

Axminster Chamber of Commerce Management Committee - Monday 15 July 2024 - 6.30pm

at Axminster Tools, Weycroft Avenue, Axminster EX13 5PH

Present: Jane Rockett (Chair), Alison Hayward (Treasurer), Matt McAuley, Mark Dowdeswell, Colin Hayward, Sarah Hunt, Karen Hussey and Kate Ridout

Minutes

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Barrie Hedges, Francesca Dowdeswell and Karen Dowdeswell

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.

Proposed: Colin Seconded: Mark

3. Matters arising

Banners - Following earlier correspondence to Chamber members regarding charging for banners trail entry, it was decided to provide entry/assets for free instead. While this would mean printing and design costs would not be recouped, it was argued that charging may dilute the desire for the community to spend time and money locally. Instead, the funds would be supplied by the Chamber's existing banner fund with the option for the community to donate via the trail assets. Paul Hayward (Town Clerk) is to approve use of the gateway sign and town crest before Kate supplies in print and pdf formats for distribution among Axminster businesses. Kate needs to confirm which banners are damaged beyond repair and therefore unusable for the project so to be removed from artwork. Also how donations can take place.

Barrie has requested the transfer of responsibility for the banners project next year and suggested replacements were supplied.

Action: Kate

Railway - The exhibition at The Railway Kitchen was a great success in terms of attendance, engagement and £65 raised. External funding is yet to be achieved but further avenues, including from The Railway Fund, are still being pursued. Calls were made to share social media posts regarding the existing

Crowdfunder.

Shop progress was confirmed with carpet laid and kitchen worktops complete.

Town map - Concerns were raised on the time remaining to complete the project ahead of summer trade. Mark agreed to chase for confirmation on the required amends so a requote could occur ahead of printing and distribution.

Waiting areas and shops with large dwell time, like Axminster Tools, were suggested as good locations to host these assets.

Action: Mark

Receipt advertising - Matt provided examples of threefold receipt covers, stating that these are retained by customers especially when for larger cost items. It was cited that advertising businesses would be difficult due to competitive advantage. However, local events with a message of "Thank you for shopping in Axminster" was agreeable. Jane to acquire printing costs.

Action: Jane

Netwalking - Following the previous meeting, feedback had been supplied to the provider alongside a further request for information. A response is yet to be received.

Waffle website - The previously discussed request for funding is yet to be concluded. Mark is waiting for feedback on grant distribution.

Action: Mark

4. Correspondence

Banking hub - The Chamber has been approached by the The Herald for comment on Axminster's banking hub. Opinion has been gathered from local businesses and fed back based on the eight responses received. This noted the weekly travel time saved journeying to other banks but generally responses were mixed. A cash machine in the centre of town was most commonly cited. The Chamber is eager to keep liaising with the town and provider to communicate community needs.

Workshop funding - Alison Hayward of East Devon County Council has attended a teams call to discuss the renewal forum. Further funding for workshops may be possible.

5. Finance & membership

(a) Update on finances

The Chamber's balance sheet is looking healthy with sufficient money in the bank for website maintenance. Printing and artwork costs are yet to be deducted from the banners fund.

(b) Update on memberships

Since the last meeting two new Chamber members have been reported with an additional renewal. One business has chosen not to renew their membership. Literature advertising Chamber benefits was requested alongside a joining form and invoices for renewing members.

Action: Alison

5. Christmas

Loyalty card terms and conditions are in progress. Enquiries have been made about other community activities happening this Christmas, but are awaiting replies. Saturday 14th December was proposed as a suitable date for the Chamber event with the committee feeling activity was welcome. Kate to liaise with Karen regarding organization and the required event licenses.

Appetite was high for a Christmas social, with Colin tasked with recruiting a location from existing or pending Chamber members.

Action: Kate/Colin

6. Post Office Consultation

The post office's potential move to Boots was raised. Practical queries were raised including a lack of parking and disabled spaces and losing the road crossing and static post box. Developments will be monitored by the Chamber.

7. Council report

Mark updated the committee on the proposal for an electric battery site at Hawkchurch. Although rejected last year, revisions had been suitable and it was now supported by Council renewal policies and could provide substantial funding for Axminster Town Council.

The previously discussed coach proposal was cited, with the option to transport tourists into the town. If approved, this will launch next year with the Council covering costs. The main concern remains parking close enough to

the town centre that won't cause gridlock.

Devon and Cornwall Police will be supporting the launch of a mobile app designed to combat antisocial behavior and shoplifting. Suspicious activity will be reported through the app and shared among other members. Costs will be covered by the Council.

Mark is preparing surveys on the latter two matters which the Chamber will circulate to members for their feedback.

Action: Mark

8. Any other business

Colin cited that The Community Shed will be holding an open day on Saturday 31st August.

9. Date of next meeting

Monday 17th September - Kate Ridout's house (which is the red brick house between the Guildhall and Harris And Harris).