

Chamber of Commerce meeting – Wednesday 16th November 2016. 6pm. Tomatitos.

1. Apologies: Clare Fry, Chris Kemp, Rob Eveleigh, Malcolm Gooch, Sally Forwood, Tricia Wordley, Giles Morgans, Simon Forrester, Julie Leonard, Juliet Noble, Anna Heywood, Maria Carreras, Athene (Great English Outdoors).
2. Present: David and Annie (Fudge Shop/Satori/Otherworldz), Sarah Whitticase, Val Harris, Nancy Lavin-Albert, Dean (Communikate), Derek Glashan, Pat Eckley, Emily Daw, Alexine Bartholomew, Gareth Ratcliffe, Emma Balch, Debbie Davies, Melanie Prince, Deb Clark.
3. We all took a moment to remember Pat Gamon from the Tourist Information Bureau who sadly died this week. Pat was a stalwart supporter of the town and will be much missed. We send our deepest condolences to her husband Jim and her friends and family.
4. Christmas Lights
 - a. Fundraising: Fundraising has been going very well so far, but we do need to sort out the remaining businesses who have not yet paid. The more we can raise this year, the more potential there will be to extend the lights further next year.
 - i. Celebrate Lottery – we were successful with this application.
 - ii. Donations to date
 - iii. Fundraising event – The event was a great success, thanks to everyone who volunteered and came along. The suggestion is that we could run two such events next year.
 - b. Installation: Jenkinsons are now putting up the lights – fingers crossed the bow will finally go up this year too!
 - c. Switching on event: To be held on Friday 25th November. Lights to be switched on at 6.15pm by Ben Fogle, with choirs either side.
5. Communications, PR and Marketing.
 - a. Hay Vouchers: We have now sold £9020 worth of vouchers! An incredible achievement. We will reorder a short run of the £10 vouchers, and ask BWA to design new vouchers in time for the 40th anniversary next year - £10 and £20 denominations.
 - b. Christmas
 - i. Ideas from Simon Forrester
 - ii. Book a Day in Hay: This has gone well but slightly haphazard at our end. Emma has done a great job on the ABADIH blog. Emma raised the point about book displays in windows which never quite got off the ground. All agreed it was a strong concept though. AW to follow up with Simon when he's back to see what mileage there is. AW NOTE: Would be good to have a photographer at the switching on – any ideas? I'll ask the B&R to send someone.
 - c. 40th Anniversary of Hay's Independence
 - i. Next meeting for groups interested in planning activities: This is planned for Tuesday 22nd November, all welcome. Debbie mentioned the idea of something commemorative to be given to school children – we should investigate this, budget permitting.

- d. Food Festival ideas. AW circulated a note from Rob Eveleigh about this. Looks like there could be a gap for a Chamber-endorsed food festival next summer. Rob to pick this up when the dust has settled!
 - e. Helen & Kenny – offer of PR support for Chamber members: AW to follow this up with Clare and Derek.
6. General Town Issues:
- a. Dementia Friends meeting: AW to follow up with Trish and arrange for early 2017. Gareth emphasised how valuable the training had been.
 - b. Hay Castle: No update
 - c. Hay Festival: Sarah reminded everyone about the great events over the Winter Weekend, particularly those for kids.
 - i. Bus routes?
 - d. Town Council: Gareth gave the great news that planning for the new Hay School has now been granted – work to commence next year.
 - i. Gareth also raised the issue of the imminent closure of our HSBC. Gareth is arranging a meeting with HSBC and Kirsty Williams AM, and will invite a Chamber member in due course.
 - e. Gwernyfed High School, other local schools: Gareth raised the issue of the potential threat of the merger of the governing bodies of Brecon and Gwernyfed. For the future security of GHS it is important that we work to keep their governing body separate.
 - f. Hay Library: The Town Council have submitted a plan to Powys and work continues to preserve and develop the library. There will be a special event on the 11th December at 4pm with carols, etc. All thanked Melanie for her work in representing the Chamber.
 - g. Hay Ho Bus: AW gave an update from Anna Heywood, revenues are down slightly and so are supporter numbers. With thanks to everyone who has supported the bus, it would be great if businesses and individuals could consider whether they could help.
7. Business Rates review: This is a matter of great concern to businesses in the town, though there is a limit to the pressure we can bring to bear on this. The key actions are to check your new rateable value via the VOA website: <https://www.gov.uk/correct-your-business-rates> If your rateable value looks incorrect you only have a limited time to appeal. Information about how to appeal is laid out on the website.
- There may also be an opportunity to lobby for additional transitional relief. A consultation on this has just finished. Once the results of this are known we can devise a plan of attack around this.
- TO REITERATE: The key thing is to check your new rateable value!
8. Membership update. Welcome to all of our new members and Derek continues to recruit more.
9. Accounts update: More on this once the Christmas lights budget has been settled.

10. Election of Directors: To be handled at the earliest available opportunity.
11. Date of Next meeting: As AW is away in January it was suggested that Clare chair a meeting mid-Jan – she'll be in touch with dates next month!
12. AOB: Derek showed us the new bag design he and James MannoX have been working on – all agreed it looked great.