

**Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on 22nd February 2017
at Farnfield Offices**

1. Apologies received from Lucy Milton-Downes, Coleen Cahill, and Cllr David Walsh.
2. **Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 20th September 2016 were accepted as a true and accurate report. Sharon welcomed Rebecca Antill to the meeting, who was attending to represent Farnfields.
3. **Matters Arising**

There was nothing to report this month under matters arising.
4. **Financial Report**
 - All invoices for 2017 have been sent out.
 - If all pay subscriptions the total funds should be £6,436.60
 - The actual amount is £4,331.60
 - Some standing orders have come through the subscriptions remain at £35 per year
 - Fran is still to be paid for work she has carried out for the Chamber.
 - Robs Honorarium is still to be paid, plus £60 per year for the Quickbooks accounting package.
 - A letter has been sent to supporters of the Chamber i.e. Sydenhams, Camelot and SSK asking them if they would like to become members along with an invoice for subscriptions.
 - Gillingham Electrical Company and John Hillier have resigned as members.
 - The Chamber's insurance cannot cover Gillingham in Gear who will now need to provide their own insurance cover. The Chamber can have a stand at the event, the date for which is 3rd June 2017.
 - Sharon has asked Keith to remove himself as a signatory for the Chamber bank account, but has not heard back from him. Currently Lucy and Rob are signatories and Sharon also needs to become a signatory.
5. **Town Council**

Barry reported for the Town Council:

Shaftesbury Hospital

 - The Town and the Parish Council are working together and local MP Simon Hoare will endorse opposing the closure of beds in Shaftesbury Hospital.
 - Barry is part of the Save our Beds Campaign.
 - CCG are however being very stubborn. A consultation was held in Salisbury, which only 2 days before Wiltshire MP Andrew Murrison demanded the consultation is extended. Barry

advised that these are short term beds.

Town Council Household Council Tax

The Precept is being raised from 11% to 17% this year and will not be capped but by year 2 and 3 the benefit of this will come to the fore and the council is preparing to keep services at the same level. This will include the upkeep of open spaces, high street cleaning and town maintenance

Car Parking North Dorset Control

- Barry advised that the portfolio holder, Cabinet member Sherry Jespersen would be the first point of contact regarding car parking.
- Barry has put into place a five year plan for town finances.

Festive Lighting Parade

- Barry advised that the Festive Lighting Parade was a fabulous and popular event this year and came in under budget.
- Looking at costings for 2017 there has been some concern at the increasing costs and various options are therefore being considered at looking at different ways to raise funds.
- The date is currently set at 1st Friday in December as usual. However, the Chamber committee wondered if an alternative date could be found, as this date clashes with both Shaftesbury and Mere.

Town Planting Scheme

- This was a great success where donations paid for all bedding plants and all planters for the town.
- Gillingham was presented with a Sun Dial by the town of Le Neubourg. Sharon asked where it could be displayed to be most visible and Rob suggested the Town Meadow. An alternative suggestion was on Neubourg Way on the building close to the car wash. Barry will float the idea and these suggestions at the working party.

Gillingham Youth Club

- Rob attended a meeting at the Youth Club and reported that Yeovil College has shown an interest in taking over the running of the club and building. It is not sure how this will be received by the Trustees. A meeting with the Trustees has been requested.
- Lucy has decided not to be on the board of Trustees.
- Barry advised that the Youth Club itself is doing well and that the required funding is being used.

Gillingham School Council to report to the Town Council, as will **St Mary's School**.

Dementia Friends will be holding a full committee meeting on 9th March 2017.

6. Members Meetings and Events

Following the success of 'Meet the Neighbours' last November; it was discussed that another event should be held this November and that a suitable date would be Tuesday 21st November 2017. The Olive Bowl is to be used as the venue. Sharon thought that this event could tie in local businesses and apprenticeships and schools.

Rebecca advised that normally Farnfields start to advertise and visit schools in March so that there is some time for pupils to consider what they may like to do prior to the final term. Sharon advised that it would be too late this year for the Chamber to host an event in March, but that maybe a Careers Event could be hosted by the Chamber in March 2018.

Sharon would be asking Neal's Yard if they would do a talk at the November event and would speak to Sue Herman to see if it is possible to do a site visit to Neal's Yard this summer.

Rob has been approached by Dorset Energy Solutions who would like to host a trade and music day on 19th August 2017. Rob suggested that it is put out to other members the idea of a trade fair for builders and contractors etc. and the Chamber could also have a stand there.

7. Any other Business

- **The Mayor's Dinner Dance** is being held at The Olive Bowl on Saturday 11th March 7.30 pm at £30 ticket. The tickets are available from Jill at the Town Council. The money raised is being donated to North Dorset Rugby Club.
- Keith Wareham sent details of the **Dorset Tourism Association Annual Conference** to see if it was of interest to members.
- **Career Event at The Olive Bowl** covered above in Members Meetings and Events
- **Social Media/Web Slot**

Fran advised that the Chamber should be linking the members and keeping a good presence on both Facebook and twitter, watching members and connecting with their website. The blog page could be used to update and advertise on what members are doing and advertising events that the Chamber is supporting, by linking and re-sharing on to the Chamber's social media where an extra page can be populated.

Rob confirmed that Coleen is the web designer and not a media producer so is putting content on, but not producing content.

Rob advised that there is some money that could be used for social media so that Fran can take this on and Rob can create a media budget.

Fran would normally charge businesses £175 per month for a complete social media service which would also include interacting with followers' comments and news.

For the Chamber Fran would produce a tweet/post per day to cover the Chamber and members and would check member Facebook accounts etc. to include their news/updates. This would involve 3 – 4 hours per month at a cost of £50 per month.

Rob advised that somebody would need to steer the Business Directory and Fran suggested Jenny Trim of Design and Print. Sharon advised that it would be good to set budgets for all the work to be carried out.

- **Communication**

If Coleen can put the page up, Fran can have access to put all information of importance on the website.

- **Newsletter**

A newsletter could also be produced to get information out to members; Sharon suggested that this could perhaps be a quarterly newsletter. Fran advised that Mail Chimp is set up for distributing information. Sharon thought the Minutes of Meetings should be added to the website once approved at the Chamber Committee Meetings.

Western Gazette Business Awards

The Western Gazette Business Awards have been launched to include various categories for businesses; Rob is to send information to Coleen.

8. Date of next meetings

Wednesday 22nd March 2017 at Farnfields

Wednesday 12th April 2017 (to be held early due to Easter break)

AGM 17th May – Town Council offices