

**The Minutes of the Meeting of North Walsham Chamber of Trade held on
6th February 2008**

Present: Colin Page, Robert Dunham, Sam Reynolds, Brian Eastell, Nicholas Lee, Chris Hargest, Chris Timms, Daniel Doyle, Jenny Harmer.

Colin welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that we stick to the agenda and any comments should be put through the chair so different conversations don't take place.

1) Apologies

Dave Audley - Three Cottages, Julie Cameron - House of Hobbies

2) Minutes from the previous meeting

These were signed as correct

Membership and Involvement

To date we have 47 members. Since we formed the committee for the Chamber many new members have joined and have expressed an interest in being involved. Therefore it is proposed that all members are invited to the quarterly meetings.

Chris Hargest proposed this and Chris Timms Seconded it. This was then unanimously voted for.

Town Centre Management

Four members of the chamber attended the public meeting held by the Griffon Partnership to discuss the feasibility of town centre management for North Walsham.

The meeting consisted of two presentations, the first by the Town Centre Manager for Bury St Edmonds and the second by Nigel Boldero. Basically the town centre manager liaises with local groups to try to establish what they want to see happening in the town and works with business, council and other interested parties to try bring this about.

In Bury St Edmonds they have been particularly successful in bringing new shops to the town and the general feeling was that this was something needed in North Walsham with a number of shops currently available or soon to become available.

The manager would be answerable to a steering committee made up of representatives from the business community, Town council and other local organisations.

The Chamber supports in principal that the proposals for Town Centre Management be taken to the next stage.

Car Parking Issues re. Sainsbury's

A complaint has been made by the Cockerel tea rooms, at Christmas Sainsburys bought a number of parking spaces from the Council for their staff this led to the car park being full and customers having to cancel their bookings resulting in loss of trade for the tea rooms. The council sold Sainsbury's 60 spaces does this mean that the Council are favoring Sainsbury's at Christmas over the town centre shops. Colin and Rob will bring this up at the meeting with the Town Centre working Group next week.

Publicity Officer

Chris has decided that he cannot take on this role as he has not got the time to give his best to the job and feels that someone else with more time would be a better option. At the next meeting we will ask if anyone would like to take on this role. It is felt that the local press will take on the job if they are given a list of the members. North Walsham Times are very interested in the Chamber and if we want any items of interest put in the Times they will be happy to do so.

Town Centre Enhancement

Ideas from the Chamber were as follows

Colin - Free parking, getting a wider range of shops into the town.

Nicholas - The town needs a general clean up

Chris H - Free car parking or for a least a period of, The pigeons are a big problem and need to sorted out

Daniel - There is a general misconception among the shoppers of North Walsham that all businesses close either a full day or half a day on Wednesdays, it is known because i am open 6 full days a week and customers are surprised at this. This concept may be losing business in the town, we need to take a poll of businesses that

stay open on a Wednesday versus the closers, then if the majority stay open, we could begin a campaign to dispel the myth that the town closes on Wednesday.

Jenny - The fly posters on empty shops need removing. This will be discussed at the Town Centre working group meeting that Colin and Rob are attending.

Chris T - Parking, Cleaning the town up and painting the shop fronts if more than one shop got together to do this they may get it done cheaper.

Robert - The pigeons need to be sorted out and the faeces cleaned up. The gutters need to be cleaned the worst culprits for this are the banks. If the shop keepers need this done they can get together and hire a cherry picker for the job and save money. Nicholas said he will write to the banks asking them to clean their gutters.

Any other business

Daniel - Recommends that every business joins the Federation of Small Businesses as it is not a large cost and the benefits out way the cost. Nick Said he will write to the FSB and get them to invite businesses to join.

Robert - There have been some negative comments about the chamber not doing any thing we need support from all members. Rob also asked about sorting out a traditional Christmas fayre. Colin and Rob will talk to Margaret about the possibility of this.

Chris H - Asked about the farmers market would it be able to join the Thursday market.

Colin - Received a letter from Margaret asking us to consider making North Walsham a plastic bag free zone with a charity box suggesting a 2p donation towards facilities for those not wishing to take part. Rob suggested buying cloth bags printed with North Walsham Chamber of Trade on them and selling them in the shops. Robert will look into the price of these as well as hessian ones and let the Chamber know as soon as possible.

Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on the 14th May 2008 at 6.00pm at the Council offices.

If you would like to have an item included on the agenda for this meeting please contact Sam at least seven days prior to the meeting.

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