

HEATHFIELD CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

KINGS CHURCH, WEDNESDAY 31 JULY 2019

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Alan Staples, Manningtons	Brian Arnott, Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council
Steve Thomas, Heathfield and District Bonfire Society	
Jo Hensman, Heathfield and District Bonfire Society	
Dave Shoebridge, Heathfield and District Bonfire Society	
John Kay, Kay & Pascoe LLP	Peter Bailey, Bailey & Co
John Abbott, Utility Warehouse	Julian Wates, Sokada Ltd
Arty Van Reeve, Artemis Bookkeeping Services	Sgt Dan Thomson, Sussex Police
Trevor Goldsmith, Goldsmith and Allcorn	Suzanne and Andy Heaseman, Gemini Greetings
Joanne Aldous, Chamber Secretary (minute taker)	

APOLOGIES:

Richard Williams, Sanzman Solutions	Suzi Christie, Heathfield News
Joanne and James Pople, Pople and Broad	
Helen Johnson, Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council	

1. Apologies

Please see above.

2. Policing Update from Sgt Dan Thomson

JAb welcomed Sgt Dan Thomson to the meeting and had already supplied him with points that were raised by the Whats App business owners group as follows:

Shoplifting – Sgt Thomson acknowledged that there is an increase in Heathfield. The WhatsApp group is a good way to share information and CCTV images of suspects. The Police will attend when they can. If shoplifting is taking place, call 999. There is an increase in calls but with a reduced number of staff. You can apprehend someone using reasonable force and it is best to wait until they are outside the premises. Sgt Dan Thomson was requested to provide JAb a list of what business are to do if shoplifting is taking place.

CCTV – There were 4 cameras positioned around the town which were funded by the Parish Council. The cameras are still there in place but not recording. Working cameras are now monitored at the Lewes Head Quarters. Brian Arnott said that CCTV cameras were discussed recently at a Parish Council meeting and they are looking at funding for this.

Presence in Heathfield – There is a regular Police presence but not at set times. The Police deal with incidents and regularly patrol. There is a district team based centrally and they all cover all areas. There are no plans to have one dedicated PCSO in each parish/town as before. It is important for them to be in cars, rather than by foot.

Parking – is not decriminalized. The Police have stated is it not Policy to deal with parking issues. Dawn Brock reported that Age Concern minibuses cannot access some houses in side streets. They were asked to report to the Police and District Council if cannot pass a vehicle or dangerous parking.

Graffiti – working with WDC street scenes department. Photos of the “tags” have been distributed. It is not known at present who is carrying this out.

Telephone number 101 – Peter Bailey raised the issue of getting through to 101. Sgt DT said that unfortunately Lewes Head Quarters had a high turnover of staff with an increase number of calls. There has recently been a social media campaign promoting reporting crimes by email or the online form on their website to take the pressure off the telephone line.

Sgt DT did ask that people do report all incidents so that they can be logged.

JAb asked if anyone had any other issues that they think of to let him know through the WhatsApp group.

TG thanked Sgt DT for attending, at which point Sgt DT left the meeting.

3. Minutes of AGM held on the 25 July 2018

Trevor Goldsmith (TG) welcomed all to the meeting and went through the minutes of the 2018 AGM which were proposed by Peter Bailey (PB) and seconded by Julian Wates (JW). One amendment is to be made to the attendees list - Beverley Casket to read Caket.

4. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from the 2018 AGM. Matters arising from the 2017 AGM:

It was thought holding a careers fair at Heathfield Community College a good idea. TG will pursue. ACTION TG

2018: TG reported he is still in discussions with the Head Teacher regarding this.

2019: TG advised that the head teacher would like to hold a careers fair at Heathfield Community College and a date needs to be scheduled.

5. Chairman’s Report

High Street Roadworks 2018

TG did ask whether the High Street roadworks could be carried out through the night, rather than having to close the road during the day, but this was rejected.

Chamber’s Charity

The Chamber’s charity for 2018-19 was the Children’s Respite Trust and it awarded them £200. The Chamber has not named a charity for 2019-20 due to restricted funds.

Working Relationships

The Chamber is a member of ACES (Association of East Sussex Chambers) and has quarterly meetings with Wealden District Council to give the Chamber updates on what they are planning and what is happening in the district. Christine Ewbank, ACES Facilitator, undertakes a lot of work on behalf of ACES.

The Chamber is also represented on the Local Action Team (LATs) where it can meet with the Police (Inspector Jon Gross attends) and other local groups to review problems in our area and

what it can do about them. The Chamber has the opportunity to raise its own questions and queries at this meeting.

The Chamber also has a good working relationship with the Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council and The Heathfield Partnership.

Finally, I would like to say thank you to all those on our committee for their support, help and encouragement, as well as all the work they do.

6. Treasurer's Report and Adoption

AVR read out the following report:

“Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to the Heathfield Chamber's Annual General Meeting.

May I start by thanking Alan Staples for verifying and approving the Chamber Accounts. Thank you, Alan.

The report I am about to present is for the Chamber's Financial Year ended 31st March 2019.

Memberships have dropped from 56 to 43 in direct contract with the well-attended Business Development Groups meetings, with an average monthly attendance of 25 to 30 members and guests. There is still a need to increase the membership to ensure continued high attendance at events and to stabilise the financial position of the Chamber.

The Wealden Expo Event, held every couple of years in October, did not take place this year and therefore no financial activity is being reported here.

The Christmas Fun Day Event was well attended with a small profit realized and ploughed back into the Chamber's reserves. As in previous years, The Chamber continues to ring-fence £500.00 towards its Christmas Fun Day Event costs.

The Chamber has decided not to nominate a charity for 2019/2020, due to lack of funds and as you can see from the Accounts, the committee members contributed half the money donated to the Children's Respite Care. The Chamber did pay £100.00 towards the Poppies Appeal Fund of £300.00, which was shared equally by the Chamber, Rotary Club and the Parish Council.

This brings me to the Profit and Loss of the Chamber Accounts for Financial Year ended 31st March 2019 with a total income of **£5,536.00** a total expenditure of **£5,149.00** and a net Profit of **£387.00**

At year end, the Chamber's Capital and Reserves totalled **£1,291.00**.

I would like to conclude by thanking all those who have contributed to last year's Christmas Fun Day Event. Thank you – much appreciated.”

There were no questions raised.

TG thanked AS for reviewing the accounts on behalf of the Chamber.

The accounts were proposed by John Kay (JK) and seconded by Peter Bailey (PB) and adopted.

7. Election of Officers

TG has decided to stand down as Chairman, after many years, but will remain on the committee. Joanne Aldous has also decided to stand down as Secretary. Thank you to JA for the last 10 years she has been in this role. The rest of the current committee members are willing to stand again. Richard Williams has been nominated for Chair and John Abbott as Secretary and Arty Van Reeven remains as Treasurer. There have been 4 new committee members nominated:

Richard Ridley	Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council
Chris Siggs	Kings Church
James MacNay	Cuculo Deli
Rachel Drinkwater	Wanted on Voyage

John Kay (JK) proposed and Julian Wates (JW) seconded the election of the officers shown on the agenda.

JAb added that the Chamber are trying to focus on High Street traders and there will be different sub-committees created to work on specific projects, ie the Christmas event. JAb is currently working on a grant application to the Parish Council regarding the Christmas event. Businesses are being encouraged to become members at a cost of £60 per year,

8. Events

8a. Breakfast meetings

These are held monthly at Kings Church. There are more members starting to attend and there are currently more non-members from outside the area attending. These forums offer the opportunity to network and discuss issues and help other businesses.

8b. Christmas Family Fun Day, 8 December 2018

The Christmas event was held on Saturday 8 December and went well with a market and Soft Play van in the Co-Op car park, Santa's grotto in the Youth Centre as well as choirs singing at different locations throughout the town.

The Christmas event this year will be held on Saturday 30 November in the afternoon and there are plans to have 2 late night shopping events on Thursday 5 and 12 December. More details will be available nearer the time.

There is now a new Co-op manager, Robbie Box, who it is hoped will be as helpful as John Miller was.

9. Website

JW advised that the new website went live a couple of weeks ago. There is a free listing for members. An interactive map is being looked at and if anyone had any ideas or amendments to their listing to let JW know.

10. Any Other Business

Heathfield and District Bonfire Society (H&DBS) – Steve Thomas advised that he is in the process of organising a traditional bonfire (not carnival) on the 26 October. The fire site will be at the Community Centre. There will be a torch light procession through the town. The road could not be closed, so a request has been submitted for a rolling block. The H&DBS has refused vendors to sell food in the High Street as it feels it is not fair on the businesses that pay rates. Marshalls will be sought when all the plans have been authorised.

JK thanked JA, on behalf of the Chamber, for her 10 years' service as Chamber secretary. He also thanked TG, on behalf of the Chamber, for his many years' service as Chairman and for his work with many other local organisations and hopes that TG will still be involved with the Chamber.

TG advised that Wealden District Council have said they will keep parking free for another 3 years.

Age Concern – Dawn Brock thanked the businesses in the town for their support with advertising in their newsletter, etc. There is now a Men's Shed group and this will be situated in the grounds of Little Tinkers Nursery and there are already 35 members. There are links with the nursery and Wealden Works to have inter-generational working. Brian Arnott said that there is a government initiative called 'Let's Talk Loneliness', which may have funding available. JAb added that the Chamber are looking at having a dementia forum.

TG thanked everyone for attending and also thanked Kings Church for allowing the use of the State Hall to hold the AGM.

The meeting closed at 7.05pm.