

Lichfield Chamber of Trade and Commerce  
Minutes of AGM – Tuesday 8th November 2022 – The George Hotel

Present:

Ruth Redgate (Chair)	Jayne O' Keeffe
Denise Whelan	Vicky Woolston
Jan Leytham-Gain	Robert Haylor
Amanda Jackson	Lizzie Brain
Matt Clay	Greg Birch
Ann Schwarzenbach	Jackie Roberts
Jono Oates	John Collins
Dagmar Maskova	Mark Maltby
Ben Hatfield	Callum Thorpe
Rob Young	Adam Lumb
Gayle Edwards	

### 1. Presidents' Report

After surviving the last two years of Covid, for many businesses they have not returned to the pre Covid ways of working

Some have adapted, Poms being a prime example of assessing and realising they don't need to be open in the evening to even opening their second restaurant for which we wish them every success. Another example of expansion has been Melbourne with the opening of Pennai Uni at the council offices, so not all doom and gloom.

However this year has brought its own trials and tribulations, with the cost of living crisis, energy price hikes and of course the recent increase in the base rate and rising inflation so we are not out of the woods yet and may not be for a couple more years. We could batten down the hatches, sit and moan or we can adapt and change and what has been demonstrated is that when we adapt and change we have a better chance of surviving and even growing when we can. So I urge all members to shrug off their cloak of doom, as that can be infectious and instead put their positive pants on.

We are fortunate once again this year that none of our members have had to close because of the economic climate but it is time to say goodbye to some of our members.

Firstly our long standing Treasurer Steve Tamplin, who due to personal circumstances is leaving us, he will finish the year end accounts before he goes and ensure a smooth handover to his replacement. Steve has been very supportive and offered me guidance when needed during my time as president and I know he has been the voice of reason on many occasions.

Then we have two members who have chosen to cease trading so they can enjoy life and we wish Tracey Garcia and Linda Clark all the very best.

And we have welcomed new members and even a new shop opening in the city centre with Dagmar and Jon from The Fabric Vault - they certainly have their positive pants on.

I would also like to offer my thanks to Vicky as Hon Secretary, whilst she hasn't been able to commit as much time as before to the role, but when she has it has been very much appreciated. Vicky has decided to call it a day with this role, and as we as a chamber have adapted and changed over the

last couple of years with many of the functions such as memberships, hanging baskets orders now being done via the website there is now no need for this officer position.

Of course my Vice Presidents Greg and Matt. And Jono who has been representing the Chamber on the Lichfield City Centre Masterplan sessions

And not forgetting all the Members who continue to support and shout about Chamber.

## **2. Treasurer report**

Delayed until January.

## **3. Christmas Fayre**

Report of the 2021 report by Lizzie.

68 Stall stalls (made up of 15 in St Mary's, 19 in Guildhall & 34 outside – Revenue - £4,700  
An Increase of 361.50 from 2019.

Costs were higher this year due to some significant larger purchases of Chamber of trade promo flags, high viz, Guildhall Hire and various bits of equipment needed.  
£3,571.89 which is an increase on last years of £700.24

Revenue made: £1,150.42 (£316.43 down)

Possibly half the promo flags cost should be allocated to normal chamber costs and not Christmas Fayre.

IT:

This year we had an online booking tool and this worked really well. The only risk I envisage is that if we open up space and advertise this, I would have to refund many due to duplication or traders we just don't want. I need to keep a close eye on this. Saved quite a bit of time on collecting fees. Just a few wording changes for next year.

City Council:

Did not charge for the use of Market Square or the power. However selling our usual date to the producers market meant that we were the first Christmas Event of the season and much earlier than we are used to.

We also asked if we could have the lights on on Market Square but told no.

LDC

They allowed our event to go ahead and I worked well with Reba in licensing to get everyone through the street trading licence process. Their online order form is still not working well according to the traders and a few had problems. Also licensing were sending our licenses to the Producers Market at one point but that got quickly sorted. After everyone was through and paid, LDC decided to waive all Street Trading Licence fees until next March. Refunds will be issues in the New Year.

The Hub at St Mary's

Changes made this year included: less stalls, non in the foyer, restricted numbers, volunteer on the door and for lift.

Price left at £65 for a 6 foot space.

This worked perfectly. Liz Leyshon looked after everyone inside and volunteers looked after the door in shifts.

Traders were all happy.

Market Square:

City council sold their market stalls and so all traders had to bring their own gazebos which does rather leave it open to interpretation. Luckily all our traders bought suitable equipment.

We increased the price from £65 to £75 based on traders getting more space.

Guildhall:

19 stalls – middle section was not used this year due to covid. One way system was in place.

Jan and Donna kept an eye on things. All worked well but the lift was virtually unused as signage needs improvement. Next year instead of a lift attendant, possible a door person to direct people.

Learnings for next time:

Spread out the stalls in Market Square, Guildhall, lower bore street, market street and guildhall. Add more stall. Get more volunteers and help in the day.

If want to increase size, employ staff to look after sections.

Extra Litter pickers – possible extra bins – Maybe ask litter legends for help.

A possible Elf emporium or Santa's grotto on ground floor for next year - a possible sponsor has been in touch. More information to be gained.

Summary

Christmas Fayre was a huge success this year. We added a tiny bit more promo on facebook but due to the other events not advertising much, our event stood out. People came in their thousands – We are guessing at over 40k at least but footfall figures are due in.

We were absolutely overwhelmed at the numbers meaning stalls were selling out by lunchtime, packing up and going. So people coming later were left disappointed at the lack of services. Not many shops opened due to staff issues but the businesses that did open, had a brilliant day. So in terms of what this event wants to deliver, it certainly did this.

At times bins were overflowing and I the scouts could not keep up with the little bit of litter picking they did. The sheer numbers of people and full bins from the weekend, mean at our event, they get filled by the beginning of lunchtime. We will see if we can employ Lichfield Litter Legends to help us next year or we need to hire extra bins.

We were disappointed that the lights would not be switched on just on Market Square for us, but I have suggested that the Light Switch On possibly could swap places in terms of date so they are the first event for the festive season. Many people thought they were coming to the switch on or food festival. It's doubtful they'll listen to many people's view that the order needs sorting but we'll see.

I've also contacted Visit Lichfield to tell them about the event and how the general public were confused at what event they were coming to and we suggested that the lack of Christmas Event brochure or event advertising may have not helped. I asked them if they'd consider a flyer or brochure to put out in all shops so that it gets better communicated but they aren't keen.

There were many disappointed people who took to facebook and commented on the page. Many of them thought they were coming to a much bigger event.

With the good dry weather, people desperate to go to an event, Christmas starting early this year, the confusion on events, upping our advertising, only our advertising being visible, it meant that we had huge numbers visit. We will try and be ready for them next year!

#### **4. Hanging flower baskets**

Chamber offered summer hanging basket service to traders within the city.  
Service included setting up, watering and removal of baskets at end of season.  
£60 per basket, discounted to £55 for members, and £35 for baskets at home.  
Take up of 52 tubs and 7 wicker baskets. Down on the 100 (approx.) regularly ordered pre-Covid.  
Lichfield City Council received grant to cover costs of watering the baskets – thanks to LCC.  
Pleased to report no incidents of vandalism and majority of feedback received was positive.

## **5. Membership report**

Numbers are growing.  
65 approximately – now renewing via website.

## **6. Honorary Secretary**

Vicky read out her report with general thanks to hosts of meetings.  
Vicky is standing down as cannot commit enough time for the role. But she has helped to make some positive changes. Now memberships are moving to the websites going forward.  
Future roles need to be separate, so all tasks do not fall to the President.

## **7. Christmas Fayre**

This year we have a committee structure for the organising  
100 Stands – Bore Street, Dam Street, Bread Market Street, upstairs and downstairs inside Guild Hall, The Hub and Market Square.  
Security and first aid, plus full event insurance.  
Walkie talkies, additional high-vis, lanyards.  
Staggered arrival times.  
19/11/2023 secured at Guild Hall, The Hub and LDC – the only event signed off for 2023.  
Approximate £2,500 profit.

## **8. Election of Officers and committees**

Executive Committee:  
President: Ruth Redgate – all in favour  
Vice President: Matt and Greg – all in favour  
Minute Secretary: Jayne – all in favour  
Treasurer: Gill Fitzpatrick – all in favour  
2 or 3 other Exec committee members needed - Ben Hatfield, Martin Ward, Jackie Roberts.  
Exec meeting required only if a decision can't wait until next members meeting.  
Agreed there be a terms of reference/ job description for the exec committee, for full transparency

Marketing Officer – proposed that this is needed, for both photo and video provision:  
Footfox Production – all in favour.

Christmas Fayre Committee (terms of reference agreed by Exec this year):  
President role – Denise, Jan, Greg, Jayne  
Ben – nominated.  
Dagmar – nominated.  
Adam – volunteered.  
2 vacancies still available. Team needs between 5-9 members.

Runs calendar year, January to December.  
Committee to review T's&C's for stall holders as first job in new year.

## **9. Bank accounts**

All agreed for Ben and Gill as new Treasurers and to go on as signatories.  
Losing Vicky and Steve.  
Another 1-2 people required for signatories.  
Tricky to change over signatories.

## **10. Future Meetings**

Happy with rotating days of the week?  
Some cannot attend Tuesday nights so prompted to rotating days.  
October meeting saw us outgrowing Poms – both sides of restaurant used. Poms loss of £400 for us to use their venue which is creating an issue.  
Tables and chairs could be moved to accommodate standing for future meetings but the way Chamber is growing, Poms may still be too small.  
Things to consider – Food used to be light buffet, is food still required? Select menu could be provided at cost per head, and pay individually? Food price to be increased and passed to Chamber?  
Drinks not paid for at Poms. £279 food bill last meeting, drinks not paid for by individuals. If continue at Poms must pay for drinks as you go, same as at George Hotel.  
If continue light buffet, price at Poms £12 incl. VAT.  
Continue meeting at Poms, with capped numbers?  
Eastern Eye for social/ networking.  
The George for business meetings/ presentations. Can they accommodate us for every meeting?

Are we networking/ lobbying? Is Facebook response to attend meeting seen as enough for RSVP?  
Formal commitment required via website?

6pm for 6.30pm, £12 per head for food and buy own drinks. Applicable wherever meetings to be held.

Christmas social in January as usual. Members pay own way. Date TBC.

What do we want the Chamber for? E.g. a collective voice to the Council?  
Better relationship now between Chamber and Council. Part of City Centre Masterplan consultations – LDC requested stall at Xmas fayre for masterplan involvement. Chamber agreed. Felt this was the most appropriate event for them to be at.

## **11. Member benefits**

Have a healthy bank balance for a non-profit.  
Hanging baskets  
HR support (used once last year, twice this year) – still required? Is this a benefit as to why new members join? Does this sway new members to join?  
Members mainly join for networking and link to council. Some members unaware of the other benefits on offer.  
Could Chamber charge more for membership if offer bigger member package?

Network of people on offer to help each other out, as most independent businesses without separate teams such as HR.

Members directory on website should be updated so member info is available to all. Currently only half the membership is online. Definitive list needed for member profiles and what each offers/ discount etc.

Chamber award badge for business websites/ stickers for shop doors required?

Next meeting could involve member brainstorming sessions as to what members require from the Chamber, to enable plans/ benefit updates going forward.

Could training be offered – e.g. mental health or social media courses.

Would guest speakers be beneficial?

Considered cost effective to be a Chamber member for what you get, compared to price of other networking events.

Price of membership goes up by £5 in January = £55 for 2023 membership. Don't want to outprice the small businesses.

## **12. Member spotlight**

Denise Whelan – Celebrant

## **13. AOB**

LDC staff changes – Lisa gone and Jonathan going next month.  
Lichfield becoming known as 'feeder authority'.

Ann – flyers for hampers/ pampering.

## **14. Next meeting**

19th January 2023, 6pm The George Hotel