to plague businesses in Penzance, in TAPA’s list. TAPA assembles dossiers on scammers and when it has sufficient material it submits them to the Companies Investigation Branch (of Companies House), the Information Commissioners Office, the Office of Fair Trade or in some cases the Police. The TAPA website is a mine of free information and advice. If you want specific help then you need to subscribe to one of their services appropriate to your problem.

<https://www.theadvertisingprotectionagency.co.uk/ledger-of-support-publishing-firms.php>

If you have had problems with scammers then please let us know. Your identity will not be disclosed and alerting other businesses through the newsletter may prevent others falling victim.

Penzance Business Improvement District (BID).

Cornwall Council is looking to start the process by which Penzance has the opportunity to become a Business Improvement District (BID). Under a BID scheme, local businesses decide whether to impose an additional tariff on the business rates to raise money to be spent locally. The amount that can be added to the business rate lies between 1% and 2% (amount decided locally). It is approved if the majority of businesses (by rateable value) vote in favour. The Town Clerk had recently attended a meeting with Cornwall Council on the matter and Penzance

business organizations can expect to be invited to a meeting on the subject soon.

The process by which businesses were briefed, polled and the money collected takes about 18 months. The scheme, if approved, then lasts for 5 years. It can continue for a further 5 years if businesses vote again in favour of doing so. Truro has recently voted to continue its BIDS scheme with over 90% of businesses voting in favour.

See final BID presentations for:

Newquay: <http://tinyurl.com/cnrs7kp>

Camborne: <http://tinyurl.com/bshg6gg>

HMRC 'Calculators'.

The HMRC have a web page listing the various calculators they provide for tax, NICS, inheritance tax, tax credits, Corporation Tax etc. Follow the link below:

<http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/calcs-tools/index.shtml>

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

It is 'self service' for Rural Community Network news in this edition of the newsletter as it is already long enough.

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Membership. If not already a member then consider joining. Membership costs £25/year. Download the invitation letter [here](#) , the membership form [here](#) and the bank mandate form [here](#) .