

**Minutes of the Annual General Meeting  
Lewes Chamber of Commerce  
Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2017 in the Reg Yarrow Room at Lewes Town Hall.**

Present: President Clare Crouch, Acting Vice President David Clark, Honorary Vice President David Quinn, Honorary Treasurer Andrew Wells, Executive Committee member Adam Bagnall and members Roger Beasley, Claire Duc, David Hurford, Nick Ludford, Ashley Price and Jonathan Spencer.

**Welcome:**

The President opened the meeting with a welcome to all those present.

**Apologies for Absence:**

Sarah Kelly, Tim Cobb, Fiona Kay, John Clark, Matthew Cornish. Robert Hill and Sussex Downs College

**Minutes:**

Of the Annual General Meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> April 2016 were agreed and signed as a true record. Proposed by Ashley Price and seconded by David Quinn.

**Matters Arising:**

The President said that everyone present had a hard copy of the annual report, agenda and accounts and there were no matters arising.

**Annual Report of the Executive Committee:**

President's Report 2016/17 from Clare Crouch

2016/17 was been a busy year for Lewes Chamber of Commerce, and one I have thoroughly enjoyed as my first year as President. It has been great meeting so many new people through the networking events and learning so much more about Lewes, the people and the businesses that make it what it is.

We held 21 events throughout the year, these included the regular Breakfast and Lunch events, a Fire Safety Training course, updates on the North Street Quarter Development, a very delightful afternoon tea at Pelham House and Football at The Dripping Pan.

These events regularly attract a diverse range of businesses made up of both Chamber members and non-members, many of which have since joined the Chamber. Our membership currently stands at 75.

I've tried to attend as many of these events as possible and have seen Chamber members building very successful partnerships. For those Lewes Chamber members who have not yet attended these events, I would really encourage you to come along.

We have actively supported and promoted *Lewes for a Living Wage*, *The Lewes & District Business Awards (LDBA)* and *The Lewes and District Dementia Action Alliance*. Last year we had five members as LDBA finalists with three of them scooping the top spot in their categories – Cheese Please (Best Independent Retailer), Community Transport for the

Lewes Area (Best Customer Service) and Wave Leisure (Best Employer). I'm hoping to see similar if not better results in 2017!

I'd like to express my personal thanks to the Executive Committee for their support in my first year. The Chamber really has thrived over the past year and has received favourable comments to that effect. If you have ideas on how you would like to see the Chamber develop and expand over the coming months please do come along to an event, share them or contact the Chamber directly we'd love to hear from you.

The Acting Vice President David Clark advised that he is standing down from that role but will stand to be a member of the Executive Committee. He thanked Clare for her enthusiasm and for taking on the role and organising so many and varied events. The Chamber has gained new members from the events and is currently in the best financial position for some years. It was good to be able to donate so much to the Late Night Shopping charity and cumulatively in the past years over £25,000 has been raised by the event for local charity

#### Late Night Shopping 2016 Report from Adam Bagnall

The evening was successful and busy with lots of people out and about on the streets. Entertainment in the form of Santa's grotto, the Harvey's yard event, screenings at the top of the town and many choirs and carol singers kept people happy. The Chestnut Tree House benefited from charitable donations on the evening and received over £1000.

Publicity was largely centred around a 6 page central feature in Viva Lewes, which includes a town trail to help get people moving around the town.

It was suggested that the top of the town wouldn't be closed to cars, enabling traffic to continue through this part of the town and turn onto Fisher Street. The shops and businesses at the top of the town felt strongly that this wouldn't be satisfactory. The road was therefore closed from the bottleneck to the base of school hill. A number of issues continue to concern me regarding closing the road in this way, I wouldn't recommend that we do this without professional help in the future. Although comparisons are drawn between LNS and Bonfire night, the reality is that we don't have comparable resources. A further requirement for future events would be marshalling of the precinct and road closure, to ensure that only organised stands/ entertainment sets up on the day and that the roads remain clear for emergency vehicles.

I am keen that the evening continues after so many years, I do believe it kick starts Christmas in the Town.

A brief discussion on this lead to a decision to hold a meeting soon after the AGM to discuss the matter in full and approach the local councils. Adam is standing down as sole organiser of the event.

#### Honorary Treasurer's Report by Andrew Wells

I'm pleased to report that the Chamber had a very successful year financially.

Our subscription income has increased and membership is now at its highest level since I became Treasurer. So, long may that continue.

We have also been able to decrease expenditure. Most notably by savings in secretarial fees paid and also because of printing membership materials during the previous year.

The result is that we have ended the year with an improved surplus over 2015/2016 and now have a comfortable surplus with which to face the future.

Late Night Shopping was again a great success with a donation going to Chestnut Tree House so thanks to everyone who worked so hard towards that and to the businesses involved and Lewes District Council for their generous support.

Finally, thanks are again due to Knill James, Chartered Accountants for reviewing the Financial Statements for 2016 free of charge.

The accounts were accepted, proposed by Ashley Price and seconded by Roger Beasley.

#### **Election of Officers and the Executive Committee:**

Clare Crouch was proposed as President by Nick Ludford and seconded by David Hurford

Andrew Wells was proposed as Honorary Treasurer by Claire Duc and seconded by David Hurford

Claire Duc was proposed as Secretary by Nick Ludford and seconded by David Hurford

Nick Ludford and seconded by David Hurford

David Clark was proposed as a member of the Executive Committee by David Hurford and seconded by Nick Ludford

Nick Ludford was proposed as a member of the Executive Committee by David Clark and seconded by Claire Duc

Sarah Kelly is willing to stand again as Honorary Solicitor

Fiona Kay is willing to stand for the Executive Committee.

All present were in favour. Proposed by Ashley Price and seconded by Jonathan Spencer.

#### **Any other business:**

1. David Quinn asked: Lewes Neighbourhood Plan – Has the Chamber had an input in the Plan? If not, then may I suggest the Chamber becomes actively involved as I am most concerned that the front page of the May 2017 Lewes Town Council Newsletter delivered to local households, contains a section headed '**What is the Neighbourhood Plan all about?**' there is a question asking "are you shocked by the way delivery lorries clog our streets obstructing bus services, pedestrians and drivers alike?" This leading question is not helpful to local retailers and businesses who rely upon regular deliveries at various times of the day.

The Chamber was not consulted at first but members have been circulated with the information and will be asked to give feedback to the Chamber so it may be collated and presented as one response from the Chamber.

2. Christmas Lights – To discuss the use of the £1800 Tesco donation held in the funds for several years.

It had been thought that Andrew Wells and Clare Crouch had the solution to this query but it needs further investigation as the money actually came from ESCC who were held responsible for the trees the lights were in being cut down, removed and destroyed with the lights in them.

A discussion ensued about the particular problems of festive lighting in the town about which Ashley Price is well informed.

There being no further business the President thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 7.20 pm