

Minutes of Axminster Chamber Management Committee

Held at 18:30 on Monday 18th November 2024 at Axminster Community Shed, Chard Street, Axminster EX13 5

Present: Jane Rockett (Chair), Alison Hayward (Treasurer), Colin Hayward, Kate Ridout, Karen Hussey, Joely Hopkins (Minutes Secretary)

Minutes

1. Apologies

- a. Apologies were received from Mark Dowdeswell and Chessie Dowdeswell

2. Minutes

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 21st October 2024 were approved as correct. Proposed by Alison Hayward and seconded by Colin Hayward.

3. Matters Arising

- a. Waffle has now been paid for costs pertaining to What's On in Axminster Website.

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. The Chamber's Profit and Loss report was presented at the meeting, and it was highlighted that there is a £30.34 loss in income compared to expenses.
- b. £760 has been set aside for costs pertaining to the banners.

5. Minutes Secretary and Membership Secretary

- a. A minutes secretary has been found, Joely Hopkins, and a candidate for membership secretary has expressed an interest in the position.

6. Update on the Benches

- a. The Chamber has been asked to pay for the materials for the refurbishment of the benches and to have them insured. It was confirmed that the current insurance policy would cover the benches. Paying for the materials would include wood treatment, the purchase of parasols and 'respect the community' signage, specifically signs that cannot be removed. The Chamber has proposed not to include parasols due to concerns about how long they would last, their expense (both initially and their maintenance unless a grant can be obtained) and if they are necessary for the space. Additionally, Karen has offered to supply plaques for the signage.
- b. Volunteers are also needed for the benches' refurbishment, and it was suggested to ask Waffle volunteers.

7. Update on Christmas Events and Activities

- a. Jane has advertised the loyalty cards and has begun to deliver them to businesses.
- b. The Christmas Tree Festival is underway, and Jane is going to meet with Mandy Loveridge and Karen Bostock.

- c. The Chamber discussed the idea of an Axminster Christmas Weekend for next year to build on the Light Up Axminster event scheduled for this year. There may be sounding out in January to consider it.

8. Update on Banners

- a. All the banners have been taken down to be replaced or fixed. Barry has indicated that £650 should cover the cost for them for next year, which is under the amount already set aside for them.
- b. Grant applications were also discussed to fund the project in the long-term.

9. Update on the Website and Newsletters

- a. Jane presented drafts of the Aims and Achievements newsletter for promoting Chamber membership and the Christmas newsletter is to follow.
- b. There was also a discussion of how the minutes are circulated and to whom.
- c. What's in Axminster has asked the Chamber to manage the business directory aspect of the website.

10. Axminster Town Council Report

- a. Only one coach operator has showed interest in day trips to Axminster and Devon County Council has said it will not promote Axminster for this because they have a concern about not having sufficient space for parking. The Chamber is going to ask the town council to lobby as much as possible on its behalf.
- b. There is no progress on the town map since they are in need of someone to work on the graphic design. Kate has volunteered to meet and discuss the feasibility of offering her services. In order for the map to stay up-to-date, Colin proposes a dedicated separate events section that can be changed regularly.
- c. The town council is still awaiting a response regarding the reallocation of funding from the South Western Railway's grant.
- d. Swish and Flick are organising a Guinness World Record attempt for the largest gathering of pirate amputees and pirates in general to raise awareness for amputee charities. There has been some media and TV interest.

11. Any Other Business

- a. Colin raised the idea of making a float to promote the Chamber at Axminster Carnival, and it was also suggested that running an event during Carnival week, such as a quiz, to show Chamber's support would be worth considering. The idea of the float was not popular but the quiz was.
- b. There was also a discussion of being more proactive on social media and promoting the location of Chamber meetings at the venues.

The meeting closed at 20:05. The date of the next meeting is to be advised.