



**Wells Chamber of Commerce  
7th August 2023  
Meeting and Social  
The White Hart, Sadler Street, Wells**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Mike Tucker, Louis Agabani, Sue Bartucca, Rod Major, Robert Powell, Mike Magrath, Andy Vallis, Ian Ames White, Dawn Payne, Guy Timson, Cllr Tanys Pullin (Mayor), Cllr Tessa Hunt and Paul Clegg

**1. Apologies:** Jonathan Orchard, Mark Adler

Introductions:

Guy Timson emailed the Chamber to ask about membership and was invited to come along to this meeting. He was welcomed and then asked to introduce himself to the meeting. Guy moved to Wells 8 years ago and has worked with our previous Secretary Judith Ludovino. He was sponsorship director for the Bristol Balloon Fiesta and has put together festivals in Gloucestershire, Bath and Bridgwater - he is used to generating leads and bringing people closer to customers.

Councillor Tanys Pullin (Mayor) was welcomed to the meeting and introduced herself - She came to Wells in 1987 and used to be an active member of the Chamber and started the Queen Street deli. She also owned a butchers shop in St Cuthberts Street.

Tessa Munt was also welcomed to the meeting - she is one of Somerset's two councillors for Wells - the other being Theo Butt Philip.

2. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3. Treasurer's report - Jonathan Orchard provided the following via email:

Total cash balance is £8,959.19. Of this £352.57 is Wells loyalty league and £5,971 is grant money. Most recent payments were £100 for Wells Literature Festival sponsorship and £200 for Wells Theatre Festival sponsorship.

4. Chair's report: Louis - there is a lot of money available for grants now which we will make member's aware of via email.

Shoplifting in Wells - a window sticker is being printed for all shops to display to inform shoplifters that all retailers share CCTV images. The retailers will be paying some of the cost of the stickers with the Chamber paying the balance - Lous will email the sticker artwork to members. There is not enough policing to prevent prolific shoplifting. Mike Tucker said how good the What's Ap retailers' group is. The shoplifters are all new faces currently and not people already known to the police.

Tessa is attending the Police and Crime Commissioners (Mark Shelford) forum on 19th September - she encourages the shops to report all shoplifting and other offenses online as the police are more likely to police areas where there are the most complaints. If retailers give details of the worst offenses to Tessa, she will take them to the forum. Louis reported that retailers stopped reporting crimes as they haven't had a response, but Tessa pointed out that the police are collecting statistics. Louis will send a message to the retailer's Whatsapp group.

4. Twinning Report: Dawn is still collating all visitors coming to Wells in the Autumn and is meeting with the treasurer next week to finalise things before 31st August. Further details of funding etc will be known before September.

#### **5. AOB speaker**

Louis introduced Paul Clegg who used to run networking group BNI Westcountry Ltd.

Paul's background is building memberships in the small business environment and the Chamber needs a strategy to get more members. Everyone has a responsibility to help generate new members.

Paul started in retail and chambers tend to be mainly retail - a lot of small businesses could benefit from membership, he was then junior salesman for Wella - and became the youngest national sales manager for Wella, then he was promoted to marketing manager. Having attended a BNI networking meeting (largest networking business in the world), he bought the franchise for Somerset and Wiltshire - 125 people turned up for the launch after a few months of pre-marketing and he ended up with 14 groups. The BNI Southwest was very vibrant until he sold the business 14 years ago. Now retired, Paul took up photography 18 months ago and now does video marketing for businesses - particularly small businesses.

Everyone at BNI had a role to play and visitors are the lifeblood of the meeting. It is important to make the meeting energetic and dynamic with a 20-point plan. He said the Wells Chamber has a structured agenda and we are tight on time - both good things.

Visitors need to see energy in the room and meetings can be intimidating for new people. It is important to welcome visitors - BNI had a registration table, where new people would put their business card, and a visitor host would introduce them to someone else in the room who may be useful to the visitor, plus give them an introduction to the Chair. We need to be slick and organised.

At the end of the meeting have a debrief with the new visitors and ask them what they thought of the meeting. The following day someone should ring or email them for feedback and to ask whether they would like to join.

Inviting process is important - and lead generation is also very important. We could decide who to invite to see the new Wells Chamber of Commerce.

We need to explain and be clear on what the Chamber can do for them as they won't be interested in membership per se. Tell them who else comes along and so forth. The Chamber should be about education, networking, training, insights, mentorship, marketing and retail sales.

Also, the committee needs to be at the meeting 15 minutes before it starts to greet the new people and make sure they don't feel awkward.

Louis said that he was enjoying the Chamber meetings more and more and it was very useful to be able to talk to other people about our problems and so on. We all need to be active in asking people along as guests. Robert pointed out that the Chamber is a place for like-minded business people and should be for everyone and not just retail.

### **AOB networking**

Judith Ludovino used to run a networking group Coffee and Croissants but she is moving on having sold her business - it would be great if the Chamber could start up a networking event to replace it but we need to run it as well as Judith did.

Could do a networking event such as a charity breakfast (suggested by Paul Clegg) on behalf of a local charity such as Mayor's New Clothes which is raising money for Heads Up and Whizz Kidz, or a Macmillan Coffee Morning. We could work with a local charity such as the Lions?

Tanys suggested that the venue for the meetings be changed now and again to make it accessible for all.

### **AOB Correspondence**

There is a meeting on 5th September organised by the Somerset Council with all Chambers of Commerces in the region - Louis will attend and Sue will send the email around to everyone.

### **AOB T towel campaign**

Robert Powell wanted to send our thanks to Dan Holland at Queen Street Deli for supporting the Chamber's historic tea towel campaign - Dan has handed over £280 for T Towels he sold - over the years he raised £1000's selling T towels and was also Treasurer of the Chamber for years.

### **6. Dates of next meetings**

- Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> September
- Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> October - speaker Peter Doyle of South West Growth Hub
- Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November
- Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December