

PENRITH CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE

**MINUTES OF THE 110th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**HELD AT NORTH LAKES HOTEL, ON TUESDAY 4th February 2014**

**Present:**

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| --- | --- |
| Alan Reading | J & J Grahams |
| Ali Turnbull | Fit to Print |
| Amyn Fazal | Penrith Building Society |
| Angela Huck | Burnetts |
| Anthony Penny | North Lakes Hotel |
| Cheryl Christian | Scott Duff & Co |
| Chris Strutt | Strutt & Co |
| David Whipp | Star Fruits |
| Grahame Latus | Enterprise Answers |
| Heidi Marshall | Dodd & Co |
| John Bodger | 2030 Architects |
| John Swainson | T.E Swainson |
| Karen Harvey | Acorn Guest House |
| Lee Quinn | Cumbria Local & Eden FM |
| Leigh Child | Burnett’s |
| Lisa Coates | Acorn Marketing |
| Lizzie Barnes | Administrator |
| Maggie Cormode | Maggies Bakery |
| Maureen Whitemore | Whitemore & Thwaytes |
| Mike Little | Cartmell Shepherd |
| Nick Harvey | Acorn Guest House |
| Pat Swainson | Just Sew |
| Paul Marshall | T.E Swainson |
| Richard Utting | President |
| Robin Hooker | Eden District Council |
| Ross Wallace | Lakes First Aid |
| Shirley Wells | Maggie’s Bakery |
| Simon Veitch | C W Herald |
| Tim Ellis | Ellis Graphic Design |

**Apologies for absence were received from**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Andrea Dennison | Wordsworth Book Shop |
| Elizabeth Allinson | The Lion Gallery & The Unicorn |
| Fiona Sellars | The George |
| Geoff Holroyd | Giles Financial Services |
| Helen Little | Treasurer / Saint & Co |
| Jane Lumley | Reflecting Health |
| Jon Dennison | Wordsworth Book Shop |
| Nigel Tarn | Moo Bar |
| Richard Sykes | Booths |

1. **1. Welcome**

The 110thth Annual general Meeting commenced at 6pm on the 4th February 2014. Our President, Richard Utting welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.

1. **2. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 2013**

The minutes of the 109thh Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday 19th February 2013 were accepted as a true record of that meeting. Richard then signed the minutes.

1. **3. Matters arising**

There were no matters arising.

Richard updated the Chamber regarding Sainsbury’s explaining that they were on the cusp of organising the new car parking signs, including a new sign for the walk way near The Lion. Boots opticians have moved in to New Squares and Sports Direct will be in shortly.

3 **President’s report**

*Over 2013 I would like to think that the Chamber has become stronger in its efforts to be the voice of the business community. It doesn’t seem like 12 months ago since I received this chain of office; in actual fact it seems a hell of lot longer. But the last year has seen the Chamber continuing to achieve some notable successes in promoting our town and supporting local business.*

*• Our membership has grown*

*• There is even more interest in Chamber affairs*

*• We have had some great B2B events and general meetings which have attracted a lot of interest and met by many as surprisingly good and informative.*

*A very successful Annual Dinner and Business Awards evening. We have continued to have an open and sometimes frank discussion with our district council. We have continued to support the Business Improvement District for Penrith which I believe will make such a difference to the town over the remaining 4 years of its current tenure.*

*The Pride in Penrith lottery, which was originally the brainchild of the Chamber, goes from strength to strength. It has given out grants worth more than £35,000 over the last 3 years which has not only supported local events but many local not for profit organisations. We also now have a corporate lottery membership, so, for those of you who are not currently members this is now your opportunity for your business to become a member and not only help local organisations but also to*

*share with your staff the possibility of winning up to £5,000.*

*The Winter Festival and Winter Droving and the Eden Food and Farming Festival – what a brilliant success these have been and what a difference these have made to the outward perception of Penrith as a business and shopping destination of choice. Of course we have our town ambassadors and my thanks go out to each and every one of them for their help and assistance in spreading the*

*Chamber word and attending our monthly meetings to discuss town issues.*

*The Ask Me Points have also proved to be a great success with a number of businesses prepared to help visitors who are new to the town.*

*Finally we have our newly formed ‘Professional Group’ now headed up by Heidi Marshall. This group was not only formed to get all the professional firms together as a self help group but members of this group will also be able to give help and assistance to Chamber members as well as be available to give presentations and training at Chamber events regarding various topics.*

*We are also involved in the introduction of Totally Locally to the town, a marketing campaign promoting the rich and varied independent shop we have in the town, and also The Digital High Street which is another way of addressing the challenges facing the high street by exploring innovative approaches to retailing by way of apps.*

*All this above said the Chamber has much more it can do to support the business community.*

*For it to be truly supportive and fully representative of all the business community it must now concentrate its efforts in attracting new interest and thus new members from the many businesses situated on the many industrial estates around the town. That is why over the next few months we will be holding a number of open meetings on these industrial estates to promote the Chamber and the many business opportunities it provides. Penrith has many great businesses and we need to engage with them so we can enlist their help in making Penrith a great place to do business.*

*We also need to make the Chamber more fit for purpose. Even though there are so many positive things going on and we still have many more opportunities, the Chamber still has a number of weaknesses which need to be addressed. Following a brainstorming session we had some weeks ago it was identified that the Chamber still has some major weaknesses which need attention.*

*These primarily are a lack of both financial and ‘people’ resource. These can easily be solved by greater engagement, more membership (and thus more membership fees) and more people prepared to get involved. So, as part of this, I would like to call upon you all tonight to consider how you can help in one small way. It doesn’t have to be mammoth; it doesn’t have to be all time consuming. It may be just bringing along another business to one of our business or networking event; it may be just helping out with an event or an activity; it may be sitting on the Executive. But the more of us who are prepared to do their bit the easier it is for everyone and it will help the Chamber to grow into a truly representative body.*

*Finally may I thank you for your attention. May I thank you for your support and thank the Executive team for the time they have given up in pursuance of improving the Chamber for the benefit of our great town.*

*Thank you*

**4 Adoption of Accounts**

The accounts were presented and read by Amyn on Helen’s behalf.

***Penrith Chamber of Trade Treasurer’s Report***

*Firstly, please accept my apologies for not being with you in person to present my annual report at the AGM. The first thing you will notice about the accounts is that they are laid out in a different format to previous years. When I read the accounts, before taking on the role of treasurer last year, I was struck by how difficult it was to work out whether or not the chamber was profitable; and as a result I decided to try and make them more user friendly.*

*Hopefully this layout will give you a clearer view of what assets the Chamber has, how much profit the Chamber is making and which of the Chamber’s projects is profitable. Page 5 of the accounts is the balance sheet. At 31 December 2013 the chamber had cash in the bank of £3,754 (compared to £485 in the earlier year). The executive would like the chamber to have cash reserves of about £5,000 and we are working towards that over the next few years. The Chamber made a profit this year of £2,010. The profit can be split between three areas:*

*• The Winter Festival – Profit of £976*

*• The Annual Dinner – Profit of £1,389*

*• General Subscriptions – Loss of £355*

*The annual dinner and winter festival have both turned profits (see pages 10 and 11 of the accounts) due to Lisa’s hard work in securing sponsorship and sticking to a budget. I would like to thank her for all her efforts, she has made my job a lot easier. Page 9, shows that subscription income has increased by 19.5% (£1,000). I would like to thank Richard Utting, Helen Sanderson and Lizzie Barnes for all their efforts to date trying to increase the membership of the chamber. Despite this increase in membership fees, the accounts clearly show that the revenue currently being generated by the membership and sponsorship of e-newsletters is not enough to cover the running costs of the Chamber. This is something we aim to rectify in the current year. The executive have discussed various ways to increase the number of Chamber members and we are also proposing an increase in the annual membership fee. I am sure Richard will inform you more about that in due course. In addition to this, I will be preparing a budget for the chamber in the next few weeks, by sticking to this I hope the accounts for the Chamber will look even better next year. Thank you for allowing to be your treasurer, the role has given me the chance to get to know a lot*

*more about the people and businesses in Penrith, which I have enjoyed. If you have any questions on the accounts, I have left some notes with Richard which should help him answer any simple questions, however, if there are questions he can’t answer from my notes, please email me your question to Helen.little@saint.co.uk and I will reply to you when I am back from my holiday.*

*Helen Little*

*Saint & Co Chartered Accountants*

The accounts were available for everyone to view. The Executive Committee were happy with the accounts, but if anyone had any questions at a later date we would be happy to answer them.

Page 9 - “other income” was queried and explained satisfactorily by Amyn, Kelvin asked about the BID donation – Richard explained that it was included in “grants”

The Membership fees were to be increased as follows

0 - 3 Members from £45 to £50

4 -9 Members from £60 to £65

10+ Members from £85 to £95 but with a “early renewal deal” if paid before the end of February at last years prices.

The accounts were accepted

A vote of thanks was extended to Helen for making the accounts much easier to comprehend and for the sterling job she had done throughout the year.

1. **4. Appointment of Accountants**
2. Watson & Co were proposed to continue as Independent examiners of the Chamber’s

account by Antony Armstrong Penny and seconded by Ian Sharman.

**5. Election of Officers:**

Richard explained that in a recent meeting with the executive, the tenure of the president was discussed. The executive were in agreement that although the tenure was not to automatically be a commitment of 2 years, it was reasonable to expect to stand for a 2 year period. Alan Reading thought 2 years may not be long enough and Kelvin spoke from experience stating that it takes the first year to build the bridges and the second year to consolidate. Richard was happy to continue at the helm for a further year believing that the next year would be the progression to what he had achieved so far.

There was a discussion regarding the necessity of the Junior Vice president position and it was agreed that this position was not necessary. Maggie Cormode asked if this role was essential and Richard advised that it was not.

# President: Richard Utting

Proposed Grahame Latus, seconded Cheryl Christian.

# Vice President: Amyn Fazal

# Proposed Ali Turnbull, seconded Maggie Cormode

# Treasurer: Helen Little

Proposed Heidi Fowler, seconded Cheryl Christian.

Ali would stand down from the executive but would continue to support by working on small projects. Liz Allinson and Heidi Fowler was to join the Executive with Heidi taking the Chair of the Professional group.

A discussion was held regarding the Executive committee membership, either with or without portfolio. Phil Caton asked how much commitment was expected, Richard advised as small or as large as they could provide. It was not meant to be a massive commitment, there was one meeting a month.

Amyn explained that in the recent strategy meeting the decision was made to try to share tasks and responsibilities as in the past the main bulk has fallen to the President. Richard commented that Maureen had represented the Chamber with the Fire Station Campaign and that had meant that Richard or Amyn had not had to deal with it. Ali was helping with the 1st World War commemoration and Totally Locally and had provided the list of Industrial Estate members.

It was Lisa’s last meeting as she was standing down from the Chamber, but would continue supporting the Annual Dinner Dance and The Winter Festival. She was presented with flowers and Richard expressed the Chambers gratitude for all her hard work. Lisa thanked everyone saying that she hoped she had made a difference.

Richard had advertised to test the market, trying to find one person that could do admin and marketing but there had been no suitable candidates. Lizzie to continue with Secretary role.

1. **8. Secretary’s Report**
2. Membership had increased to 111 and Richard and Lizzie were actively recruiting within Penrith Town centre, with the Industrial estates to be targeted shortly. Their goal for this coming year was to achieve a membership of 200 members.

**9. Membership, Benefits & Subscriptions**

Subscription rates for the coming year had been discussed by the executive

**Talk By Dr Robin Hooper Chief Executive Robin Hooper Chief Executive, Eden District Council.**

Dr Hooper gave an enlightening and interesting talk about his background and his vision for the future of Penrith. Working with North West business leaders, Newton Rigg and West Cumbria to open up the M6 Corridor, between junction 40 and 41, his aim is to bring businesses to Eden along with investment and encouraging people to relocate here. He saw Eden as a commuter belt to Manchester and the new Media City. His vision is to make Penrith an indoor leisure destination and to promote our local attractions such as Richard 3rd, local castles and their heritage.

Richard thanked him for his interesting observations and thinking “out of the box”

More discussion was held initiated by Phil Caton questioning why he had not mentioned Lowther, and Graham asking about Coast to Coast activities. Kelvin also thanked Robin and there followed a discussion about improvements to The Beacon and Penrith Town centre.

**10. Any Other Business**

Date for your Diary

4th March B2B - for further details, please see website.

Next General Business Meeting 1st April 6pm at The North Lakes Hotel

Next AGM will be 3rd February 2015 at The North Lakes Hotel.

The meeting closed at 7.15 pm

President

Richard Utting …………………………………………………….. Date 03/02/2015