



PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

MINUTES OF PENZANCE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN THE WHARFSIDE CENTRE CONFERENCE ROOM ON TUE 5 FEB 2013

Attendees:

Dick Cliffe (DC) Chairman, Steven Richford (SR), James Howorth (JH), Janet Mogford (JM), Nina Minear (NM), Sally Bodinar (SB), Malcolm Lawrence (ML), Margaret Cass (MC), John Garrison (JG), Chris Edwards (CE), Lucy Kean (LK)

Items 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Barbara Hanik and Hazel Trembath

Items 2. Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held in January were not available for approval.

Item 3. Matters arising/actions outstanding

Action: DC to write to Solo building supplies welcoming them to the Chamber

Item 4. Applications for Membership

Three more applications for membership had been received.

Application	Proposed	Seconded
Barclays Bank	John Garrison	Margaret Cass
Wharfside Shopping Centre	Dick Cliffe	Janet Mogford
Altcom Ltd	Dick Cliffe	Chirs Edwards

Additionally Halo Accounting and the Edge of the World Bookshop had expressed an interested in joining. James Howorth (Edge of the World Book Shop) was welcomed to the meeting.

Actions:

LK to provide invoice for Altcom and for future members to ensure a smooth joining process for new members.

DC to send welcome letters to three new members.

Item 5 Correspondence.

No correspondence of significance had been received.

Item 6. Arrangements for AGM 19 February 2013.

The AGM had been booked for 19th Feb at the Queens Hotel. The MP had now confirmed his attendance from 7.00pm. Members agreed that the AGM should start at 6.00 pm as originally suggested thereby allowing time for the general meeting matters to be completed prior to a comfort break and the MP speaking at 7.00 pm.

Action: DC to provide a copy of the Chairman's presentation to Andrew George prior to the meeting.

Item 7. Update on Penzance Harbour.

The Chairman admitted he was in dark regarding progress with plans for Penzance Harbour. He would pursue the matter. ML stated that the Town Council had also asked for an update but nothing had been forthcoming.

Secretary's Note. Plans for dredging Penzance Harbour and depositing tailings at a site in Mounts Bay had been submitted to the Marine Management Organization on 8 Jan 13 for approval. The dredging proposals included Albert Pier which was the storm berth for the Scillonian. A structural survey of South Pier had been commissioned by Cornwall Council several months ago but weather and sea conditions had prevented completion of the inspection until recently. The results of this survey would influence the case for sea defence of South Pier which might or might not form part of the Penzance proposals. Some highways improvements were likely to be included in the Penzance works planned for 2013/4. More ambitious plans for Penzance Harbour could not be delivered in time to benefit from the current ERDF programme because this ended in Dec 2013 and project proposals need to be completely worked up with all

permissions in place by Apr/May 2013 to satisfy the DfT. The December 2013 ERDF deadline means a contract part funded by the ERDF cannot be let after that date.

Item 8. Friends of Isles of Scilly Transport Update.

The runway at Lands End had been officially notified as closed until 11th Feb. Plastic runway matting is currently being installed at the airfield to enable the runway to be reopened and the IOS Council was working with the IOSSCo on a longer term plan to install a permanent hard runway. Central Government had provided project development money to aid development of a plan.

A FRIST/IOS Council meeting was planned for the 11 Feb. The Chairman was not attending as the meeting was more about internal issues rather than advocacy of the islanders case outside of Scilly.

The level of support for the FRIST campaign was impressive with approximately 43% of residents having formally signed up to record their support for the Campaign and over 2000 supporters overall.

SB commented of the lack of people traveling through the Town to the Islands in recent weeks and how this had negatively affected business in the Town.

SB asked whether Penzance would be adversely affected on a more permanent basis should Exeter become the alternative option to Lands End. DC confirmed that only 4 flights per day are planned per for Exeter peak season compared to 20/day at Lands End and 6 from Newquay. A successful long term solution to the runway problems at Lands End Airport was vital to the local economy. Newquay was proving a highly inconvenient airport for many islanders because poor public transport links made day trips to attend outpatient appointments impossible unless taxis were employed between Newquay Airport and Truro (expensive at ~£40 each way).

SR asked about the capacity of Skybus now that the helicopter service has ceased; would it cope with the additional traffic following the loss of the helicopter. The Chairman said there was uncertainty over future passenger numbers; the 2012 figures had dropped substantially even before the helicopter service had ceased. The basic carrying capacity of Skybus had been expanded and appeared sufficient. The expanded Exeter service ought to work well as Exeter would not be vulnerable to coastal fog problems like Newquay and Lands End. The unknown factor was weather given the fixed wing service's vulnerability to disruption. With the ferry in operation there was the alternative mode of travel in the summer. What terms would be applied to the MCA licence for the Scillonian for 2013 was not known but it was understood the maximum complement would remain restricted to 450 person (432 pax). This was not believe to be an issue for most sailings.

On the issue of subsidy, the Transport Minister had made it clear that it was only the vital needs of the community, and not tourism, that would ever justify a subsidy and then only after every opportunity for the private sector to fill the shortfall had been exhausted. This statement did not mean that projects like a hard runway for Lands End Airport could not benefit from grant funding, just that such projects were justified on regional economic grounds and were typically resulted in on-off infrastructure grants and not continuous year on year subsidies.

Item 9. Town Team Project Updates

Discovery Map –The PDTA have made excellent progress with the delivery of Penzance Discovery Map and were being supported in the task by the Chamber and Penzance Civic Society. Cornwall Council (Sustainability Team) had stumped up a £5000 grant which was linked to Penzance piloting the Discovery Map Project Guide (the ‘toolkit’). Most of the £23,760 required needed to be raised by sponsorship. The PDTA had provided £1000.

Discovery Maps cover the centre of the Town on one side and the Town's surrounding area on the other side. The Penzance area map covered everything from Marazion to Lands End. The Isles of Scilly would be included in a box as would Newlyn to ensure it was adequately covered given its historic and commercial significance.

Town Centre Market – The plan for the proposed Town Centre Market had been modified. It would no longer stretch from Lloyds Bank to the London Inn but instead take place in the Green Market which would be closed to traffic on market days. This was necessary because the original site included a number of Cornwall Council controlled trader pitches most of which had been let. The Green Market was seen as a much better location but the deciding factor would be the cost and manageability of road closures. The original target date had been Easter but that was now unrealistic.

SB raised concerns regarding the road closures as a result of the negative affect on Chapel Stree during the Christmas Market road closures. The Chairman explained that the road would be closed between Lloyds Bank and The Cornish Hen to prevent drivers turning right at the top of Market Jew Street. There would be three barriers in total needed:

There manned barriers were expected to be necessary:

- One unmanned at Bread St
- One manned running from Lloyds bank to the Cornish Hen and
- One manned one at Alverton

CE asked if the road closures would continue to attract a cost each month or if it was a one off license fee. There was ongoing work to establish all of the costs and ensure that manning met safety needs which included arrangements to allow access for emergency vehicles.

The new market was being funded with £10,000 grant from Central Government which had been awarded when Andrew George MP became a Penzance Town Team Partner under a scheme organized by DCLG. Cornwall Council was the fund holder for the grant.

Item 10. Penzance Business Improvement District Update.

The Penzance Town Team needed to meet in the near future to progress the Town's BID scheme. A BID Steering Group needed to be formed comprising representatives from businesses within the proposed BID area.

The Steering Group, with assistance from the Cornwall Council BID Manager , would put together a BID proposal which business would vote upon. There has been a lot of positive comment about a Penzance BID but a vigorous campaign would be needed to encourage businesses to accept the addition burden on their business rates.

JM asked if there was to be a list of positive outcomes expected from the BID to encourage business owners to vote for it. This was the purpose of the BID proposal. See Secretary's note below.

Secretary's Note. The St Austell BID vote took place on 31 Jan 2013 and the BID was approved with a handsome majority. The St Austell BID Final Proposal can be viewed at the link below: (well worth reading).

<http://staustellbid.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/St-Austell-BID-Final-Proposal.pdf>

Item 11. Planning Issues.

Old Gasworks Site The Chamber did not take a strong view regarding Churchill Retirement Living Ltd's planning application because members were evenly split over the acceptability of the development when polled. The initial refusal of planning permission had recently been overturned following an appeal hearing in Penzance during November 2012. The only concern raised by Committee Members was whether the additional retail units on the ground floor would find tenants and/or place further strain on the high street given the number of empty premises that already existed. The construction phase of the project would inject millions of pounds into the local economy and an eyesore would be removed from Wharf Road. Although the development was not the preferred mix it would still contribute to the Town more than the previous vacant site (vacant for decades).

Coinagehall Site The Chairman had met Derek Sheldon of Palm Court Properties on 31 January. An application for planning permission was likely to be submitted towards the end of February. The plans include a mix of apartments (~42), restaurant/café units (ground floor on Prom side) and a 70 bedroom hotel in the NE corner. There would be a central atrium in the complex open to the public. The commercial units would offer views over the Prom and out to

sea. It was not known at this stage which hotel chain might eventually take over the hotel. Travelodge had been ruled out by Mr Sheldon. The proposals reflected a number of ideas that had come out of the two public consultation events. The proposed mixed use offered to transform the harbour area and breathe new life into the eastern end of the Promenade. The Committee found it difficult to fault the proposal as far as economic impact was concerned. The architectural impact would be a much more subjective issue and it was almost inevitable that there would be a range of opinions once the designs were made public.

A new hotel inevitably creates competition for existing accommodation providers however there was a shortage of serviced accommodation in the summer and only one hotel in the Town was large enough to accept coach parties. If the hotel became a Premier Inn (the company is developing long stay hotels for holiday area) then based on room pricing at Hayle and Helston, existing guest houses would remain price competitive. The summer room rate at Hayle and Helston was £82/night with breakfast for 2 an extra hotel as this would attract new trade and not cannibalize existing trade.

Item 12. Parking

Cornwall Council had announced its intention to change the 4.00 pm transition time from hourly parking to flat rate evening charging. The change was expected to take place from 31 March. Local Cornwall Councillors had sought this change and it was welcomed by the Committee. Previous the £2 flat rate had discouraged parents from short shopping trips after the end of the school day.

The Chamber had supported campaigns for cheaper parking. Members confirmed that shoppers continued to complain about the parking charges.

The Chairman asked for views about the merit of a parking regime based upon paying on departure rather than in advance (which then restricts how long you can stay in the Town). The Sainsbury's Section 106 fund included a sum intended to subsidize parking in the winter. The question was whether this would be better spent on infrastructure changes to allow payment on departure. Committee Members expressed a preference for payment on exit as this offered long term benefits whereas the once only parking subsidy would soon be exhausted and forgotten. SR suggested pay on departure would also benefit Cornwall Council as nobody would be able to leave without paying thereby increasing revenue. It was also thought that this system of parking management would also reduce anti-social behavior within the car park by 'boy racers'.

Item 13. Any Other Business

SR highlighted the online capability of the Edge of the World bookshop who could order books online for collection from the next day from the shop.

With no further business the meeting was closed at 19.10 hrs.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D Cliffe', written in a cursive style.

D Cliffe

Chairman

13 February 2013