

## **DARTMOUTH CHAMBER OF TRADE AND BUSINESSES LTD**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2007 IN THE DARTMOUTH YACHT CLUB**

**PRESENT:** Dave Cawley (Chairman – Timestep) & Jill Cawley (Timestep), Adam Edsall (Vice Chairman – Dartmouth Ice Cream Co), Tessa de Galleani (Members Secretary – Copper Sixpence), Tara Barton (Secretary – Barista Cafe), Elaine Jeffery-Bailey (Harveys), Paul Weedon (Lloyds TSB), James Brown (Browns Hotel), Derek & Elaine Rogers (The Ark), Paul Reach (D'Art Gallery), Tony & Trish Stokes (Real Food Deli), John & Liz Donlan (Dreams of Dartmouth), Steve Thomas (Trish Thomas Jewellery).

**APOLOGIES:** Lesley Challacombe (Singer & Singer), Peter Jones, (Peter Jones Hair).

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The Chairman wished to raise a couple of issues:

#### **REPUTATION & PURPOSE OF THE CHAMBER**

It must be recognised that The Chamber makes positive decisions & that these have a beneficial effect on Dartmouth. The general reputation of The Chamber must therefore be improved & more people encouraged to join, attend & help The Chamber make beneficial differences to Dartmouth.

#### **CHAIRMAN'S PAST EXPERIENCE**

The Chairman stated that he was previously Chair of the T.I.C. However that was very different. The T.I.C was already functioning very well with funding in place, its own building & established staff & systems. There is therefore no comparison between the two jobs. The Chairman stated he aims to define the role of The Chamber and improve its reputation as a group that make a positive difference to the economy of Dartmouth.

#### **BEST DRESSED CHRISTMAS WINDOW**

The Chairman announced that the competition had gone well. It was well run, entries were high & it was a success. The winner was Sakura of Duke Street. There was full coverage and a photo on the front page of The Dartmouth Chronicle.

#### **WORKING WITH OTHER BODIES**

The Chairman wished to stress the importance of improving working relationships with other bodies that have the best interests of Dartmouth as their goal. These include The Town Council (possible funding opportunities), The T.I.C (dual goals), The MCTI and others where it may be beneficial for the town.

#### **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The Chairman asked if anyone had found any problems with the accuracy of the last meetings minutes. They hadn't. Jill Cawley proposed that the minutes of the meeting of 28.11.06 were accurate and should be signed. Paul Reach seconded the motion. The chairman signed the minutes and passed them to the Secretary.

#### **MATTERS ARISING**

- The Chairman confirmed that Adam Edsall had agreed he was happy to fulfil the role of Vice Chairman of The Chamber as discussed in the last meeting.
- The Chairman asked if members were happy to receive minutes of meetings via email. Members agreed this would be fine. Those who do not have email will receive them by post or hand-delivery.

## **CAR PARKING PASSES – CHANGES PROPOSED BY SHDC**

The Chairman explained that SHDC have made proposals to alter arrangements for the use of parking passes in Dartmouth & throughout the South Hams. The proposed changes were outlined as follows:

- The entitlement for businesses will be reduced from five permits per business to two.
- ALL passes will have to be registered by car number plate and not business name. A maximum of two numbers will be allowed per pass.

The Chairman asked James Brown to speak on the issue. His main points are as follows:

- The SHDC knew this proposal would cause uproar (as it did previously) and so put a very small notice in the local papers to inform permit holders of the changes. It was felt that this was extremely inappropriate as permit holders were unlikely to have seen the notice & therefore would be unable to object to the proposal.
- The proposed changes mean that if you have a hospitality business which, due to the changes, cannot offer parking, the ability to market Dartmouth as a place to stay & visit has been removed.
- The customer experience of visitors to Dartmouth will be dramatically decreased. This will have catastrophic effects on the economy of the town. People will just stop coming if there is no pleasure in their visit due to the lack of parking.
- This will not just affect hotels, it will affect ALL types of accommodation providers, ALL retailers & ALL cafes & restaurants. The entire economy of the town will suffer.
- The Park & Ride is not a viable alternative for parking for several reasons as follows:
  - \* It is only open for six months of the year
  - \* The buses do not run regularly enough
  - \* The buses are old, smelly, dirty & in terrible condition
  - \* The site is too far away from the town
  - \* The stops in the town are too far away from the town centre – people would have to walk a very long way carrying heavy luggage
  - \* The service is overall appalling & the profile of Dartmouth visitor (ie, bringing large economic benefits) cannot be expected to catch buses and use such a service.
- People are making commitments to visit Dartmouth NOW expecting that they will have provision for parking. What will we do when they arrive and are unable to park?! This will have dire consequences for the reputation of Dartmouth & any future marketing and promotion for the town. These people will not return and will not encourage others to do so.

The Chairman added that through his previous experience of running Dartmouth Cottages, people DO NOT book accommodation without parking provision. The accommodation sector alone stands to lose up to 450 holiday weeks. The consequences of this alone could be catastrophic.

Steve Thomas agreed and added that if people cannot park or stay, they cannot spend money in Dartmouth – it will affect ALL businesses in the town.

James Brown followed that IF the changes go ahead there will be NO long term parking provision in Dartmouth. People will just stop coming.

Liz & John Donovan added that people will just bypass Dartmouth if they know they can't park.

Paul Reach agreed and said this is the single biggest issue affecting the future prosperity of Dartmouth.

Adam Edsall enquired what The Chamber needs to do in order to try and stop this happening.

The Chairman answered that there was to be a vote on the issue. He would then present the view of The Chamber in writing. He also urged ALL businesses to email on an individual basis to [chris.lucas@southhams.gov.uk](mailto:chris.lucas@southhams.gov.uk). He said he would contact all members with this address.

James Brown made the proposal that The Chamber wish to keep the status quo with the parking permit system & that The Chamber will co-operate with consultation on future parking plans for Dartmouth. Tessa de Galleani seconded the motion.

The vote was unanimous in favour of the motion (yes-16, no-0). The Chairman will write to SHDC.

## **THE FUTURE OF THE CHAMBER**

The Chairman stated that he has been a member of The Chamber for five years and still isn't clear as to its exact purpose. He asked members for their opinion on this.

Paul Reach stated that the tagline 'The Business Voice of Dartmouth' is appropriate but The chamber must aim to be more pro-active, influential & more effective in decision making for the town in order to fulfil this.

There was general agreement that this was right.

Tessa de Galleani added that in order to do this The Chamber must improve communication among members and the surrounding community and district, especially through the local paper (as per other chambers). She asked how people can express views if they can't reach The Chamber.

The Chairman proposed that the website (previously set-up by The Chamber and now not functioning) be reinstated in order to improve member communication & better represent The Chamber to the local community.

Adam Edsall seconded the motion.

All members voted in favour of the motion (yes-16, no-0). James Brown suggested the site should have a 'member's only area' entered via password, as well as a question & answer forum available to all. He added that once people start using it, it could be invaluable and The Chamber will hence become self promoting.

## **NEXT MEETINGS AGENDA**

Steve Thomas asked if The Chamber has a current constitution or set of rules by which it runs. The Chairman has the only copy. It was agreed that it would be copied and circulated to all members for discussion in the next meeting.

The Chairman suggested The Chamber needs a mission statement in order to define its role. He asked James Brown if he would be happy to write one. James Brown agreed and will bring a draft to the next meeting.

Tessa de Galleani enquired if The Chamber would have more power if it had more members. It was agreed that it would. It was agreed that ways of promoting membership would be discussed in the next meeting.

Adam Edsall suggested that The Chamber does not have enough time to focus in depth on enough issues affecting the town and hence can become a little 'bogged down'. He suggested that The Chamber form sub-groups to investigate certain issues and the groups can then report back to the main monthly meetings. It was generally agreed that this was a good idea.

Tessa de Galleani suggested that the first of the sub-groups could be formed to work on Christmas events for 2007. This was agreed as a good idea and the group will be discussed and formed in the next meeting in place of the Constitution / Rules, which will be discussed in the meeting after that.

Liz Donovan suggested that ways of encouraging membership and bring back old members should be discussed at the next meeting. The Chairman agreed this was important and will be discussed at the next meeting.

The Chairman suggested that a second 'sub-group' could be formed in order to work on The chambers original plan for parking in Dartmouth. Paul Reach seconded this and it will be discussed in the next meeting. Tessa de Galleani agreed she was happy to work on the plan again if others would help as it took a lot of time and effort last time. The original plan is to be circulated all members prior to the next meeting so that they may be fully informed and able to join the sub-group if they wish.

### **CONFIRMED AGENDA ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

- Mission statement for The Chamber
- Promotion of membership & encouraging old members to return
- Formation of a sub-group to tackle Christmas events for 2007
- Formation of a sub-group to tackle work on the parking plan
- Update on progress with The Chamber website development
- Any other business – to include moving meetings from second Tuesday in month to third Tuesday in month due to a prior standing booking at The Yacht Club

### **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of The Chamber will be held at Dartmouth Yacht Club on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2007 at 6pm sharp.

### **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Unfortunately due to a prior booking at The Yacht Club, The Chamber ran out of time for their meeting. The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

### **FURTHER ACTION BEFORE NEXT MEETING**

- The Chairman to write to SHDC in order to present The Chambers view on proposed changes to the parking permit system in The South Hams.
- The Chairman to email all members with the email address of SHDC in order that they can object on an individual basis to the proposed changes to the parking permit system in The South Hams.
- The Chairman will register members email addresses to the proposed yahoo website that will be used as the website for The Chamber in the future. Further site development and progress will be reported at the next meeting.
- James Brown will draft a Mission Statement for The Chamber and bring to next meeting.
- The Chairman will circulate the original parking plan to all members to read prior to the next meetings discussion on the subject.
- The chairman will circulate a copy of The Chamber rules to all members in order it can be discussed in the meeting following the next one.