

## **Minutes of Axminster Chamber Management Committee**

Held at 18:30 on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at Axminster Tools – Axminster Store Unit 9A Weycroft Ave, Axminster EX13 5PH

Present: Jane Rockett (Chair), Alison Hayward (Treasurer), Colin Hayward, Kate Ridout, John McFadzean, Matt McAuley, Joely Hopkins (Minutes Secretary)

### **Minutes**

#### **1. Apologies**

- a. Apologies were received from Karen Hussey and Mark Dowdeswell.

#### **2. Minutes**

- a. The minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2024 were approved as correct. Proposed by Alison Hayward and seconded by Colin Hayward.

#### **3. Matters Arising**

- a. The Christmas Trail prizes have all been handed out and some of the vouchers have been spent.

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

- a. The Chamber's Profit and Loss report was presented at the meeting, and it was pointed out that the Chamber is currently running a loss of £499.81 and that the banners fund now stands at £574.76.

#### **5. Report from Axminster Town Council**

- a. No report was received.
- b. Barrie has been awarded Citizen of the Year 2025 by the Town Council. The Chamber would like to offer their heartfelt congratulations to Barrie for his well-deserved award and would like to thank him for all he has done for the Chamber and many other groups within Axminster and beyond. His energy and enthusiasm to simply get things done was truly appreciated.

#### **6. Action Plan for 2025**

- a. Leaflet and Town Map
  - i. Kate has agreed to speak to Delphine and feed back to Jane about whether it is possible to keep her illustration with an added informational layer which can be altered and updated.
  - ii. Kate also volunteered to discuss putting together a leaflet/poster connected to the map to encourage visitors to Axminster and Jane also agreed to liaise with TIC about the leaflets/posters, which they already have. It was recognised that the responsibility of distributing the leaflets would fall on the Chamber.
- b. Applying for grants

- i. Jane mentioned engaging Councillor Ian Hall for funding and that the Chamber may be able to apply to the locality fund.
- c. Benches repairs
  - i. John provided an update from the Community Shed, who have estimated that they will be able to begin repairs in March once the benches have dried out. The Chamber has requested that the repairs are finished, and the benches put out by Easter, or at the latest by 9<sup>th</sup> May.
  - ii. Colin raised the idea of the Chamber asking Polyvine to sponsor the plaques for the benches in order to cover the costs. The wording and design as for the plaques has yet to be finalised.
  - iii. Jane will meet with Simon from Waffle to discuss the benches.
- d. Banners
  - i. The group of painters have responded that they are happy to carry out repairs for the damaged banners. Also, Barry has worked out the cost for the repairs for 2025, estimating that they should be about £400.
  - ii. There was also a discussion on fundraising for the banners in 2026 and it was mentioned that printing the banners may be more cost effective.
  - iii. Jane has said she will find out the date for when they will be up.
- e. Tennerfest in March
  - i. The Chamber has agreed to back Totally Locally's Tennerfest, which will be held from 1<sup>st</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> March. Individual businesses will create their own offers, and the Chamber has confirmed that it will promote the event, perhaps including printing posters.
- f. Plans for Easter
  - i. The Heritage Museum is running a '200 Years of the Railway' celebration during the easter holiday.
  - ii. An Easter Bonnet Parade was proposed with the Heritage Centre suggested as a meeting place and a parade over the green.
    - 12<sup>th</sup> or 13<sup>th</sup> April was provisionally set out for the event, or in order to hold it on market day, 17<sup>th</sup> April was suggested.
    - Jane has indicated that she would speak to the Vicar and Nigel to see if it is viable.
- g. Gate to Plate and Axminster Eats
  - i. The Chamber decided to approach the Town Council to share the pitch with them for the event. There was also a discussion on the purchasing of a plain gazebo that could be hired out, which the Chamber's banner could be attached to.
  - ii. Axminster Eats has confirmed the dates for the event are the second Friday in the month i.e. 9<sup>th</sup> May, 13<sup>th</sup> June, 11<sup>th</sup> July and 8<sup>th</sup> August.

h. Scarecrow Trail

- i. The Chamber has affirmed that the trail will be run again this year, and Alison has agreed to take the lead.
  - In addition, the Axe Vale Show has requested that the scarecrows be brought to the show like last year. In response, the Chamber has decided to run the trail in the lead up to the Axe Vale show, culminating in them being judged at the event.
  - The proposed dates for the trail are from 1<sup>st</sup> June to 20<sup>th</sup> June.
- ii. Jane will ask Heather Fallows if she would hold a workshop on scarecrow making in conjunction with the trail.
- iii. The Chamber also discussed creating a physical trail sheet, which could be sold to fundraise for the Carnival. The plans for this will be explored before the next meeting.

i. Fundraising for Carnival and/or Light Up Axminster

- i. The Chamber considered ideas for fundraising in the latter half of year, perhaps around October.

j. Potential Speakers

- i. Jane raised the idea of asking Stuart Carrington from Westcott to come and discuss the implications of the budget.
- ii. Alison suggested asking Sarah Hunt about a talk on social media for around March.

k. Workshop

- i. The Chamber discussed ideas for potential workshops and Colin suggested that the Chamber organise an opportunity to visit another chamber's meeting to see how they operate.

l. Anything for Halloween

- i. There was also a discussion on the Chamber doing something similar to the scarecrow trail running alongside Swish and Flick's pirate event.

m. Christmas 2025

- i. The Chamber considered various ways to reduce the cost of the loyalty trail scheme, such as create a more generic loyalty card that can be used every year.
- ii. Colin proposed a chamber member's advent calendar, which could be displayed in a shop window to highlight the non-frontline chamber members.

n. Empty Shop Windows

- i. The Community Shed has asked the Chamber to facilitate the use of a shop window in the town centre and Jane has confirmed that she will ask Santander or Boots for the use of theirs.

o. Town Clean Up Before Half-term/Easter

- i. The chamber explored the possibility of a town tidy-up weekend.

## **7. Any Other Business**

- a. The idea of doing something to promote a member of the chamber each month was also raised, as well as other social media engagement improvements, such as guess the shopkeeper.
  - i. Additionally, it was suggested that the chamber could ask Suzanne McFadzean for advice on improving social media engagement.
- b. Jane has confirmed that she will follow up with Axminster Rotary Club for their payment.

The meeting closed at 20:11. The date of the next meeting is 17<sup>th</sup> February at the Lamb, Lyme Road, Axminster.