Wells Chamber of Commerce Meeting and AGM Minutes
Monday 8th June, Old Mill Board Room

Present

Lewis Dyer, Jonathan Orchard, Dean Mortlock, Judith Ludovino, Mike Tucker, Tom Wood, Matt Ruddle, Beverley Smith.

Chair Appointment

Judith Ludovino volunteered to take on the role of Chair.

Judith outlined her extensive B2B business experience, having previously served as Chair of the Wells Chamber of Commerce on three occasions. She expressed enthusiasm for the role and a desire to make the Chamber engaging, with concise meetings and active member participation.

Mike formally stepped down as Chair and but will continue to support the chamber

Proposal: Judith to become Chair of Wells Chamber of Commerce with immediate effect.

Decision: Unanimously approved.

Committee Support

Matt Ruddle offered his support to become more involved with the Chamber. While he does not currently have the capacity to take on a formal committee position, he would like to actively support Chamber activities.

Mike suggested that Matt could assist with the organisation of events.

Mike and Tom agreed to share the vice Chair role, stepping in and supporting where needed.

Treasurer's Update

Lewis reported ongoing issues with Santander regarding bank account access. Santander failed to retain the scanned and signed documentation required to update account signatories. As a result:

- Lewis does not yet have account access.
- Jonathan remains the only authorised signatory with access to the account.

Website

The Chamber website currently costs £144 every six months.

Action: Judith to review website arrangements and work with Ben and Tom from St Andrews Press to assess updating.

LinkedIn and Social Media

The committee agreed that LinkedIn is an important platform for engaging with the local business community and should be reinstated.

Action: Contact Sue Bartucca regarding access to the Chamber's LinkedIn and social media accounts.

Chamber Merger Discussion

The proposal regarding a potential merger with the Glastonbury and Street Chamber was discussed.

Judith stated that the immediate priority is to strengthen and rebuild Wells Chamber. If, in the future, there is renewed interest in collaboration between strong local Chambers, the discussion could be revisited.

No further action at this stage.

Membership

The committee agreed that membership records need to be reviewed and brought up to date.

For future memberships, an automated payment system such as Go Cardless or Stripe should be investigated to simplify renewals and administration, Judith will investigate these along with Sum up.

Communications

WhatsApp Groups

The committee discussed creating:

- A WhatsApp group for committee members immediately.
- A separate WhatsApp group for Chamber members further down the line.

Member Engagement

The committee agreed that engagement with existing and prospective members should be addressed in the first instance.

If we are to encourage engagement we need to advocate what we offer: The current Chamber purpose, as summarised on the website, was noted:

The Wells Chamber of Commerce and Tourism comprises a friendly and energetic group of business people passionate about promoting the beautiful city of Wells, working together on common issues and raising the profile of the Wells business community.

The Wells Chamber of Commerce and Tourism exists to promote the interests of its members, the local community and visitor economy, ensuring Wells remains a great place to do business.

Events and Networking

Tom suggested that the Chamber should broaden its approach to meetings and events rather than relying solely on The Old Mill as a venue.

Suggestions included:

- Rotating member events between different venues.
- Holding quarterly committee meetings at The Old Mill.
- Hosting member events at alternative venues throughout the year.

The committee agreed that rebuilding membership should take priority, with a fuller events programme to follow after the summer.

Event Ideas

Construction Sector Networking Event
Suggested by Mike, targeting architects, electricians, plumbers, builders and related trades.

Golf Networking Event
Suggested by Tom for either July or October.

Networking Breakfasts
Examples from other organisations include:

- Bacon rolls, tea and coffee networking sessions with one-minute business introductions.
- Speed networking sessions with two-minute introductions.

AI for Business Event
Suggested by Tom, focusing on practical ways AI can support local businesses.

Partnerships and Promotion

Visit Wells

Judith confirmed that a connection has been established with Visit Wells and an initial meeting is scheduled for 21 July.

Wells Voice

Dean offered support through Wells Voice, including the possibility of a regular Chamber section featuring updates, news and business information.

The cost would be approximately £40–£50 per six-month period for a business-card style listing section. Dean would charge only for business card advertising space and is happy to support editorial content without charge.

Jonathan agreed budget is available for this.

Action: Judith and Dean to explore a regular Chamber column

Actions

Contact Sue Bartucca regarding LinkedIn and social media access	Dean
Review membership administration, website arrangements and online payment options (Stripe, SumUp or similar)	Judith & Tom
Establish a committee WhatsApp group	Judith
Develop event proposals discussed during the meeting	Matt, Tom & Mike
Develop a regular Chamber column for Wells Voice	Judith & Dean
Resubmit Forms to Santandar	Lewis & Jonathan

Thank you the outgoing chair

Jonathan expressed the committee's sincere thanks to Mike for his service as Chair.

It was recognised that the Chamber has faced a challenging period, with committee members having very limited time available to dedicate to Chamber activities. Despite these challenges, Mike has kept the Chamber operating, maintained continuity, and ensured the organisation remained active during a difficult time.

The committee thanked Mike for his commitment, leadership and dedication, and acknowledged the contribution he has made to the Wells Chamber of Commerce. His efforts have provided a strong foundation from which the Chamber can now move forward and rebuild.

Next Meeting Date : 6th July 2026 The Old Mill