

## **Report on by the Treasurer**

### **On the accounts of Penrith Chamber of Trade**

#### **For the Year ended: 31 December 2015**

During the year ended 31 December 2015, the Chamber of Trade made a profit of £3,079 which means that the Chamber has now built up its reserves to £8,653. At the end of the year, the Chamber of Trade bank account had £11,783 in it.

The Chamber's profitability came from three areas:

1. Subscriptions
2. The Annual Dinner
3. The Winter Festival

Subscription income has fallen this by £100 from £6,206 to £6,106. The fall in subscription income is largely as a result of two factors:

1. The change in payment structure at the last AGM, made invoicing very difficult. In previous years, the secretary (and more latterly me) would send out the invoices after the AGM. This was not possible this year as we needed to know how many employees each member had before the invoice could be raised. Getting this information proved difficult and time consuming. When members did not send back this information, we were unable to invoice them and resulted in a higher proportion that normal not renewing their membership.
2. In previous years, the secretary and Richard Utting had been instrumental in signing up new members. With Kate being new to the role of secretary and having to combine the role with a fulltime job, it was not practical for her to be signing up members from the off. With Richard stepping down from the executive at the start of the year he would no longer be in a position to actively recruit members.

As the year progressed the executive realised there was an issue so they asked Richard if he would come back and work for the Chamber signing up new members. I am pleased to report he has been very successful at this to date and he has signed up 23 members for the 2016 financial year.

Richard is getting paid 50% of the first year's membership fee as commission on every member he signs up. This accounts for the £235 of commission which is a new expense in the accounts.

Despite the fall in membership the main part of the Chamber was profitable. (2015 – Profit of £2,023 and 2014 – profit – 1,095). The increased profitability is due to the reduction in secretarial expenses, marketing and meeting expenses.

My feeling is the executive should spend a little more on the administration of the Chamber this year. This should help support the president and treasurer with their duties and provide the membership with the events and information that they need. I have worked with a number of secretaries in the last three years, and when you have an good secretary who understands the role and owns it, it make a vast difference to the Chamber's smooth running.

The annual dinner was a success again this year and contributed £964 to the profit of the Chamber.

The winter festival made a small profit this year of £92. You will note we have had to write off bad debts from the winter festival to the tune of £190 this year. These debts relate to the adverts placed but not paid for in the 2014 brochure. I would advise that in future years a policy of payment upfront, for advertising should stop this happening again.

Thank you for having me as your treasurer for the past three years. I apologise that I have not been as hands since the birth of my daughter in August 2014. Logistically, it has been very difficult for me to fit in work, get Julia from childcare, home to Carlisle and me back to Penrith for the meetings at 6pm, which is why I feel it is only right I step down.

When I took over the role as treasurer, the Chamber had reserves of £1,585 and had made a loss of over £2,000 in the year to December 2012. At the time there was a lot of energy being put into making the Chamber more relevant to the Penrith Business Community, but I was concerned that this may come at the expense of the financial stability of the Chamber.

For the past three years I have tried to ensure the financial stability of Chamber, without impinging on the work the Chamber been doing. I am proud to be leaving the Chamber in a much stronger financial position than when I took over.

I am also proud that the Chamber of trade now has a proper accounting system in place so we can keep track of who owes money to the Chamber and who we owe money to. I hope this continues to serve the chamber well.

Finally, I would ask you to support Glen in his role as treasurer, at times a thankless task and Heidi as the new president. I am sure they will both do an excellent job.

Helen Little

Treasurer