



**Wells Chamber of Commerce**  
**5th June 2023**  
**Old Mill Board Room**  
**MINUTES**

**Present:** Louis Agabani, Mark Adler, Sue Bartucca, Rod Major, Robert Powell, Andy Vallis, Neil Johnson, Mike Magrath (Wells Golf Club), Lewis Dyer, Mike Tucker, Ian Ames-White

**Apologies:** Jonathan Orchard, Dawn Payne (Twinning Society)

2. Minutes of the last meeting

These were approved with one spelling mistake to correct.

3. Neil Johnson of Wells Theatre Festival (6th-9th July 2023) spoke. The Chamber supported the festival last year with a £500 donation. Neil is trying to raise £10K which is roughly half the cost of the festival and has raised £9K so far and he made an official request for a donation from the Chamber. The festival will have eight different productions - something for everyone. They are trying to get primary schools etc to come. Family tickets are available - making it as accessible as possible. The most expensive ticket is £15, with the venues being the Bishop's Palace, Cedars Hall, Cathedral Green and Wells Museum, 4,000 programmes will be printed. Neil needs to know if the Chamber will support the festival before it begins.

**Decision:** Louis will email Jonathan Orchard to discuss the finances and a decision will be made by email to the committee members.

4. Mike Magrath, club captain of Wells Golf Club, has selected his charity to raise money for, Orchard Vale Trust - based in Wookey - supporting younger adults. The Trust doesn't have much government funding so is fully reliant on sponsorship and so forth. Mike was looking for support from individual businesses around Wells. Orchard Vale Trust have four residential homes in the local area and are looking after 60 people. Mike offers them a free monthly golf session at Wells Golf Club.

The club is running a Golf Charity Day on 29th July - looking for raffle prizes, advertising and sponsorship. Sponsor a hole - banners by the hole and so forth. Donating a gift to raffle. Hoping to raise £6,500 of some sensory interactive equipment. Club a member of the local community but would like to get more active in the community. 140 people taking part in day. Lewis will email details of Chamber membership.

6. Honorary memberships. We need to open the Chamber up - Louis encouraged committee members to send any thoughts of organisations to join who can then be invited along to a meeting.

7. Update from Twinning - Dawn Payne was not in attendance but is writing a report for the next meeting.

8. Mark Adler of the Mendip Times: the Mendip Times is entering its 29th year of publication and Mark saw the Chamber Facebook post for this meeting and wanted to come along to meet us and let us know he is around. He was welcomed to the meeting.

9. Social media - Louis and Sue have control of Facebook page but there is still a link with Sean Sloan's business - they will always have overall control. It was decided to start afresh with a new Facebook page. Louis and Sue to investigate. Louis will ask Sarah Sloan to delete the page on the Chamber's behalf. Sarah has been very helpful. Sue to further investigate LinkedIn - again we will probably have to start a new page as there has been no response from the current admins.

10. Volunteers for roles - Sue to take on social media. Membership needs to be everyone's responsibility - but we need people to organise it. Louis has produced an initial idea for a leaflet - we need to add membership information on the back. Louis to get the leaflet finished and bring it to the next meeting. Everyone to invite members and talk to everyone as soon as we have a stack of leaflets. Catchment area: Wells and its environs - the idea is to be inclusive. Mark suggested putting leaflets in pubs in local villages etc. We need an electronic version of the leaflet too. Meetings don't have to be at Old Mill offices - they could be at other member's offices if needed.

11. Email: Creating our own email will cost £5 per month - info@wellschamberofcommerce.co.uk forwards to Sean Sloan - the domain name, wellschamber.com is available. When we set up a new email it needs to replace the one on the website (telephone number needs to come off as it forwards to Judith's phone currently and we do not need a phone number).

The idea is that the Chamber would buy email address - and that no one person ever has access to the address.

12. Speakers list - shall we have a speaker every month? Rod suggested the Mayor, Bishop and Bishop's Palace, Somerset Councillors.

James Heapey MP can come to a meeting on a Friday only to speak. Proposed for September to meet on a Friday as a bonus meeting - in the Town Hall and use it as a promotion for the Chamber - need to invite Tessa to do the same another time - Theo and Tessa keen to come along. Publicise on social media, website and so forth.

Louis to ask Mayor to come along to the next meeting.

Mike Tucker will ask someone from the farming community.

Charlie Bigham (Ian Ames White suggestion)

Ask the Bishop if we could have a meeting at the Palace - we will write to them and invite them along. paula.denyer@bathwells.anglican.org - Bishop's secretary.

Someone from the police to discuss cyber security

Chamber members are encouraged to send in any of their own ideas for speakers.

13. Lewis will email membership invoice to Louis for businesses joining the Chamber..

14. Robert talked about fundraising - for example mugs and tea towels which raised £1000s for the Chamber. The idea is to make money to support business.

Merchandise. Bag, poster, tea towel. Need Chamber members to sell merchandise for free. Robert to cost up a bag to begin with.

15. Charter Fair - this is a legally binding event and has to be in the parish of the Cathedral (St Andrew) - i.e. only the green or the market square. Louis declared an interest. There is a funfair twice a year in the square. In 1909 the charter reduced the amount of space where it can go. Louis spoke to the City Council about the negative impact of the fair on businesses (retail, hospitality and hotels). Suggested it could move to Palace Fields for example. The County Council is involved in discussion as land belongs to Somerset. The fair owns the Charter that they can come twice a year but it is now unpriced and unregulated.

16. AOB

We have received bill for sponsorship of a flower pot in Wells in Bloom.

It was agreed to give £200 to sponsor the Theatre Festival and £100 to Wells Festival of Literature if they apply for sponsorship

Twinning Society will be looking for funding too - Louis has asked how much they need to raise.

The Chamber will put together a press release and look into providing training courses etc for local businesses. Somerset Skills and Learning.