

CHILTERN CHAMBER OF TRADE & COMMERCE

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

held on Wednesday, 20th May, 2015 at 5.30 p.m.
at the offices of Wilkins Kennedy, Little Chalfont.

Present: Vee Bharakda – Chairman (Wilkins Kennedy & Co.) Andrew Merrifield (Max-e-Biz Ltd)
Andy Garnett - Vice Chairman (The Garnett Foundation) David Bishop (Maurice Phillips Partnership)
Moya Garnett (The Garnett Foundation) Fred Davies (Better Prospects)
Mike Golding (Littlestone Golding) Martin Parkes (Better Chesham/Flix) - VISITOR
Jean Pritchard – Secretary Lynne Cairns (Companies Connected) - VISITOR
Sandra White (NPA Insurance Broking Group) Vince Crompton (Chesham in Bloom) – VISITOR
Robert Havasi (GWS Corporation) Chris Wilson (Chairman of Amersham Action Group)
Paul Batey (Clarks of Amersham) Kiel Sagers (SWR Doors) VISITOR
Robert Gibson (Dovedale Design) Stephen Singer (Secret Diners Club) VISITOR
Anne Scott (Auberge du Chocolat)
Cllr. Peter Hudson (Chesham Town Mayor) later Cllr. Noel Brown (CDC/CTC)
Cllr. Fred Wilson (CDC/CTC) Matt Rogers (Another Angle/The Gap Partnership)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Steve Hayden, Peter Henry, Kathryn Graves, Jackie Campbell & Daphne Clarke.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Vee thanked everyone for coming, and gave her Chairman's Report as follows.

"Firstly a big thank you to everyone for taking the time out this evening to attend this AGM. I am about to report on what has been an eventful 12 months!

Let me start with how great it has been to be the Chair of the CHILTERN CHAMBER! We are attracting more and more businesses from Amersham and really seeing a significant difference in our whole makeup. Right from our new website designed and managed by Robert Gibson to Jean Pritchard, our very long-standing secretary, Andy Garnett the Vice Chair, Steve Hayden our Treasurer and all committee members, Sandra White, Anne Scott, Paul Batey, Jackie Campbell and Robert Havasi, and my Ambassadors Peter Henry, Matt Rogers and Mimi Harker.

Last week I was sitting at my desk, trying to come up with what I would say in my report today. I can talk for the world, and having to cut down on what I would like to say tonight was really hard for me. In all honesty I was looking for a snapshot of the last 12 months BUT so much has happened! I sat with a blank document in front of me trying to search for something to which you, my audience, would like to hear. Something of value and something that you could take away with you today and think about in your business. As in many things the key to successfully connecting with the people in your life, your family, your friends, your clients, co-workers, audiences, is CONSISTENCY and ENGAGEMENT.

I don't know if every person reads my emails, but for every email I send out I receive a few responses on how some of the things I wrote resonated in one way or another, or at least made them smile or that it worked for their business.

Nothing happens if we just show up once. Our children trust us and we keep them safe because we are consistently there for them. Day in and day out. Our pay checks keep coming as long as we consistently show up for work day in and day outeven doing the laundry is consistent. We build TRUST and we connect when we consistently engage with the people in our lives. So, if that works then surely it must work with the Chamber. We are consistent! We engage with our members, we put news and information on our website, we hold business events and briefings. We help local businesses, we partner with local organisations, we take part in local events and support local charities.

CONSISTENCY and ENGAGEMENT is very hard to maintain, sometimes impossible. So Enough of that! Going through the year since May 2014 AGM:

The Chamber team is working really hard together. We have exciting events which we hold on the 1st Wednesday of each month and our committee meetings, which are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. The Committee meetings and events are held at a variety of venues suited to all our Chesham and Amersham members.

Our website has been rebuilt and managed by Robert Gibson of Dovedale Design. He does an excellent job and keeps us all on our toes as well as educating us in the world of web design and marketing, mailshots, etc. It is a great tool for our members to advertise their business. For those that have not visited, please do have a look at our website – it is full of interesting things going on in the area and B2B offers.

So what else? We give out special recognition awards to organisations who we believe go that extra mile. This year the awards have been given to Chesham High School for raising a significant sum of money for their 6th form block, Chiltern Hills Academy, Stirling Maguire for the Chesham Town Bell fund-raising campaign, Clarks of Amersham for being a thoroughly good company! And to Vince Crompton for his community work for which Chesham Town Council made him the first Freeman of Chesham.

My Vice-Chairman, Andy Garnett, is part of the Chiltern & S. Bucks Economy Group (CSBESG) which includes representatives from the three local councils. There is more information about this on our website. There is continued consultation and involvement with local government and we have worked in partnership with Buckinghamshire Business First. In addition to this, and particularly me having a look at our website CONSISTENTLY for the last week or so, I would really, really encourage our members to engage with us on LinkedIn and Twitter. In the last 6 months our Twitter followers have grown from around 50 to over 700. Several of us are tweeting and re-tweeting, and Pau Batey has actually created a profile for Chiltern Chamber Ambassadors which is working really well. I just need to find a way of converting these followers to members.

Our support for charitable and community causes was last December to Christmas in Chesham, the Amersham Pudding Race (for African Street Children) and the Amersham Showcase (for Sign Health, a charity for deaf children). This year in early April was the Mayor's zip wire event in Chesham for the St. Francis Hospice in Berkhamsted.

We started January 2015 with a bang. Sandra White, our events manager had arranged all the events for the next 12 months with some interesting topics and themes. The year started with Paul Ryan from Improve on You, Nick Sophos on Cybercrime, arranged by Epoq IT, Robert Gibson on Website Design, Paul Batey on Customer Service and our Food & Drink event which was excellent and connected various local businesses together, leading to new members as a result. This last was a new venture for us and the buzz continued for a few weeks after. Well done to Sandra for all her hard work in making it happen!

Some of our events are aimed at educating and informing, and some purely networking. It works, and brings new ideas to the table. We have our annual Golf Day coming up on 5th June at Chartridge Park Golf Club when we are expecting about 60 players and a few more for the evening dinner. Our Strawberry & Pimms garden party on 1st July at The Bury promises to be a very successful event and we are aiming to attract over 150 businesses, weather permitting.

We hope to support all our member organisations, help local businesses thrive and champion both local and regional economic development. As a business community we are focussed on growth and pursuing new opportunities. We will continue to lobby local organisations on issues relevant to both Chesham and Amersham and look forward to helping our members establish new relationships with potential customers. We will concentrate for the future on engaging as a voice of business, committed to the enhancement of the economic prosperity and quality of life in the Chiltern region.

Our strength is OUR MEMBERS and our network! In particular we look to the members to help us identify the needs of the community and businesses and for them to engage with any campaigns we develop. The Chamber responded to the call for ideas in the CDC Local Area Plan. As mentioned, we are active in various areas of local government. But if we are to be the voice of local business we shall always need the help of local businesses to put forward their concerns and ideas, and then we can amplify that voice and take it to the right places. We have a web site which could now be used much better for engagement and campaigns, we have an active Twitter and LinkedIn presence. Think of us like a megaphone! And let's try to make the coming year one of – I repeat – CONSISTENCY and ENGAGEMENT.

I would like to thank you all again – THANK YOU – my Vice Chair, committee members, ambassadors and everyone who has helped us with our mission this year. I have been overwhelmed by everyone's enthusiasm and willingness to help make the hiltern Chamber a very successful organisation”.

3. RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 1: To receive and adopt the Minutes of the last AGM and Accounts for the year ended 30th September, 2014.

The accounts were available for anyone who wished to see them. In the Treasurer's absence he submitted a report:-

“The accounts show a break-even figure for the year (-£13) and this was our intention. During the year we saw increased membership fees and also spent extra money on marketing to boost membership. The accounts were submitted to the committee on 23rd April in advance of the AGM and all queries answered. Hopefully the accounts can be agreed today in my absence and I can then sign and return to Littlestone Golding for filing at Companies House. The current financial year accounts are fine, with no cause for concern, and we are on target again to live within our means”.

The 2014 Minutes, having been studied, were proposed as accurate by **Vee Bharakda** and seconded by **Sandra White**.

Resolution 2: To confirm any changes to the Committee, and new members to be proposed and agreed.

The committee, at the time of the AGM notice going out 21 days before this meeting, was as follows:-

CHAIRMAN	Vee Bharakda
VICE-CHAIRMAN	Andy Garnett
HON. VICE-CHAIRMAN	Fred Wilson
HON. TREASURER	Steve Hayden
SECRETARY	Jean Pritchard
ACCOUNTANT	Mike Golding
COMMITTEE MEMBERS:	Sandra White Jackie Campbell Heather Dean Robert Havasi
REPRESENTING CTC	{ Cllr. Noel Brown { Cllr. Tina Michael

However, since the Local Elections last week we have lost **Cllr. Tina Michael** and gained **Cllr. Fred Wilson**, as one of the two representatives from Chesham Town Council. We hope to balance our committee with more members from Amersham. It was also proposed that **Robert Gibson**, who has helped us so much with our website, join the committee, and this was proposed by **Vee Bharakda** and seconded by **Andy Garnett**. The new committee was proposed and seconded unanimously by all present.

Resolution 3: To re-appoint Littlestone Golding as Independent Examiners for the Chiltern Chamber.

Mike Golding was duly thanked and the Resolution was proposed by **Andy Garnett** and seconded by **Vee Bharakda**.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Vee opened the floor for questions, although she remarked that AGMs are really a résumé of the past year.

Liaising with the wider business community

Lynne Cairns said that Chiltern Chamber is an ideal group to include in our meetings via articles in local Parish magazines and neighbouring Chambers of Commerce, some of the smaller or home-based businesses in the general local area, which **Cllr. Peter Hudson** informed us amount to approx. 600.

Anne Scott reminded us that however happy we are for “out-of-the-area” companies to join us, since becoming a wider-based Chamber embracing mainly the HP5, HP6 & HP7 area we had made the decision to take a steady approach and concentrate on consolidating our position with the immediate Amersham/Chesham businesses for the time being.

Lynne also suggested we ask our members to let us know their prime concerns, which we could follow up. If we develop one or two campaigns to post on our website it could provoke a lively dialogue regarding such matters as our recent submission to the Local Plan. **Robert Gibson** informed her that we do offer a free page on our website for each paid-up member to have their say, but despite several mailshots only about one-third of our membership has taken this opportunity.

*Chesham Mayor Cllr. Peter Hudson left at 6.10 pm. for another meeting.
He had come to show support from CTC and was thanked.*

Amersham Action Group

Chris Wilson was invited to speak about Amersham-on-the-Hill’s revitalisation aims. He stressed that although the group has grants from various Councils they are an independent body. Since he took office a year ago the group has submitted their views on the Local Plan and many other issues including the ambitious redevelopment of the swimming pool complex/library site. Having seen year by year the success of Chesham’s Schools of Chesham Carnival and Christmas in Chesham, Amersham is planning a similar Carnival this summer and a second Christmas Showcase day in December on a more ambitious scale than last year and with many surprises.

He handed out some Carnival flyers and asked people to offer to take programmes to sell at £1 each.

Chesham Society’s projection for the town’s future

Andy drew our attention to a riveting presentation given by the Chairman of the Chesham Society at the recent Chesham Town Meeting where he drew a picture of how the town could look in the future. For all its ambition and humorous portrayal the presentation gave an idea of what could be achieved given a huge length of rope. The Chesham Society had originally come up with this “New Chesham” design some years ago as a kind of wake-up call to planners and inhabitants alike, and it is a bold interpretation of a potential though improbable dream. It sometimes takes a futuristic concept such as this to jerk people out of complacency and into the realisation of how monumental redevelopment schemes can make mind-blowing changes/improvements? to a town.

Special Recognition Award

Andy was delighted to introduce **Vince Crompton**, recently recognised as the first Honorary Freeman of Chesham, and worthy of one of Chiltern Chamber’s Special Recognition Awards for his achievements and selfless commitment to the local communities. Andy listed Vince’s tireless work as Chairman of Chesham in Bloom since 2012, being a founder member of the Chesham Allotments Group and secretary for

Chesham Horticultural Society, not to mention his many other voluntary works which include donating and cooking Christmas lunch for the elderly and visiting and cooking for housebound older people across town.

Vince thanked the Chamber for the award, and also for our help at last year's Christmas in Chesham evening in selling his Chesham in Bloom calendars. He has met with nothing but enthusiasm and support from the people of Chesham and mentioned the enormous help he had received from the young students at the Skills & Enterprise Centre in planting a large wild flower garden in Lowndes Park.

He then took the opportunity of appealing to the Chamber, as representative of the business community, to say how much he would welcome the donation of more seats in Lowndes Park for elderly people to rest, and how wonderful it would be if this dream could become reality in time for this year's Chesham in Bloom judging in the summer!

**The meeting ended at 6.35 p.m.,
followed by drinks, nibbles and networking.**