



Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 11 March 2020
at Farnfields Solicitors

Present: Fran Hill (Chair); Jenny Trim; Bev Kemp; Tom Sheen, Barry Von Clemens; and Karen Auckland

1. Apologies for absence

Sharon Cullingford and Mark Hansford.

2. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meetings held 12 February 2020 were approved.

3. Matters Arising

Barry wanted to correct the cost of the festive light and parade which was discussed at the last meeting in his absence. Barry advised that the cost of the parade is less than £1,000 and this includes the reindeer and the children's entertainer. The £4,300 referred to in the last meeting includes all the Christmas trees, the town tree and all the lights and other festive activities. This year the Council has decided to go with a simpler event of just carols around the tree which will only cost around £200 - £300. Barry saying that the Chamber's sponsorship of the festive trees at the Barn Surgery roundabout would have gone towards the parade had we been keen to take this on, and therefore only an additional £50 would have been required.

Fran thanked Barry for this information but noted that the cost of the parade was only one factor in the decision of the Chamber nor to take on this event, with the time commitment being the larger issue.

4. Financial Report

Bev provided the following financial update:

- The current bank balance as of 11 March 2020 is £3,819.18.
- There are just £207.50 of outstanding payments, though a small amount of this relates to over-payments by some companies.
- The only costs due to come out are for Vale Advertising, the monthly software costs of £6 a month and the social media costs.
- Fran thanked Jenny for her help in chasing debtors.

5. Gillingham Town Council (GTC)

Barry provided the following update:

- **Festive Lights** – this year, as above, the theme will be Carols Around the Christmas Tree. The early start last year did not work. The Anonymous Travelling Market has withdrawn from the event due to insufficient trade last year and is unlikely to be replaced. The town car park will be used as an emergency site. Sponsorship of Christmas trees has been withdrawn this year as it was raised that only certain businesses are given this opportunity year after year. It will be discussed at the next meeting when the Chair returns, whether the Chamber is still happy to donate to the Christmas trees if there is no sponsorship.

- **Pan Dorset Local Plan** – work is underway for this and it should hopefully be completed in three years. Val Apothecary is the Dorset Council Champion for Economic Development.
- **Local business news** – it is understood that interest has been shown by a Turkish man wanting to open a restaurant on the High Street. The location is not known.
- **X2 Bus Service** – residents were invited to a council meeting and 40 – 45 people attended. All were supportive of the bus service. This was followed by a smaller meeting on 6 residents. The way forward was discussed. The general view is that there is no way to save the service. It has been suggested that data should be collected on who would be willing to use a replacement service and be willing to make a contribution rather than use their bus passes. Most are saying they are willing to pay £1. If there is sufficient evidence that the service will be supported they will submit it to the Dorset Councillor for Shaftesbury for them to consider a community bus option. Sharon Butler is heading up the group, called “Bus for Us”.
- **Graffiti opposite end of Wyke Road** – this unfortunately cannot be removed as the stone is too absorbent.
- **Mayor’s Green Day** – this is due to take place at the end of April. There is no cost to the council as everyone is donating their time.
- **VE Day** – plans are underway for an event on the town meadow on 8th May with music and food in the early evening.
- **Other** – the police commissioner elections are scheduled to take place in May.

Fran thanked Barry for his comprehensive update.

6. Members, Meetings, and Events

Members

Jenny confirmed there are now 86 members after a few opted not to renew their membership and a couple of businesses have closed. Jenny commenting that she thinks we should look at doing a membership drive to try and boost numbers prior to the end of the year. Perhaps a mailout to all businesses.

Jenny has recently emailed all members with a proof of their advert for the upcoming Gillingham and Shaftesbury Guide. She has also asked if any members are interested in offering discounts to Chamber members etc.

Bev confirmed that TS Accounting is happy to pay 50% of any companies annual Chamber membership if they sign up to use their accounting services.

Fran and Jenny commenting that the adverts currently on the website are very out of date and going forward we need to check with businesses annually for current offers and contact details.

Events

- **2020 fund raising event** – this has been confirmed as a quiz to take place on Friday 30th October 2020. As this is close to Halloween some questions may be themed. The Olive Bowl has confirmed the cost of lasagne dinner will be £6 a head so tickets will be £10 each. A raffle will also be run to try and raise additional funds.
- **Networking Drinks** – it was discussed that this is still a worthwhile way to attract members. Fran, who is standing for election as Chair at the upcoming AGM, commented that going forward, if elected, she would want to attend these drinks and at

present cannot make the first Thursday of the month. It will therefore need to be revisited if she is elected. Barry suggesting some Chamber members may be interested in hosting a networking event at their own premises, with a presentation, tour etc. Jenny commented that Charlotte Lilley of Global Media is keen to speak at a future event and has also offered to assist with obtaining raffle prizes for future events. Charlotte to be invited to attend the April event, subject to Sharon's confirmation. Bev has confirmed she is happy to sponsor the drinks.

- **Race Night proceeds** – so far only one person has replied asking for the money raised to be used towards a band stand on the town meadow. Barry advised that this would far exceed the funds raised and would also require planning and Environmental Agency permission. Had a plan for this already been underway then the money could have been updated to the pot but nothing is being considered by the council at the current time. Barry suggesting that the Library could be a potential candidate as they need to obtain a Twitter licence. KA to send Barry the application form. Barry saying Gillingham in Bloom might also want to apply.

Meetings

KA confirming the AGM papers will be tabled for approval at the next meeting and then will need to be sent out the next day, Thursday 9 April prior to Easter to meet the deadline for clear days prior to the meeting taking place. The AGM is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 6 May at the North Dorset Rugby Club.

Fran offered KA assistance with setting up the Mailchimp.

7. Marketing

Fran provided the following update:

- She thanked all those that are sharing her social media posts.
- Progress is being made on the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Guide. It will be similar to last year but updated and is due out at the end of March.
- Fran asked Committee members to let her know if they hear of any local business news so that she can do a social media post.

8. Any Other Business

Fran updated the Committee on the recent BID meeting she attended at Dextra. It was well attended and the intention was to discuss the feasibility of Gillingham becoming a BID. Moto Corsa's managing director attended as he led the Ferndown Industrial Estate BID. If they go ahead they need to find someone to lead the steering committee. Previous BIDs have had paid managers and this would be needed for Gillingham.

The area of the BID would also need to be defined – likely to be the town centre and some surrounding areas but the Brickfield Industrial Estate would need to be considered etc. as this would require a hybrid BID as the needs of both areas are different.

There is currently access to a £5,000 seed grant from the Dorset County Council which will be used to fund a feasibility study and finding a BID manager. The steering group would be linked to Gillingham Enterprise but would be separate.

Fran saying some large businesses are interested, i.e. Dextra, Waitrose, but not many so far and there are no volunteers to take on the role of manager to lead the steering committee. The view is that the town could get a lot out of the project but it would be a lot of work. If

they can get 51% interest then they may go ahead. Then businesses would be required to pay a percentage of their rateable value, up to no more than 2%.

In Ferndown they managed to make the project cost neutral by installing CCTV cameras which in turn reduced insurance premiums for all the businesses.

Barry questioned how the £5,000 seed grant would cover the cost of the manager salary and Fran confirmation it wouldn't, it would just get things started.

Fran saying it is not possible to obtain the seed grant monies until there is a bank account set up and that is not possible until the BID steering committee is formed.

Barry asking how the 51% approval is obtained – is it via referendum? Fran saying the vote would be run by the BID manager.

Barry agreeing that it would be great for the town as previous BIDs have been excellent, i.e. Wimborne.

Date of next meeting

The next meeting is to be held at Farnfields Solicitors on Wednesday 8 April 2020 at 6pm.

The meeting closed at 7.20pm.